

divided up in its orchestration between plucked and bowed strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion—a memorable instance of Berlioz’s novel imagination for tone color. The scale theme also appears in a truly shattering inverted form (that is, moving up instead of down).

Berlioz had written this march or something like it several years earlier. As he revised it to go into the *Fantastic Symphony*, he added a coda that uses the *idée fixe* and therefore only makes sense in terms of the symphony’s program. The final fall of the axe is illustrated musically by the sound of a guillotine chop and a military snare-drum roll, right after bars 1–2 of the *idée fixe*. “Berlioz tells it like it is,” conductor Leonard Bernstein once remarked. “You take a trip and you end up screaming at your own funeral.”

Fifth Movement: Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath (Larghetto—Allegro) Adding a fifth movement to the traditional four of the Classical symphony was a typical Berlioz innovation (although it can be traced back to the Beethoven he so admired). Now the element of parody is added to the astonishing orchestral effects pioneered earlier in the symphony. First we hear the unearthly sounds of the nighttime locale of the witches’ orgy. Their swishing broomsticks are heard, and distant, echoing horn calls summon them. Mutes are used in the brass instruments—perhaps the first time mutes were ever used in a poetic way.

As Berlioz remarks, the “noble and timid” *idée fixe* sounds thoroughly vulgar in its last transformation, played in a fast jig rhythm by the shrill E-flat clarinet. (Compare the music examples on page 255.) The treatment of the *idée fixe* here is strictly “programmatic”: When the theme first arrives, only two phrases are played before the orchestra breaks in, with a “roar of joy” welcoming Harriet Smithson to the orgy to mock her lover’s death.

As the merriment is brought to an end by the tolling of funeral bells, Berlioz prepares his most sensational stroke of all—a burlesque of one of the most solemn and famous of Gregorian chants, the *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath). This chant is the centerpiece of Masses for the dead, or Requiem Masses; in Catholic France, any audience would have recognized the *Dies irae* instantly. Three segments of it are used; each is stated first in low brasses, then faster in higher brasses, then, faster still and in the vulgar spirit of the transformed *idée fixe*, in woodwinds and plucked strings. It makes for a blasphemous, shocking picture of the witches’ black mass.

MOVEMENT 4
He dreams he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned to death and led to execution. A march accompanies the procession, now gloomy and wild, now brilliant and grand. Finally the *idée fixe* appears for a moment, to be cut off by the fall of the axe.

MOVEMENT 5
He finds himself at a Witches’ Sabbath. . . . Unearthly sounds, groans, shrieks of laughter, distant cries echoed by other cries. The beloved’s melody is heard, but it has lost its character of nobility and timidity. It is *she* who comes to the Sabbath! At her arrival, a roar of joy. She joins in the devilish orgies. A funeral knell; burlesque of the *Dies irae*.

Original Gregorian chant

Di - es i - rae di - es il - la Sol - vet sae - clum in fa - vil - - la . . .
Day of wrath, that dreadful day, When heaven and earth shall pass away etc.

Version 1: TUBAS and BASSOONS

f

Version 2: FRENCH HORNS and TROMBONES

8va

Version 3: WOODWINDS and PIZZICATO STRINGS

8va

LISTENING CHART 14

Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, fifth movement

9 min., 59 sec.



INTRODUCTION

- 0:00 Mysterious orchestral effects
- 0:27 *Fanfare* Like a distant summons: trombones, then flutes plus piccolo echoed by muted French horns
- 0:57 Free repetitions: mysterious sounds, fanfare

IDÉE FIXE

- 1:39 Prefatory statement: two phrases (only) of the *idée fixe*; note the bass drum. Riotous orchestral response, *ff*
- 1:59 *Idée fixe* Entire tune presented in a grotesque transformation, in 6/8 meter, played by “squeaky” E-flat clarinets
- 2:29 *Crescendo* Big climax—the first of many
- 2:50 Upward motive A short, expectant motive (later this motive initiates the fugue subject of the “Round Dance”)
- 2:53 *Transition* Quiet descending passage
- 3:11 Funeral bells Three sets of three bells (the third set is muted); the upward motive also appears



DIES IRAE

- 3:38 Segment 1 Segment 1 of plainchant *Dies irae* is played in three versions:
(1) tubas and bassoons—slow
(2) horns and trombones—faster
(3) woodwinds—faster still (the rhythm here recalls that of the *idée fixe*)
- 4:14 Segment 2 Segment 2 of the plainchant, same three versions
- 4:37 Segment 3 Segment 3 (begins like segment 1), same three versions
- 5:11 Transition The upward motive is developed; crescendo.



WITCHES' ROUND DANCE (free fugue)

- 5:28 Exposition Four entries of the fugue subject
- 5:55 Episode 1
- 6:15 Subject entries Three more entries, in *stretto*
- 6:30 Episode 2 A passage starting with a loud rhythmic motive, derived from the subject, comes four times.
- 6:52 The music dies down.
- 7:10 Fragments of the *Dies irae*
- 7:26 Long transition; crescendo over a drum roll
- 8:06 Subject entry The original subject returns.
- 8:12 Subject plus *Dies irae* The two themes together in a polyphonic combination. This is a climax; trumpets play the *Dies irae* for the first time.
- 8:44 Subject entry Final appearance of subject: over strings *col legno* (played with the wood, that is, the back of the bow). Some notes are lengthened.
- 9:19 *Dies irae* Segment 1 of the *Dies irae* hastily recollected; big drum strokes
- 9:28 Conclusion Final passage of cadences: very loud



► Access Interactive Listening Chart 14 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen



Witches' Sabbath (detail), by Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), one of a number of dark, unsettling images Goya painted on the walls of his house in his last years. Satan, in the form of a goat, presides over the orgy.

The final section of the movement is a “Witches’ Round Dance.” Berlioz wrote a free fugue—a traditional form in a nontraditional context; he uses counterpoint to give a feeling of tumult and orgiastic confusion. The subject is an excited one:



The climax of the fugue (and of the symphony) comes when the Round Dance theme is heard together with the *Dies irae*, played by the trumpets. Berlioz wanted to drive home the point that it is the witches, represented by the theme of their round dance, who are parodying the church melody. The *idée fixe* seems at last to be forgotten.

But in real life Berlioz did not forget; he married Smithson and both of them lived to regret it.

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 17 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 18

Romantic Opera

The nineteenth century was a golden age of opera, which flourished all over Europe from Germany, France, and Italy to Bohemia and Russia. This was true in part because opera tied into two important Romantic themes. The first was the idea of breaking down barriers between the arts. Combining music with poetry and other forms of literature, and even with philosophy, made perfect sense to Romantic composers and their audiences. The age that produced the lied—a German song with an important poetic dimension—was also committed to the union of music and drama.

“Carve this into your head, in letters of brass:
An opera must draw tears,
cause horror, bring death,
by means of song.”

Opera composer Vincenzo Bellini, 1834



The Wolf's Glen Scene from Weber's *Der Freischütz*, most famous of early German Romantic operas (see page 262)

The second Romantic theme was the celebration of music as the most profound of all the arts. Opera composers and librettists began to ponder the meaning and message of their work; they came to view opera as a type of serious drama in music, not just a vehicle for song, spectacle, and entertainment, as had often been the case before. Richard Wagner is famous for embracing, publicizing, and indeed co-opting this notion. He put it into action with his “music dramas,” as he called his operas—works that fascinated the later nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Wagner was not alone. Even when he was still an unknown provincial conductor, the attitudes he would build on were developing all over Europe.

In this climate many operas took their subjects from highly regarded Romantic novels, such as *Ivanhoe*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, by Sir Walter Scott. Other operas started from Romantic poems and plays by Lord Byron, or the French writer Victor Hugo (author, in his later days, of *Les Misérables*). Moreover, since Romantic writers looked with new enthusiasm to Shakespeare’s plays, opera composers also drew on them widely. Giuseppe Verdi, to whom we now turn, set versions of Shakespeare’s tragedies *Macbeth* and *Othello* as well as the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

1 Verdi and Italian Opera

Verdi was the greatest of Italian opera composers and the dominant figure in nineteenth-century opera houses. For while Wagner’s music dramas and his theories of opera attracted much excited attention, Verdi’s operas got many more performances. Then as now, people were inevitably drawn to compare and contrast these two masters.

The heart of the contrast lies in Verdi’s unswerving commitment to the human voice. In this, he was a faithful follower of the *bel canto* principles of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini (see page 262). Verdi never allowed the voice to be overshadowed by the orchestra, and from early on in his career he showed a special talent for writing both beautiful, Romantic melodies and catchy tunes. Opera was a singing art to Verdi, and generations of opera lovers before, during, and after his lifetime have enthusiastically agreed with him.

But while audiences have always loved Verdi’s melodies, what he himself cared most about was the dramatic quality of his operas. First and foremost, Verdi was interested in people, people placed in situations in which strong, exciting actions bring out equally strong emotions. He sought out dramatic subjects full of stirring action, and he had a genius for finding just the right vocal melody to capture a dramatic situation.

“I want subjects that are novel, big, beautiful, varied and bold—as bold as can be!”

Giuseppe Verdi, 1853

Recitative and Aria: The Orchestra

As an opera composer, Verdi never wavered in his commitment to the human voice. This does not mean, however, that the orchestra was unimportant to him. Instead it plays a much richer role in his operas than in those of any of his Italian predecessors. This was all but inevitable in the orchestra-intoxicated nineteenth century.

The role of the orchestra was especially expanded in passages of recitative or near-recitative—the relic or descendant of the recitatives of Baroque opera seria and Classical opera buffa. Italian opera still held roughly to the old division of

Early Romantic Opera

Romantic opera made its serious start in the 1820s, after the end of the Viennese Classical period. It did not, however, start in the heartland of Classical music, which was Vienna. In that city, both Beethoven and Schubert felt threatened by the popular rage for the operas of Gioacchino Rossini, a young Italian whose meteoric career left a mark on the whole of Europe.

Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868)

Rossini is most famous today for crisp, elegant opera buffas in a style that is not all that far from Mozart—the immortal *Barber of Seville* among them. The overtures of these operas, which are popular as concert pieces, are even written in sonata form, the true trademark of Classicism in music.

But in his own day Rossini was admired equally for his serious operas, which established the style and form of Italian Romantic opera. This is sometimes called *bel canto* opera because of its glorification of beautiful singing (*bel canto* means just that—“beautiful song”). Rossini’s operas provided models of Romantic emotional melodic expression, such as Desdemona’s “Willow Song” from his Shakespeare opera, *Otello*. The same operas are also well stocked with coloratura arias, showcases for the legendary virtuoso singers of that era.

To everyone’s astonishment, Rossini gave up opera in 1829 after the success of *William Tell*, his greatest work.

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

Donizetti, who dominated Italian *bel canto* opera after Rossini’s sudden retirement, moved decisively in the direction of simple, sentimental arias and blood-and-thunder action music. Enormously prolific, he wrote more than sixty operas in his short lifetime.

The most famous are *Lucia di Lammermoor*, based on the historical novel by Scott mentioned on page 261, and *Don Pasquale*, a very late example of opera buffa. In the 1970s, the American soprano Beverly Sills starred in a Donizetti trilogy featuring famous queens of English

history: *Anna Bolena* (Anne Boleyn, the ill-fated second wife of Henry VIII), *Maria Stuarda* (Mary Stuart—Mary, Queen of Scots), and *Roberto Devereux* (about Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex).

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835)

Vincenzo Bellini strikes listeners today as the most refined of the three early *bel canto* composers. He wrote many fewer operas than the others, and his most beautiful arias have a unique Romantic sheen. The title role in *Norma*, his finest work, is the final testing ground for sopranos, for it demands highly expressive singing, coloratura fireworks, and great acting, all in unusual quantities.

Verdi often expressed his admiration for the supremely melodious Bellini. All the same, he learned more from the more robust and dramatic Donizetti.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

Weber was the founder of German Romantic opera. His most important work, *Der Freischütz* (The Magic Bullet), has the quality of a German folktale or ballad put to music. Max, a somewhat driven young huntsman, sells his soul to the devil for seven magic bullets, but is redeemed by the sacrifice of his innocent fiancée, Agatha.

Two spiritual arias sung by Agatha in this opera show Romantic melody at its best. There are German choruses in folk-song style. A famous scene of devilish conjuration (see page 260) features sensational orchestral writing with spooky special harmonic effects.

Supernatural subject matter with a strongly moral overtone—quite unlike the historical subjects chosen by Donizetti, for example—and emphasis on the orchestra became characteristic of German Romantic opera. These features are still evident in the mature works of Richard Wagner, who started out in the 1830s as an opera composer in Weber’s mold. Otherwise, Wagner’s “music dramas” leave early Romantic opera far behind.



Legendary singers of the *bel canto* era: Pauline Viardot (1821–1910; she was also a composer), Maria Malibran (1808–1836), and Giulia Grisi (1811–1869), along with a playbill for one of their favorite showcases, the opera *Norma* by Vincenzo Bellini.

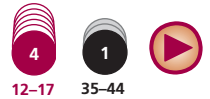
declamation (recitative) for the action and dialogue portions of an opera, and melody (arias) for reflective, emotional expression. (Ensembles encompassed both.) But plot action and dialogue were now always accompanied by the full orchestra. Nowhere in Verdi will you hear passages of the old recitative of Mozart, accompanied by harpsichord alone. The orchestra, also, is usually not restricted to the simple chords that were normal in earlier recitative styles; it plays more active, motivic, and excited music that points up the words and urges the singers on.

Recitative is no longer a satisfactory name for this action music in Verdi's operas, though no other name exists. Highly melodramatic, it is always on the point of merging into a full-fledged melodic style. What distinguishes this music from actual arias is that arias are formally complete and distinct. Unlike passages of Verdian recitative, Verdian arias can be (and often are) extracted and sung separately, as concert numbers.

In arias and duets, the orchestra's role is smaller; here, however, Verdi uses another Romantic resource, that of rich harmonies underpinning melodic high points and climaxes. Many—though by no means all—of Verdi's arias might be described as simple strophic songs in his own exuberant style of Romantic melody. Some of his most famous music consists of timeless tunes such as the choral hymn “Va pensiero” from *Nabucco*, the soprano aria “Addio, del passato” from *La traviata*, and the tenor aria “Celeste Aida” from *Aida*.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Rigoletto (1851)



Rigoletto was a daring subject for Verdi to take on, typical of his dramatic choices in its strong situations and violent emotions. For the source of this opera Verdi looked to a play by the literary lion of French Romanticism, Victor Hugo. Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse* (The King Amuses Himself) scandalized Paris in 1832 with its depiction of a dissolute, womanizing king and a jester who tries to have him assassinated; it was closed by the police after one performance. When Verdi settled on it the censors, who checked every operatic project in Italy at the time, demanded many changes. (The king was demoted to a mere duke, this apparently making his immorality less offensive.) Scandalous or not, *Rigoletto* was an immediate success; today it ranks among the most frequently performed of operas.

The Story The scene is set during the sixteenth century at the court of Mantua in northern Italy, where Rigoletto is the hunchbacked court jester of the Duke. He is a split character, divided between cynicism and hatred for the courtiers and his shining love for his daughter, Gilda, whom he keeps hidden from sight. The dashing, immoral, and rapacious Duke has gotten wind of her, however, and wants to add her to his list of conquests. Verdi's Duke of Mantua is descended clearly enough from Mozart's Don Giovanni.

Through turns of plot we will not trace, the Duke manages to seduce Gilda. She falls in love with him, believing he is a student who returns her love. Rigoletto, meanwhile, can think only of revenge. He hires an assassin, Sparafucile—half comical, but still one of the most menacing characters of nineteenth-century opera—to lure the Duke to his broken-down inn on the

edge of the Mantuan marshes. Sparafucile (his name means something like “Shotgun” in Italian) does so with the aid of his sister, Maddalena.

All this, in the terms of nineteenth-century operatic tragedy, can only end very badly for poor Gilda and her father.

We pick up the action at the beginning of the final act, as Rigoletto brings Gilda to Sparafucile’s hovel to see for herself the Duke’s habits. The scene is split, with the Duke and Maddalena inside the house, Rigoletto and Gilda eavesdropping from outside through a crack in the wall, and Sparafucile moving in between. (We are meant to understand that father and daughter sing to each other, unheard by those inside.)



Rigoletto and Gilda outside, the Duke and Maddalena inside: two images of the quartet, one from Verdi’s day, the other a modern production



Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

The son of a storekeeper in a tiny village in northern Italy, Verdi had a spotty education. He played church organ and conducted the band of the neighboring little town. A local merchant, Antonio Barezzi, who became a patron and almost a second father to the young man, sent him to Milan to study music.

In those days, the center of musical life in Italy was Milan's opera house, La Scala. (It is still active and world famous today.) After several discouraging years in that city, Verdi scored a huge success with his biblical opera *Nabucco* (Nebuchadnezzar) when he was twenty-nine years old. For the next ten years he composed operas at a furious rate for opera houses in Italy, Paris, and London. Three great hits in the early 1850s are still his most popular works: *Rigoletto*, which we take up here, *Il trovatore*, a grisly tale set in the age of chivalry, and *La traviata*, about a Parisian courtesan with a noble heart. After this Verdi took more time with his operas, and his later works became richer and more subtle.

Italy was not an independent nation during Verdi's youth. He was an ardent supporter of the Risorgimento, or Italian liberation movement, and many of his early operas had patriotic themes. The most beloved number in *Nabucco* was a nostalgic hymn of the Hebrew slaves in Babylon—a clear reference to the Italians under the heel of the Austrian Empire. In the year of revolution, 1848, Verdi wrote the rousing *Battle of Legnano*. VERDI actually became a patriotic acronym for the popular choice

for king—Vittorio Emanuele, *Re d'Italia*. After independence was achieved, the composer was made an honorary deputy in the first Italian parliament.

A dour character and a tough businessman, Verdi drove hard bargains with opera impresarios, bullied his librettists, and insisted on supervising the production of his new operas. After the premiere of *Aida* in 1871 in Cairo, Egypt—Verdi was internationally famous—he retired to a fine country estate near his birthplace and spent his later years hunting and raising livestock. He was coaxed out of retirement in the 1880s by his canny publisher and by an eminent librettist, Arrigo Boito. In his seventies, Verdi wrote his two greatest operas with Boito on Shakespearean subjects: the tragedy *Otello* and the comedy *Falstaff*.

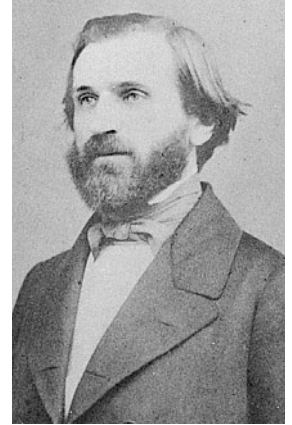
Verdi's first marriage, to the daughter of his early patron Barezzi, ended when his young wife and two babies died within two years. The composer bore the emotional scars of this tragedy all his life, and it may be that the many moving scenes between fathers and daughters in Verdi's operas, including *Rigoletto*, served to channel his feelings about fatherhood. He later married a remarkable woman, Giuseppina Strepponi, a singer

who had assisted him in his early career and starred in his first success, *Nabucco*. She had been Verdi's partner for many years before their marriage.

By the time he died, at the age of eighty-eight, Verdi was a national institution, and he was mourned throughout Italy. Schools closed. Eulogies were delivered in a special session of the senate in Rome. Nearly 300,000 people saw the old man to his grave. His operas remain the most popular of all in the international repertory.

Chief Works: Twenty-four operas, including *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *La traviata*, *Don Carlos*, *The Force of Destiny*, *Aida* ■ Two great Shakespeare operas composed in his seventies, *Otello* and *Falstaff* ■ A Requiem Mass, and a few other choral works; a string quartet

Encore: After *Rigoletto*, listen to *La traviata* (Act I), *Aida* (Act IV), *Otello* (Act I).



A popular graffito of the Italian revolution: “Viva VERDI” (meaning “Long live Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy”)



LISTEN

Rigoletto, from Act III, scene i



12-17



39-44



The stage is divided, showing the inside and the outside of a sordid inn.

RECITATIVE

12
39

The Duke enters the inn.

Gilda: (Ah! padre mio!)

(Ah! dear father!)

Duke: Due cose, e tosto:

Two things, and right now.

Sparafucile: Quali?

What?

Duke: Una stanza e del vino.

A room and some wine.

Rigoletto: (Son questi i suoi costumi.)

(That's the way he does things.)

Sparafucile: (Oh il bel zerbino!)

(Big spender!)

13
40

ARIA

0:29	Duke:	La donna è mobile/Qual pium' al vento, Muta d'accento/E di pensiero. Sempre un amabile/Leggiadro viso, In pianto o in riso/È menzognero. La donna è mobil'/Qual pium' al vento, Muta d'accento/E di pensier!	Woman is fickle, a feather in the wind; Changing her words and thoughts, She's a lovable, sweet sight, When she's weeping or laughing, she's lying. Woman is fickle, a feather in the wind; Changing her words and thoughts!
1:11	1:28	È sempre misero/Chi a lei s'affida; Chi le confida/Mal cauto il core! Pur mai non sentesi/Felice appieno Chi su quel seno/Non liba amore. La donna è mobil' . . .	Man's always wretched who believes her; If you trust her, watch out for your heart! Yet he'll never feel happy Who from that breast does not drink love! Woman is fickle . . .

Sparafucile gives the Duke a bottle of wine and glasses, then goes outside to Rigoletto.

14
41

RECITATIVE

2:45	Sparafucile:	È là il vostr'uom, viver dee, o morire?	There's your man; does he live or die?
	Rigoletto:	Più tardi tornerò l'opra a compire.	I'll be back later to finish him off.

Sparafucile walks off; enter Maddalena, with the Duke inside; Gilda and Rigoletto remain outside.

15
42

QUARTET (from midway through the fast section)

3:05	Duke:	La bella mano candida!	What lovely hands you have!
	Maddalena:	Scherzate voi, signore.	You're joking, sir.
	Duke:	No, no,	No, no . . .
	Maddalena:	Son brutta.	I'm plain!
	Duke:	Abbracciami!	Kiss me!
	Gilda (outside):	(Iniquo!)	(Villain!)
	Maddalena:	Ebro!	You must be drunk
	Duke:	. . . d'amore ardente!	. . . with burning love!

Aria and Quartet (Act III)

Recitative A quick rustling gesture in the orchestra signals the Duke bursting in, disguised as a military officer, and demanding service at the inn. Gilda cries out in dismay as she recognizes her “student” lover.

Aria: “La donna è mobile” Waiting for his drink, the Duke holds forth on the fickleness of women. (He should talk!) This brief aria is one of Verdi's most famous and enduring tunes—one of those nineteenth-century melodies everyone knows, even if they can't identify it. It captures perfectly the compelling energy of the Duke, sweeping all before it. The effect stems especially from the insistent repetitions, in sequence, of the short motive that opens (and dominates) the aria.

The aria is in strophic form, with each of the two strophes introduced by the orchestra. At the end of each strophe the opening words return as a refrain



		Maddalena:	Signor l'indifferente, Vi piace canzonar?	You couldn't care less, sir, You like your little joke.
		Duke:	No, no, ti vo' sposar.	No, I mean to marry you!
		Maddalena:	Ne voglio la parola.	Give me your word?
		Duke:	Amabile figliuola!	Silly girl!
		Rigoletto:	(E non ti basta ancor?)	(Isn't that enough for you?)
		Gilda:	(Iniquo traditor!)	(You horrible traitor!)
16 43		QUARTET (slow section)		
	3:38	Duke:	Bella figlia dell'amore Schiavo son de' vezzi tuoi; Con un detto sol tu puoi Le mie pene consolar. Vieni, e senti del mio core Il frequente palpitar.	You gorgeous child of love, I'm enslaved by your charms; With one word you can Stop my suffering. Come and feel My heart pounding!
1:00	4:38	Maddalena:	Ah! Ah! rido ben di core Chè tai baie constan poco, Quanto valga il vostro gioco Mel credete, sò apprezzar. Son avvezza, bel signore, Ad un simile scherzare.	Ha, ha, I'm laughing out loud. Talk doesn't mean a thing; Believe me, I know how much Your game counts for. My dear sir, I'm used To such joking.
1:03	4:41	Gilda:	(Ah! così parlar d'amore! A me pur l'infame ho udito! Infelice cor tradito, Per angioscie non scoppiar!)	(Oh, to talk about love like that! The villain has said the same to me! My unhappy, betrayed heart— Don't burst with anguish!)
1:12	4:51	Rigoletto:	Taci, il piangere non vale, Ch'ei mentiva sei sicura. Taci, e mia sarà la cura La vendetta d'affrettar. Sì, pronta fia, sarà fatale, Io saprò fulminar.	(Quiet! It's no use weeping. You can see he was lying. Hush, and I'll take good care To get quick revenge. Yes, it'll be swift and fatal, I'll know how to strike him down!)
17 44		RECITATIVE		
	7:25	Rigoletto:	M'odi: ritorna a casa, Oro prendi, un destiero, Una veste viril che t'apprestai, E per Verona parti. Sarovi io pur doman.	Listen: go back home, Take the money, get the horse, And the men's clothes I got you, And ride to Verona. I'll join you there tomorrow.
		Gilda:	Or venite.	Come with me now!
		Rigoletto:	Impossibil.	I can't.
		Gilda:	Tremo.	I'm frightened!
		Rigoletto:	Va!	Go!

and lead the melody up to the tenor's highest pitches. On our recording the tenor adds a brief flourish (a vocal *cadenza*; see page 128) at the end of the second stanza, finishing on his highest pitch of all.

Recitative Instead of pausing for applause, Verdi keeps the orchestra moving, repeating the melody of “La donna è mobile” more and more quietly in the woodwinds as Sparafucile comes out to confirm that this is the man Rigoletto wants killed. It is a small but deft touch, turning the jaunty melody of the aria a bit sinister and making it an accompaniment for a quick recitative exchange. Sparafucile exits, leaving Rigoletto and Gilda (outside still) and the Duke and Maddalena (inside) to sing an *ensemble*—in this case, a quartet.

Quartet: “Bella figlia dell’amore” (Allegro) This is another of Verdi's most famous inspirations. It begins with a fast section, in which the Duke presses

his attentions on Maddalena while she jokingly resists. Meanwhile, outside, Gilda is horrified. These recitative-like exchanges are sung to a lively, continuous orchestral melody that propels the action forward—one way Verdi blurred the distinction between recitative and full-fledged melody.

Our recording skips the beginning of this section, picking it up midway through. The fast section comes to a stop on a loud, expectant chord, with all four singers joining together.

Andante As a slower movement begins the Duke, never at a loss for a beautiful tune, takes the lead, pursuing Maddalena with all the suavity Verdi's melodic genius could muster. His melody is a perfect sixteen measures, four phrases of four measures each, rising to a climax in its third, contrasting phrase: **a a' b a'**.

As he finishes, the other voices start up, one by one. Each sings a distinct melody that captures perfectly the emotions at stake: Maddalena laughing at the Duke's efforts, Gilda sobbing, and Rigoletto stern, determined, bent on revenge. We heard this kind of dramatic characterization through melody in *Don Giovanni*, in the duet of Giovanni and Zerlina (see page 197).

The Duke joins in, the four voices shift through rich, Romantic harmonies (and modulations) to come to another expectant pause, and then the Duke begins his melody again. Now, however, the others sing with him; but Verdi has skillfully managed their melodies so that each preserves its independent emotional stance in the counterpoint that results. The *Andante* ends with a long passage for all four voices.

Recitative The lush quartet could not contrast more with what follows: a stark, brusque recitative in which Rigoletto tells his daughter to go to Verona, where he will follow. To sharpen the contrast, Verdi omits the orchestra entirely.

Alas, Gilda does not obey her father's instructions. She returns to the scene and is murdered, in place of the Duke, during a climactic thunderstorm. Rigoletto comes back to gloat over the dead Duke, but finds instead his daughter, dying; he is left maddened with grief as the curtain falls.

2 Wagner and Music Drama

Richard Wagner was, after Beethoven, the most influential of all nineteenth-century composers. His strictly musical innovations, in harmony and orchestration, revolutionized instrumental music as well as opera. In terms of opera, Wagner is famous for his novel concept of the “total work of art” (*Gesamtkunstwerk*; see page 270) and his development of a special operatic technique, that of the “guiding motive” (leitmotiv).

Unlike earlier innovative composers, it seems Wagner could not just compose. He had to develop elaborate theories announcing what art, music, and opera ought to be like. (Indeed, he also theorized about politics and philosophy, with very unhappy results.) Wagner's extreme self-consciousness as an artist was prophetic of attitudes toward art of a later period.

His theory of opera had its positive and negative sides. First, Wagner wanted to do away with all the conventions of earlier opera, especially the French and Italian varieties. Opera, he complained, had degenerated from its original form as serious drama in music—Wagner was thinking of ancient Greek drama, which he knew had been sung or at least chanted—into a mere

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Wagner was born in Leipzig during the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars; his father died soon afterward. His stepfather was a fascinating actor and writer, and the boy turned into a decided intellectual. Wagner's early interests, literature and music (his idols were Shakespeare and Beethoven), later expanded to include philosophy, mythology, and religion.

As a young man he worked as an opera conductor, and he spent an unhappy year in Paris trying to get one of his works produced at the very important opera house there. The virulent anti-French sentiments in his later writings stemmed from this experience. Back in Germany, he produced the first of his impressive operas, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, and wrote *Lohengrin*. Though these works basically adhere to the early Romantic opera style of Carl Maria von Weber, they already hint at the revolutionary ideal for opera that Wagner was pondering.

This he finally formulated after being exiled from Germany (and from a job) as a result of his part in the revolution of 1848–49. He wrote endless articles and books expounding his ideas—ideas that were better known than his later operas, for these were extremely difficult to stage. His book *Opera and Drama* set up the principles for his “music drama” *The Rhinegold*, the first segment of the extraordinary four-evening opera *The Nibelung's Ring*. He also published a vicious essay attacking Felix Mendelssohn, who had just died, and other Jews in music. Fifty years after Wagner's



Wagner, Cosima, and their son Siegfried, who followed Cosima as director of the Wagner festivals at Bayreuth

death, his anti-Semitic writings (and his operas) were taken up by the Nazis.

Wagner's exile lasted thirteen years. His fortunes changed dramatically when he gained the support of the young, unstable, and finally mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Thanks to Ludwig, Wagner's mature music dramas were at last produced (*The Rhinegold*, completed in 1854, was not produced until 1869). Wagner then promoted the building of a special opera house in Bayreuth, Germany, solely for his music dramas—an amazing concept! These grandiose, slow-moving works are based on myths and characterized by high-flown poetry of his own, a powerful orchestral style, and the use of *leitmotifs* (guiding or leading motives). To this day the opera house in Bayreuth performs only Wagner, and tickets to the yearly Wagner Festival are almost impossible to get.

A hypnotic personality, Wagner was able to spirit money out of many pockets and command the loyalty and affection of many distinguished men and women. His first marriage, to a singer, ended in divorce. His great operatic hymn to love, *Tristan and Isolde*, was created partly in response to his love affair with the wife of one of his patrons. His second wife, Cosima, daughter of Franz Liszt, had been married to an important conductor, Hans von Bülow, who nonetheless remained one of Wagner's strongest supporters. Cosima's diaries tell us about Wagner's moods, dreams, thoughts, and musical decisions, all of which he shared with her. After the death of “the Master,” Cosima ruled Bayreuth with an iron hand.

Half con man and half visionary, bad poet and very good musician, Wagner created a storm of controversy in his lifetime that has not died down to this day. He was a major figure in the intellectual life of his time, a thinker whose ideas were highly influential not only in music but also in other arts. In this sense, at least, Wagner was the most important of the Romantic composers.

Chief Works: Early operas: *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin* ■ Mature “music dramas”: *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* (a brilliant comedy), *Parsifal*, and *The Nibelung's Ring*, a four-opera cycle consisting of *The Rhinegold*, *The Valkyrie*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of the Gods* ■ *Siegfried Idyll*, for small orchestra (based on themes from *Siegfried*; a surprise birthday present for Cosima after the birth of their son, also named Siegfried)

Encore: After selections from *The Valkyrie*, listen to “Wotan's Farewell” from the same work (Act III); Prelude and Liebestod (love-death) from *Tristan and Isolde*.



concert in costume. He particularly condemned arias, which were certainly at the heart of Italian opera, as hopelessly artificial. Why should the dramatic action keep stopping to allow for stretches of pretty but undramatic singing?

The Total Work of Art

The positive side of Wagner's program was the development of a new kind of opera in the 1850s, for which he reserved a special name: **music drama**. Music, in these works, shares the honors with poetry, drama, and philosophy—all furnished by Wagner himself—as well as the stage design and acting. Wagner coined the word **Gesamtkunstwerk**, meaning “total work of art,” for this powerful concept. He always insisted on the distinction between music drama and ordinary “opera.”

Since words and ideas are so important in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the music is very closely matched to the words. Yet it is also unrelievedly emotional and intense, as Romantic doctrine required. The dramas themselves deal with weighty philosophical issues, or so at least Wagner and his admirers believed, and they do so under the symbolic cover of medieval German myths and legends.

This use of myths was another Romantic feature, one that strikingly anticipated Freud, with his emphasis on myths (for example, the myth of Oedipus) as embodiments of the deepest unconscious truths. Wagner employed the old romance of Tristan and Iseult, the saga of the Nordic god Wotan, and the Arthurian tale of Sir Perceval to present his views on love, political power, and religion, respectively. Wagner's glorification of Germanic myths in particular made him the semi-official voice of German nationalism, which in turn paved the way for Hitler.

One of the first great conductors and a superb orchestrator, Wagner raised the orchestra to new importance in opera, giving it a role modeled on Beethoven's symphonies with their motivic development. Leitmotifs (see below) were among the motives he used for this symphonic continuity. The orchestra was no longer used essentially as a support for the singers (which was still the situation, even in Verdi); it was now the orchestra that carried the opera along. Instead of the alternation of recitatives, arias, and ensembles in traditional opera, music drama consisted of one long orchestral web, cunningly woven in with the singing.

Leitmotifs

A **leitmotiv** (líte-moh-teef) —guiding, or leading, motive—is a musical motive associated with some person, thing, idea, or symbol in the drama. By presenting and developing leitmotifs, Wagner's orchestra guides the listener through the story.

Leitmotifs are easy to ridicule when they are used mechanically—when, for example, the orchestra obligingly sounds the Sword motive every time the hero reaches for his weapon. On the other hand, leitmotifs can suggest with



Wagner was God's gift to cartoonists.

“Drama is the most comprehensive work of art; it can only be fully realized when all the other arts in their full realization are present in it.”

Wagner pondering the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, 1850

Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (1859)

Wagner's first completed music drama was the great love story of Tristan and Isolde, taken from medieval legend. There was already a mystical undertone to the legend, which Wagner, writing the opera's libretto, refined under the sway of Romantic thinking.

The composer was only too pleased to find support in the writings of a contemporary philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, who had made his own formulation of the Romantic insight into the central importance of music in emotional life. All human experience, said Schopenhauer, consists either of emotions and drives—which he called “the Will”—or of ideas, morals, and reason, which he downgraded by the term “Appearance.” He insisted that the Will always dominates Appearance, and that our only direct, unencumbered sense of it comes through music.

“Through *my* music!” we can almost hear Wagner exclaiming. And in a music drama, what would exemplify the Will better than the strongest human drive that is known, sexual love?

Tristan and Isolde is not just a great love story, then, but something more. It is a drama that presents love as the dominant force in life, one that transcends every aspect of worldly Appearance. Many love stories hint at such transcendence, perhaps, but Wagner's story makes it explicit, on the basis of an actual philosophy that the composer espoused.

The plot shows step by step the growing power of love, and the music—with its hypnotic orchestral web of leitmotifs and Romantic harmonies of unmatched richness—grows more and more powerful, too. In Act I, love overpowers Isolde's fierce pride, which had previously made her scorn Tristan as her blood enemy, and also Tristan's chivalry, which had demanded that he escort Isolde safely to her marriage to King Mark of Cornwall, his uncle and liege lord. In Act II, love overcomes the marriage, when the pair meet in the longest unconsummated love scene in all of opera. Their tryst is discovered, and Tristan is mortally wounded—but love overcomes the wound, too. In Act III he simply cannot or will not die until Isolde comes to him from over the seas. Isolde comes; Tristan dies in her arms; she sinks down in rapture and expires also. For both of them, death is not a defeat but an ecstatic expression of love.

At this point (if not earlier) the plot passes the bounds of reality—which was exactly what Wagner wanted to show. Tristan and Isolde, hardly characters anymore but stand-ins for the Will, move in a realm where conventional attitudes, the rules of society, and even life and death have lost their powers. Transcendence is a recurring theme of Romanticism; here passion becomes the ultimate experience, beyond reality. Music, which is itself beyond reality, explores the insecure borderland between love, sensuality, and death.

In Act II of Wagner's opera, Isolde signals Tristan that all is clear for their fatal meeting.



considerable subtlety what the hero is thinking or feeling even when he is saying something else—or saying nothing. Wagner also became very skillful in thematic transformation, the characteristic variation-like technique of the Romantic composers (see page 237). By transforming the appropriate motives, he could show a person or an idea developing and changing under the impact of dramatic action.

And since, for the Romantics, music was the undisputed language of emotion, leitmotifs—being music—could state or suggest ideas in *emotional* terms, over and above the intellectual terms provided by mere words. This was Wagner's theory, a logical outcome of Romantic doctrine about music. Furthermore, the complex web of leitmotifs provided his long music dramas with the thematic unity that Romantic composers sought. On both counts, psychological and technical, leitmotifs were guaranteed to impress audiences of the nineteenth century.

“The language of music consists only of *feelings* and *impressions*. It expresses to the utmost the emotions . . . independently of the language of words, which has become a purely rational system of communication.”

Wagner in a public letter to his supporters, 1851

RICHARD WAGNER

The Nibelung's Ring (1848–1874)



18–23

23–28

Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Nibelung's Ring) is a huge music drama in four parts, stretching over four separate nights of three to five hours each. This work, a quarter-century in the making, counts as the supreme example of the Romantic tendency toward the grandiose (see page 235). The *Ring* (as it is commonly called) grew so large because of the sprawling material Wagner wanted to cover, large portions of the most famous of all Germanic or Norse legends. It involves gods and goddesses, giants and dwarfs, magical prophecies and transformations, a dragon, an invisibility cloak that lives on in Harry Potter novels—and, in the midst of it all, very human feelings and actions. The *Ring* counts as one of the towering artworks of all time, comparable to the Taj Mahal, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel (comparisons the megalomaniac Wagner would have enjoyed).

The first night, *Das Rheingold* (The Rhine Gold), shows us events whose consequences will be played out over the following three nights: A precious lump of gold at the bottom of the Rhine River is stolen from its rightful owners, the mermaids of the Rhine, by the dwarf Alberich, and then is taken again from him by the gods. The stolen gold, forged into the ring of Wagner's title by the dwarfs whom Alberich commands, carries with it a curse. It makes all who possess it, even Wotan, the leader of the gods, renounce the love that could save them from its corruption. *Love* is meant here in the broadest sense, to include human compassion in all its forms. Over the following three nights of the *Ring*—*Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie), *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods)—generations pass. We see the gods, humans, and dwarfs—and a giant, transformed into a dragon—brought to grief by their lust for the gold. An innocent hero, Siegfried, is born who can defy the gods and their corrupt order, but even he dies through treachery arising from everyone else's pursuit of the ring.

Wagner employs all this elaborate mythology to tell a simple modern tale. His basic theme is the moral decline of the world, brought about by greed for money and hunger for power. In the guise of Norse gods, gnomes, and warriors, one group after another of nineteenth-century society is shown destroying

“By the mid-sixties *The Lord of the Rings* [by J. R. R. Tolkien] was probably the most influential fantasy story in the Western world, occupying the same position *Star Wars* did in the late seventies and Wagner's *Ring* cycle did toward the end of the nineteenth century.”

Film critic Marion Gostlyn, 1986

itself in the pursuit of gold. Even the renunciation of love entailed in possessing the ring is an allegory, turning the old myth into an indictment of modern bourgeois biases toward work and discipline and away from emotion.

The Valkyrie (1851–56), Act I, scene i *The Valkyrie* is the second of the four nights of the *Ring*. Much of the opera concerns a subplot in Wagner's tale. This story within a story brings together Siegmund and Sieglinde, two of Wotan's numerous children, a brother and sister separated in early childhood. Their irresistible attraction to each other results in an incestuous union (at the end of Act I), doubly illicit since Sieglinde is already married to Hunding. In Act II, Hunding fights a duel with Siegmund. Wotan, for reasons stemming from his fateful involvement with the ring, is powerless to intervene to help his son, and Siegmund is killed—another playing out of the gold's curse. Sieglinde escapes, however, to bear their child: the hero Siegfried, protagonist of the last two nights of the *Ring*.

The first scene of Act I shows us the meeting of Siegmund and Sieglinde. He stumbles into her dwelling, worn to exhaustion by a pack of enemies pursuing him in a raging thunderstorm. The storm is depicted by the orchestral prelude that opens the work; see our own Prelude on pages 4–6 and listen again to this opening. Siegmund collapses on the hearth to the sound of a leitmotiv we quickly come to associate with him, a descending scale that is a transformed version of the theme of the storm. This musical connection shows us that the storm is in Siegmund's soul as much as it is out in the elements.

Sieglinde enters from the back room and is startled to find a stranger unconscious on her floor. As she bends over him, concerned, the violins sound her leitmotiv—it rises up gently and falls back—while cellos underneath continue to play Siegmund's. Wagner's orchestral music has already joined the two characters.

What follows is one of the great portrayals of love at first sight in all of opera. Or nearly at first sight: Siegmund and Sieglinde's attentions are riveted to each other almost from the moment he regains consciousness, but the intensity of their emotional connection grows quickly during this scene.

Storm Motive

Siegmund Motive

A little livelier

CELLOS VIOLINS

General Features Along the way the audience witnesses the primary features of Wagner's revolutionary music drama.

7 The orchestra, carrying the leitmotifs, plays a role far beyond merely accompanying the singers. It depicts for us the characters' thoughts and especially their feelings, even during long stretches when they are not singing. It yields a sense of psychological depth and complexity in the characters—a sense conveyed, in typical Romantic fashion, more by music than by words.

7 The leitmotifs hardly ever appear in exactly the same way twice but instead are transformed slightly for each new appearance. In this way their psychological portrayal shifts along with the drama. This probing, shifting depiction of the characters' feelings is one of the hallmarks of Wagnerian drama.

7 The singers, meanwhile, do not as a rule sing the leitmotifs, and their melodies show none of the tunefulness or lyrical song forms of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Instead they deliver a free-formed declamation of the words, something like recitative, that blossoms forth now and then to approach tunefulness but never gives way to full-fledged aria.

The First Drink As Sieglinde leans over him, Siegmund awakes and cries out for a drink. She hurries outside to fill a drinking horn for him. While she does so the orchestra takes over, building to a miniature climax before falling back;



The images evoked over the years by *The Valkyrie* and Wagner's other operas are wonderfully diverse. Shown here are Wagner's favorite tenor, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, in a typical costume of the day; Sieglinde with a drinking horn for Sigmund by book illustrator Arthur Rackham, from 1910; and a very ordinary Sieglinde and Sigmund from a *Valkyrie* production of 2003.

in its music we still hear Siegmund's and Sieglinde's leitmotifs. Siegmund drinks, and his eyes fix on Sieglinde for the first time. A new melody grows in the orchestra, warmly scored for solo cello and other low strings, and richly harmonized. It is the leitmotiv of their blossoming love:

Now the characters exchange information, for their benefit and the audience's. Sieglinde tells him that she is Hunding's wife; he tells her how he came to her home, and of the relief from his misery she has brought him: "Now the sun smiles on me anew."

The Second Drink At this, Sieglinde spontaneously hurries to her storeroom to fill a horn with honeyed mead for him. This action, parallel to her fetching water earlier, summons from the orchestra an intensified version of its earlier climax. (See the Listen guide, first and second orchestral climaxes.)

The lovers share the mead, their eyes now fixed on each other, and the love motive sounding in the orchestra also wells up—until Siegmund rouses himself with a deep sigh accompanied in the orchestra by a loud dissonant chord. He is ill-fated; misfortune follows wherever he goes (Wagner sets the crucial, repeated word *Misswende* to additional dissonant chords); and he would not for the world bring such misery on her (Love motive)—he must leave. Sieglinde cannot let him go. She stops him in his tracks with an impulsive admission: She is as ill-fated as he!

Communion At Sieglinde's last word a hesitant new, warm melody begins low in the orchestra; we immediately hear it as an affirmation of the deep empathy they already feel for each other. It is played first in sequence—a favorite of Wagner's techniques for developing his leitmotifs. Then, when Siegmund announces he will stay, the orchestra cannot restrain itself; it pours forth a lush, Romantic harmonization of the new melody, the soon-to-be lovers gazing at each other all the while. In the midst of this beautiful passage, other leitmotifs are heard: first Sieglinde's, later the Love motive, and finally Siegmund's drooping scale.

The passage comes to no cadence—another favorite trick of Wagner's—but is cut off by a new, ominous leitmotiv in the low brasses. Hunding has returned, and the second scene begins.

Wagner's drama often moves at an enormous, slow pace, and it has sometimes been criticized for this. (And lampooned, too; there is a Bugs Bunny cartoon that takes on the *Ring*.) In the first scene of *The Valkyrie* we have the sense that searching looks and sighs are stretched out to exaggerated length. Other than Sieglinde's fetching two drinks for Siegmund, there is little stage action. At the same time, however, especially because of his orchestra with its leitmotifs, Wagner manages to pack a lot into the minimal gestures of his characters. By the end of scene i, barely a quarter-hour into the drama, we have been introduced to two protagonists and gained knowledge of their history and a subtle sense of their emotional lives. And, before our eyes and ears, their love has burgeoned.

Sorrow/empathy Motive



“Monday, July 17 First act of *Valkyrie*, Fräulein Scheffsky [Sieglinde] terrible! Herr Niemann [Siegmund] does it well. R. very tired, little demand for seats. Tuesday, July 18 Second act of *Valkyrie*, Fräulein Scheffsky even more horrible; at lunch an excess of ungainliness and gracelessness! Conference over whether to get rid of her.”

From the 2,000-page Diary of Cosima Wagner: rehearsals for the premiere of *The Nibelung's Ring at Bayreuth, 1876*



LISTEN

Wagner, *The Valkyrie*, Act I, scene i

18–23



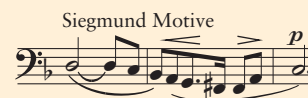
23–28



The inside of a dwelling, built around a huge ash tree in its midst; to the right a hearth, and behind it an inner storeroom. Siegmund, exhausted, enters from outside as the storm subsides.

18
23

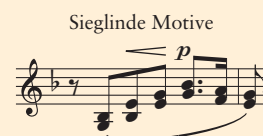
0:00 Siegmund: *Wess' Herd dies auch sei,* Whoever's hearth this may be,
hier muss ich rasten. I must rest here.



He sinks back and lies motionless. Sieglinde enters, thinking her husband has returned; she is surprised to find instead a stranger. Hesitantly she approaches him closer and closer.

1:23

Sieglinde: *Ein fremder Mann?* A stranger here?
Ihn muss ich fragen. I must ask him:
Wer kam ins Haus Who has come into this house
und liegt dort am Herd? and lies on the hearth?
Müde liegt er von Weges Müh'n: He's weary and travel-worn.
schwanden die Sinne ihm? Is he unconscious?
Wäre er siech? Could he be sick?
Noch schwillt ihm der Atem; No, he is still breathing;
das Auge nur schloss er. he's only sleeping.
Mutig dünkt mich der Mann, He seems to me valiant,
sank er müd' auch hin. even though he's exhausted.



Siegmund: *(suddenly raises his head)*
Ein Quell! Ein Quell! A drink! A drink!

Sieglinde: *Erquickung schaff' ich.* I'll bring some water.

19
24

2:08 FIRST ORCHESTRAL CLIMAX

She quickly takes a drinking horn and goes out. She returns with the horn filled and offers it to Siegmund.

Labung biet' ich Moisten your dry lips
dem lechzende Gaumen: with this drink I've brought:
Wasser, wie du gewollt! water, as you wished!

0:51 2:59 *Siegmund drinks and gives the horn back. As he nods his head in thanks, his eyes fix on her face with growing interest.*

1:58 4:06 Siegmund: *Kühlende Labung* The water brings me
gab mir der Quell, cooling relief;
des Müden Last it lightens
machte er leicht; my weary load;
erfrischt ist der Mut my heart is refreshed,
das Aug' erfreut my eyes relish
des Sehens selige Lust. a beautiful, glorious sight.
Wer ist's, der so mir es labt? Who is it who so revives me?

20
25

5:05 Sieglinde: *Dies Haus und dies Weib* This house and this wife
sind Hundings Eigen; belong to Hunding;
gastlich gönn' er dir Rast: he'll welcome you as guest;
harre, bis heim er kehrt! wait here until he returns!

Siegmund: *Waffenlos bin ich:* I am weaponless;
dem wunden Gast a wounded guest will
wird dein Gatte nicht wehren. not threaten your husband.

Sieglinde: *Die Wunden weise mir schnell!* You're wounded? Where?

0:28	5:33	Siegmund:	Gering sind sie, der Rede nicht wert; noch fügen des Leibes Glieder sich fest. Hätten halb so stark wie mein Arm Schild und Speer mir gehalten, nimmer floh ich dem Feind; doch zerschellten mir Speer und Schild. Der Feinde Meute hetzte mich müd', Gewitterbrunst brach meinen Leib; doch schneller, als ich der Meute, schwand die Müdigkeit mir; sank auf die Lider mir Nacht, die Sonne lacht mir nun neu.	It's nothing, pay no heed; my body is still strongly knit. If my shield and spear had been half as strong as my body, I never would have fled my foe. But spear and shield were shattered; the horde of enemies chased me down, the thunderstorm broke body and spirit; but now—faster than I fled my weariness flees from me! Darkness sank on my eyes, but now the sun smiles on me anew!
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21
26

6:24 SECOND ORCHESTRAL CLIMAX

Sieglinde goes to the storeroom and fills a horn with mead; she returns and offers it to Siegmund.

Sieglinde: Des seimigen Metes süssen Trank
mö'gst du mir nicht verschmähn.

Surely you'll not refuse
a sweet drink of honeyed mead.

Siegmund: Schmecktest du mir ihn zu?

Would you not taste it first?

22
27

7:21 LOVE MOTIVES RETURN

Sieglinde drinks from the horn and gives it back. Siegmund takes a long drink, watching her all the while with growing warmth. At 1:12 he sighs deeply and his eyes sink to the ground.

Siegmund: Einen Unseligen labtest du:
Unheil wende der Wunsch von dir!
Gerastet hab' ich und süß geruht:
weiter wend ich den Schritt.

You've helped an unhappy man;
may I keep Ill-fate from you!
I have rested—rested sweetly;
now I must go on my way.

Sieglinde: Wer verfolgt dich,
dass du schon fliehst?

Who follows you,
making you flee?

2:01

9:22 **Siegmund:** Misswende folgt mir,
wohin ich fliehe;
Misswende naht mir,
wo ich mich zeige.
Dir, Frau, doch bleibe sie fern!
Fort wende ich Fuss und Blick.

Ill-fate follows me,
wherever I run;
Ill-fate approaches,
wherever I linger.
You, wife, keep your distance!
I must turn my path from you.

2:33

9:54

He turns to leave. She calls after him impetuously.

23
28

10:10 **Sieglinde:** So bleibe hier!
Nicht bringst du Unheil dahin,
wo Unheil im Hause wohnt!

No, remain here!
Ill-fate is nothing new here,
where Ill-fate makes its home!



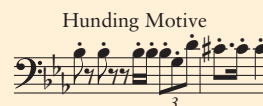
He turns back, looks searchingly at her; she lowers her eyes in sadness and shame.

Siegmund: Wehwalt hiess ich mich selbst:
Hunding will ich erwarten.

I myself named me Wehwalt—
Woebound; I'll wait for Hunding.

EMPATHY MOTIVE DEVELOPED

He rests against the hearth, his eyes fixed on her; she raises her eyes to his, and they regard each other with deep emotion. At 2:16 Sieglinde starts as she hears Hunding outside.



3 Late Romantic Opera

Opera continued to flourish after Wagner and Verdi. The orchestra retained the important role it had achieved, if in different ways, with both of these composers. The Romantic emphasis on strong emotions, alongside powerful music to convey and probe them, continued.

These emotional passages now tended to break down into ever freer and more fragmentary melodic forms, and the distinction between recitative and aria, blurred in Verdi, became even harder to maintain. Wagner's leitmotiv technique was employed in most operas, in one form or another; its dramatic power was acknowledged by composers and audiences alike.

What composers and audiences turned away from, however, was Wagner's mythical, quasi-philosophical ideal for opera. "Music drama" in Wagner's sense gave way to new realistic tendencies. Modern-day subjects were chosen for operas, showing up-to-date middle- or lower-class characters, rather than kings and queens, gods and heroes. A few of Verdi's operas had already pointed in this direction, most notably *La traviata* (see page 265).

Late Romantic realistic operas typically emphasized the sordid and violent aspects of life, as far as the censorship of the day would allow—in this they carried further a tendency we can already glimpse in *Rigoletto*. A famous and masterful example is *Carmen* (1875), by the French composer Georges Bizet. Set in contemporary Spain, it tells the tale of a fiery, sexually irresistible Gypsy woman who works in a cigarette factory and a soldier who falls under her spell. Having abandoned his fiancée and deserted his regiment for her, he loses her to a devil-may-care matador; at the final climax, in a jealous rage, he stabs her to death. All this is very distant from the mythical setting, the minimal action, the lingering gazes, and the psychological probing of *The Valkyrie*.

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

Giacomo Puccini was the main Italian opera composer after Verdi; indeed, he may be said to bring to an end the great tradition of Italian Romantic opera, which had begun a century before. Several operas Puccini composed around 1900 are perennial favorites, thanks to his special gift for short, intense vocal melodies and his canny sense of the stage.

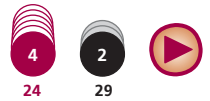
Most of Puccini's operas are touched by the new realistic tendencies in late Romantic opera, but they also tend to distance the audience from what would otherwise be quite harsh dramatic messages. The locales of his operas range from contemporary Japan to the American Wild West, and from Rome in 1800, under Napoleon, to Beijing in the distant past. In these remote, even exotic sites, Puccini found it easier to view realistic stories through a Romantic and sentimental lens.

Capitalizing on Romantic psychological depiction in opera, Puccini specialized in intimate portraits of helpless women in hopeless situations. Such is the actress Tosca, propositioned by the police chief of Rome as the price for her lover's life (*Tosca*); or the poor seamstress Mimi, dying of tuberculosis (*La Bohème*); or the geisha Cho-Cho-San (*Madame Butterfly*), whose plight we take up now.



GIACOMO PUCCINI

Madame Butterfly (1904)

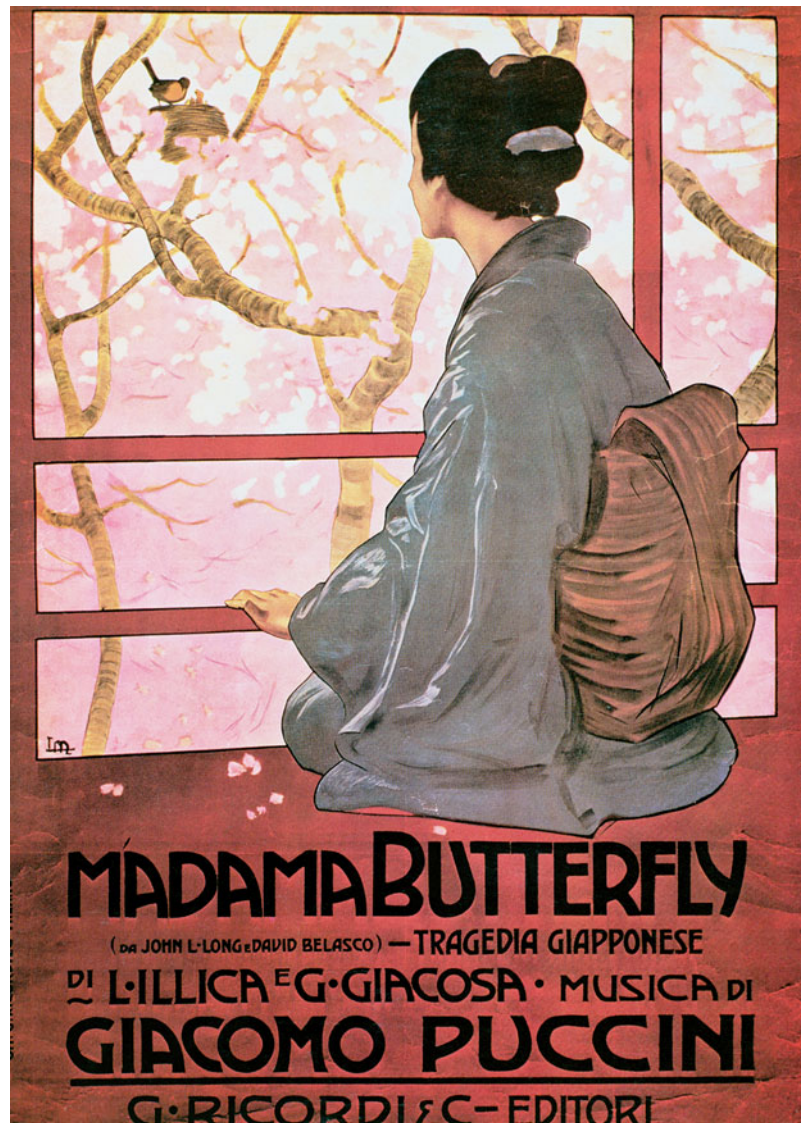


Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, derived from a play by the American author David Belasco, has a disturbingly true-to-life story. In the wake of the opening of Japan to trade with the United States in the 1850s, a cynical young naval officer, Lieutenant Pinkerton, marries a naive fifteen-year-old geisha, Cho-Cho-San, whom he calls "Madame Butterfly." He then sails away with no intention of honoring the Japanese ceremony. Cho-Cho-San persists against all evidence in hoping he will return; but when he eventually does, he brings his "real" American wife with him, and Cho-Cho-San, now mother of Pinkerton's child, kills herself.

"Un bel dì," aria from Act II In response to her maid's doubts, Cho-Cho-San sings the opera's most famous number, "Un bel dì," spinning a fantasy about Pinkerton's return. From the hills (she imagines) they will first see a little wisp of smoke, as the gunboat appears on the horizon. She sings this vision to a memorable melody that has a floating, disembodied quality in keeping with the fantasy it portrays—partly because it begins high in the soprano's range and slowly descends, partly because of its delicate orchestration.

After this melody, the aria takes on a freer formal cast. Cho-Cho-San sings varied music that mixes full-fledged melody (at "Poi la nave bianca . . .") with something closer to a recitative-like declamation (at "Mi metto là sul ciglio . . .").

But when she comes in her fantasy to the moment of remeeting Pinkerton ("Per non morire . . ."), she sings her heart out to a reprise of the aria's opening melody, now louder and with redoubled brass orchestration. It is a stroke of almost unbearable pathos, for it dramatizes the helpless growth of her fantasy. Originally linked to the hope that Pinkerton's ship would return, now the main melody expresses her joy at his return to her—which is sheer delusion. Puccini underscores the pathos when, at Cho-Cho-San's last words, the orchestra takes up the intensified melody once more to end the aria.





LISTEN

Puccini, *Madame Butterfly*, Aria “Un bel dì” from Act II

0:00	Un bel dì, vedremo levarsi un fil di fumo sull'estremo confin del mare; e poi la nave appare.	One beautiful day, we'll see a tiny thread of smoke rise up on the horizon, out at sea; then the ship appears.
0:38	Poi la nave bianca entra nel porto; romba il suo saluto. Vedi? È venuto! Io non gli scendo incontro—io no;	Now the white ship sails into port; cannons roar a welcome; see? He has come! I don't run to meet him—not I;
1:24	mi metto là sul ciglio del colle, e aspetto, e aspetto gran tempo, e non mi pesa la lunga attesa.	I go to the brow of the hill and wait, and wait a long time, but the long wait doesn't bother me.
1:49	E uscito dalla folla cittadina un uomo, un picciol punto, s'avvia per la collina.	Out of the crowd down in the city a man, a tiny speck, sets out up the hill.
2:18	Chi sarà, chi sarà? E come sarà giunto, che dirà, che dirà? Chiamerà: “Butterfly” dalla lontana . . . Io senza dar risposta me ne starò nascosta un po' per celia, e un po'	Who is it? Who is it? And as he comes, what will he say? what will he say? He'll call out: “Butterfly” from afar . . . Without answering I'll hide myself, partly to tease him, and partly
2:56	per non morire al primo incontro! Ed egli alquanto in pena chiamerà, chiamerà: “Piccina mogliettina, Olezza di verbena”— i nomi che mi dava al suo venire.	so as not to die when we first meet! And then he'll be worried and call: “Little child-wife! Verbena blossom!”— the names he gave me when he first came.
3:40	Tutto questo avverrà, te lo prometto! Tienti la tua paura; io con sicura fede l'aspetto!	All this will happen, I promise you! Don't be afraid; I await him knowing he'll come!

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 18 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 19

The Late Romantics

The year 1848 in Europe was a year of failed revolutions in France, Italy, and in various of the German states. Political freedom, which for the Romantics went hand in hand with freedom of personal expression in life and art, seemed further away than ever. While not all the early Romantics lived in free societies, at least by today's standards, freedom was an ideal they could take seriously as a hope for the future. We recall Beethoven's enthusiasm for Napoleon as a revolutionary hero, reflected in the *Eroica* Symphony of 1803, one of the landmarks of nineteenth-century music. In the 1820s, artists and intellectuals thrilled to the personal role of one of them—Lord Byron, a poet—in the struggle for Greek independence. Then they lamented his death near the field of battle.

But the failure of the revolutions of 1848 symbolized the failure of Romantic aspirations. In truth, those aspirations had had little to nourish them since the days of Napoleon. Romanticism lived on, but it lived on as nostalgia.

The year 1848 is also a convenient one to demarcate the history of nineteenth-century music. Some of the greatest early Romantic composers—Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Schumann—died between the years 1847 and 1856. By a remarkable coincidence of history, too, the 1848 revolution transformed the career of Richard Wagner. Exiled from Germany for revolutionary activity, he had no opera house to compose for. Instead he turned inward and—after a long period of philosophical and musical reflection—worked out his revolutionary musical ideas. Wagner's music dramas, written from the 1850s on, came to dominate the imagination of musicians in the second half of the century, much as Beethoven's symphonies had in the first half.

Romanticism and Realism

European literature and art from the 1850s on was marked not by continuing Romanticism, but by realism. The novel, the principal literary genre of the time, grew more realistic from Dickens to Trollope and George Eliot in Britain, and from Balzac to Flaubert and Zola in France. In French painting, there was an important realist school led by Gustave Courbet. Thomas Eakins was a realist painter in America; William Dean Howells was our leading realist novelist. Most important as a stimulus to realism in the visual arts was that powerful new invention, the camera.



Realists in the arts of the nineteenth century tended toward glum or grim subject matter. The Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins was so fascinated by surgery that he painted himself in among the students attending a class by a famous medical professor, Dr. S. D. Gross (*The Gross Clinic*, 1875).

There was a move toward realism in opera at the end of the nineteenth century, as we have seen (page 278). On the other hand, the myth-drenched music dramas of Wagner were as unrealistic as could be. (Wagner thought he was getting at a deeper, psychological realism.) And what would “realism” in orchestral music be like? Given music’s nature, it was perhaps inevitable that late nineteenth-century music came to function as an inspirational and emotional escape—an escape from political, economic, and social situations that were not romantic in the least.

Perhaps, too, music serves a similar function for many listeners of the twenty-first century. Significantly, concert life as we know it today, with its emphasis on great masterpieces of the past, was formed for the first time in the late nineteenth century.

1 Late Romantic Program Music

Late Romantic program music took its impetus from an important series of works called *symphonic poems*, composed in the 1850s by Franz Liszt. A **symphonic poem** is a one-movement orchestral composition with a program, in a free musical form. By using the word *poem*, Liszt insisted on the music's programmatic nature.

It is not often that a great virtuoso pianist such as Liszt, who started out composing études and other miniatures of the kind cultivated by Chopin and Schumann, turns himself into a major composer of large-scale orchestral works. Liszt's formula was simply to write a one-movement piece for orchestra associated in one way or another with a famous poem, play, or narrative. In its single-movement format—unlike a Berlioz program symphony—the symphonic poem is descended from the concert overture as practiced by Mendelssohn (see page 253). But unlike the concert overture, it often is formally free, showing no sign of sonata form. Symphonic poems, so-called or under some other name, became very popular in the later nineteenth century.

Among Liszt's symphonic poems are *Hamlet*, *Orpheus*, *Prometheus*, and *Les Préludes*, the last loosely connected with a poem by the French Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine. But except for *Les Préludes*, these works are heard less often today than other symphonic poems written by composers influenced by Liszt's example. The most popular of later symphonic poems are those by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss (see page 340).

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Overture-Fantasy, *Romeo and Juliet* (1869, revised 1880)



Tchaikovsky wrote several symphonic poems, including one on a subject already used by Liszt and Berlioz, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Rather than *symphonic poem*, he preferred the descriptions *symphonic fantasia* or *overture-fantasy* for these works. They are substantial pieces in one movement, with free forms adopting some features from sonata form, rondo, and so on.

In his *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky followed the outlines of the original play only in a very general way, but one can easily identify his main themes with elements in Shakespeare's drama. The surging, romantic string melody clearly stands for the love of Romeo and Juliet. The angry, agitated theme suggests the vendetta between their families, the Capulets and the Montagues. More generally, it suggests the fate that dooms the two "star-cross'd lovers," as Shakespeare calls them. The hymnlike theme heard at the very beginning of the piece (later it sounds more marchlike) seems to denote the kindly Friar Laurence, who devises a plan to help the lovers that goes fatally wrong.

Slow Introduction The slow introduction of *Romeo and Juliet* is already heavy with drama. As low clarinets and bassoons play the sober Hymn theme, the strings answer with an anguished-sounding passage forecasting an unhappy outcome. The wind instruments utter a series of solemn announcements, interspersed by strumming on the harp, as though someone (Friar Laurence?) was preparing to tell the tale. This sequence of events is repeated, with some variation, and then both the woodwind and string themes are briefly worked up to a climax over a dramatic drum roll.

“The kernel of a new work usually appears suddenly, in the most unexpected fashion . . . All the rest takes care of itself. I could never put into words the joy that seizes me when the main idea has come and when it begins to assume definite shape. You forget everything, you become a madman for all practical purposes, your insides quiver.”

Tchaikovsky writes to Mme. von Meck about his composing, 1878

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)



Tchaikovsky was born in the Russian countryside, the son of a mining inspector, but the family moved to St. Petersburg when he was eight. In nineteenth-century Russia, a serious musical education and career were not accorded the social approval they received in Germany, France, or Italy. Many of the famous Russian composers began in other careers and only turned to music later in life, when driven by inner necessity.

Tchaikovsky was fortunate in this respect, for after working as a government clerk for only a few years, he was able to enter the brand-new St. Petersburg Conservatory, founded by another Russian composer, Anton Rubinstein. At the age of twenty-six he was made a professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Once Tchaikovsky got started, after abandoning the civil service, he composed prolifically—six symphonies, eleven operas, symphonic poems, chamber music, songs, and some of the most famous of all ballet scores: *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*. Listen to a dance from *Nutcracker* on the Companion DVD.

Though his pieces may sometimes sound “Russian” to us, Tchaikovsky was not as devoted a nationalist as some other major Russian composers of the time (see page 288). Perhaps because of this, he had greater international renown than they. Of all the nineteenth-century Russian composers, Tchaikovsky had the most success in concert halls around the world. His famous Piano Concerto No. 1 was premiered in 1875 in Boston, and he toured America as a conductor in 1891.

Tchaikovsky was a depressive personality who more than once attempted suicide. He had been an extremely delicate and hypersensitive child, and as an adult he worried

that his homosexuality would be discovered and exposed. In an attempt to raise himself above suspicion, he married a highly unstable young musician who was in love with him. The marriage was a fiasco; in a matter of weeks, Tchaikovsky fled and never saw his wife again. She died in an asylum.

For many years Tchaikovsky was subsidized by a wealthy, reclusive widow named Nadezhda von Meck. She not only commissioned compositions from him but actually granted him an annuity. By mutual agreement, they never met; nevertheless, they exchanged letters regularly over the thirteen years of their friendship. This strange arrangement was terminated, without explanation, by Madame von Meck.

By this time Tchaikovsky’s position was assured, and his music widely admired. In a tragic mishap, he died after drinking unboiled water during a cholera epidemic.

Chief Works: Symphonies No. 4, 5, and 6 (*Pathétique*); a very popular Violin Concerto and Piano Concerto ■ Operas: *The Queen of Spades* and *Eugene Onegin*, based on works by the Russian Romantic poet Alexander Pushkin ■ Symphonic poems: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Overture 1812* (about Napoleon’s retreat from Russia in that year) ■ Ballet scores: *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*

Encore: After *Romeo and Juliet*, listen to the *Nutcracker* Suite; Symphony No. 4; Violin Concerto.

Allegro The tempo changes to allegro, and we hear the Vendetta or Fate theme. It is made up of a number of short, vigorous rhythmic motives, which Tchaikovsky at once begins to develop. Then the Vendetta theme returns in a climax punctuated by cymbal claps.

The highly romantic Love theme (illustrated on page 231) is first played only in part, by the English horn and violas—a mellow sound. It is halted by a curious but affecting passage built out of a little sighing figure:



After the Love theme dies down at some length, a lively development section begins (a feature suggesting sonata form). Confronted by various motives from the Vendetta theme, the Hymn theme takes on a marchlike character. We may get the impression of a battle between the forces of good and evil.

LISTENING CHART 15

Tchaikovsky, Overture-Fantasy, *Romeo and Juliet*

20 min., 25 sec.



INTRODUCTION (Andante)

- | | | | |
|------|------|----------------|---|
| 25 | 0:00 | Hymn theme | Low woodwinds, <i>pp</i> |
| 2 | 0:35 | String motives | Anguished quality; contrapuntal |
| 26 | 1:28 | Strumming harp | With “announcements” in the high woodwinds |
| 3 | 2:09 | Hymn theme | High woodwinds with pizzicato strings. Followed by the string motives and harp; the “announcements” are now in the strings. |
| 2:00 | 4:08 | Buildup | Ends with drum roll, <i>f</i> |
| 27 | 4:45 | Preparation | Prepares for the main section; <i>p</i> , then <i>crescendo</i> |
| 4 | | | |



MAIN SECTION (Allegro)

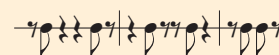
- | | | | |
|------|-------|----------------|---|
| 28 | 5:26 | Vendetta theme | Full orchestra, <i>f</i> |
| 5 | 5:51 | | Development of the Vendetta theme; contrapuntal |
| 0:25 | 6:20 | | Reaches a climax: cymbals |
| 0:54 | 6:33 | Vendetta theme | Full orchestra, <i>ff</i> |
| 1:07 | 6:56 | | Relaxes, in a long slowdown |
| 1:30 | 7:44 | | Prefatory statement of Love theme (English horn): phrase a |
| 2:18 | 8:07 | | “Sighing” theme; muted strings, <i>pp</i> |
| 29 | 8:57 | Love theme | Form is a b a, in woodwinds, with the sighing motive played by the French horn. |
| 6 | | | |
| 30 | 10:05 | | Harp. Cadences; the music dies down and nearly stops. |
| 7 | | | |



DEVELOPMENT

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---------------------------|--|
| 31 | 11:13 | Developmental combination | Vendetta theme fragments are combined with the Hymn theme, which now sounds more like a march than a hymn. |
| 8 | 12:34 | | This works up to a climax, marked by a cymbal crash. |
| 32 | 13:00 | Hymn theme | Played by trumpets; syncopated rhythm in the cymbals |
| 9 | | | |

CYMBALS



FREE RECAPITULATION (abbreviated)

- | | | | |
|------|-------|---------------------------|---|
| 33 | 13:30 | Vendetta theme | Full orchestra, <i>ff</i> |
| 10 | 13:56 | | Sighing theme |
| 0:26 | 14:38 | Love theme | a b a; ecstatically in the strings, with the sighing motive again in the French horn; the last a is <i>ff</i> . |
| 1:08 | 15:47 | | Fragments of the Love theme |
| 34 | 16:18 | (Love theme) | Sounds like another ecstatic statement, but is interrupted |
| 11 | 16:28 | | Interruption by the Vendetta theme: conflict! Cymbals |
| 0:32 | 16:39 | Developmental combination | Vendetta theme fragments combined with the Hymn theme; buildup to <i>fff</i> |
| 0:42 | 17:21 | | Then dies down, rather unwillingly; ends on drum roll, <i>f</i> |
| 0:53 | | | |

CODA (Moderato)

- | | | | |
|------|-------|------------|---|
| 35 | 17:55 | Love theme | A broken version of the Love theme, with muffled funeral drums. The music seems to be ending. |
| 12 | 18:32 | New theme | Woodwinds; ends with a transformation of the sighing motive |
| 36 | 19:31 | Love theme | Section a in a slow cadential “transcendent” version. The strumming harp of the slow introduction has returned. |
| 13 | 20:03 | | Final cadences; a drum roll and solemn ending gestures |
| 0:59 | | | |
| 1:31 | | | |



pp Access Interactive Listening Chart 15 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen



A famous Juliet of Tchaikovsky's time: Mrs. Patrick Campbell in an 1895 London production of Shakespeare's play

The Vendetta theme returns in its original form (suggesting a sonata-form recapitulation). The sighing motive and the lengthy Love theme also return, but the end of the latter is now broken up and interrupted—a clear reference to the tragic outcome of the drama. At one last appearance, the Vendetta theme is joined more explicitly than before with the Hymn theme.

Coda (slow) A fragment of the Love theme appears in a broken version over funeral drum taps in the timpani. This must depict the pathos of Romeo's final speeches, where he refers to his love before taking poison. A new, slow theme in the woodwinds is really a transformation of the sighing motive heard earlier.

But the mood is not entirely gloomy; as the harp strumming is resumed, the storyteller seems to derive solace and inspiration from his tale. Parts of the Love theme return in a beautiful new cadential version, surging enthusiastically upward in a way that is very typical of Tchaikovsky. Doesn't this ecstatic surge suggest that even though Romeo and Juliet are dead, their love is timeless—that their love transcends death? The influence of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (see page 271) was felt here as everywhere in the later nineteenth century.

2 Nationalism

One legacy of Romanticism's passion for freedom played itself out all through the nineteenth century: the struggle for national independence. The Greeks struggled against the Turks, the Poles rose up against Russia, the Czechs revolted against Austria, and Norway broke free of Sweden.

As people all over Europe became more conscious of their national characters, they also came to prize their distinctive artistic heritages more and more. This gave rise to **nationalism** in music. The characteristic feature of this move-

ment is simply the incorporation of national folk music into concert pieces, songs, and operas. Symphonic poems or operas were based on programs or librettos that took up national themes—a hero of history such as Russia's Prince Igor; a national literary treasure such as the Finnish Lemminkäinen legends; even a beloved river such as the Vltava (Moldau) in Bohemia. Such national themes were reinforced by actual musical themes taken from folk song. The result was music that stirred strong emotions at home, and often made an effective ambassador abroad.

Although in the nineteenth century political nationalism was certainly a major factor all over Europe, composers in Germany, Italy, and France are usually not categorized with the musical nationalists, for musical nationalism also strove to make local music independent of Europe's traditional cultural leaders. Nationalist composers often deliberately broke the traditional rules of harmony, form, and so on. They did this both in a spirit of defiance and also in an effort to develop new, genuinely local musical styles.

Exoticism

All this specifying of national styles had another effect: Audiences came to enjoy hearing folk music of *other* nations at concerts and the opera. French composers wrote Spanish music, Russians wrote Italian music, and Czechs

“The art of music is above all other arts the expression of the soul of a nation. The composer must love the tunes of his country and they must become an integral part of him.”

Nationalist composer Ralph Vaughan Williams



Nationalism: For Finland chafing under the rule of Russia, the epic poem *Kalevala* became a nationalist icon, drawn upon again and again by composer Jean Sibelius as well as the Finnish painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela. In our picture, Kullervo, one of the saga's heroes, rides off to war; *Kullervo* by Sibelius is a grandiose symphonic poem.

wrote American music (George Bizet's opera *Carmen*, Tchaikovsky's orchestra piece *Capriccio Italien*, and Antonín Dvořák's famous *New World* Symphony, with its reference to spirituals). Such music cannot be called nationalistic, since its aim was not national self-definition, but it still had the effect of emphasizing the unique qualities of nations. It is usually simply called "exotic." Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (page 279) exemplifies this trend. Puccini even studied a few samples of Japanese music to find the right exotic sound for his opera.

The Russian *Kuchka*

A close group of five Russian nationalist composers were nicknamed (by one of their critic friends) the *kuchka*—sometimes translated as the "Mighty Five," but actually meaning a group or clique. They were an interesting and exceptionally talented group—even though they included only one trained musician, Mily Balakirev (1837–1910). Alexander Borodin (1833–1887) was a distinguished chemist, César Cui (1835–1918) an engineer, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) a navy man, and Modest Musorgsky (1839–1881) an officer in the Russian Imperial Guard.

What held this group together was their determination to make Russian music "Russian," their deep interest in collecting folk song, and their commitment to self-improvement as composers, relatively late in life.

MODEST MUSORGSKY

Pictures at an Exhibition (1874)



The title of this interesting work refers to a memorial exhibit of pictures by a friend of Musorgsky's who had recently died, the Russian painter Viktor Hartmann. Like Musorgsky, Hartmann cared deeply about getting Russian themes into his work. *Pictures at an Exhibition* was originally written for piano solo, as a series of piano miniatures joined in a set, like Robert Schumann's *Carnaval* (page 249). In 1922 the set was orchestrated by the French composer Maurice Ravel, and this is the form in which it is usually heard.

1
30

Promenade [1] To provide some overall thread or unity to a set of ten different musical pieces, Musorgsky hit upon a plan that is as simple and effective as it is ingenious. The first number, "Promenade," does not refer to a picture, but depicts the composer strolling around the picture gallery. The same music returns several times in free variations, to show the promenader's changes of mood as he contemplates Hartmann's varied works.

The promenade theme recalls a Russian folk song:



Ravel orchestrated this forceful theme first for brass instruments, later for woodwinds and strings. Quintuple meter (5/4: measures 1, 3, and 5) is a distinct rarity, and having this meter alternate with 6/4 (measures 2, 4, and 6) rarer

still. The metrical oddity gives the impression of blunt, unsophisticated folk music—and perhaps also of walking back and forth without any particular destination, as one does in a gallery.

- 2 **Gnomus** “Gnomus” is a drawing of a Russian folk-art nutcracker. The gnome’s jaws crack the nut when his legs (the handles) are pulled together; the same grotesque figure, which could frighten a little child, comes to life and dances in Tchaikovsky’s well-known Christmas ballet *The Nutcracker*. Musorgsky writes music that sounds suitably macabre, with a lurching rhythm to illustrate the gnome’s clumsy walk on his handle-legs, and striking dissonant harmonies.

The lurching rhythms and dissonance of “Gnomus” and the 5/4 meter of “Promenade” are among the features of Musorgsky’s music that break with the norms of mainstream European art music, in a self-consciously nationalistic spirit.

- 3 **Promenade [2]** Quieter now, the promenade music suggests that the spectator is musing as he moves along . . . and we can exercise our stroller’s prerogative and skip past a number of Hartmann’s pictures, pictures that are not nationalistic in a Russian sense. Some refer to other peoples, and Musorgsky follows suit, writing music we would call exotic: “Bydlo,” which is the name of a Polish cattle-cart, and “Il Vecchio Castello,” Hartmann’s Italian title for a conventional painting of a medieval castle, complete with a troubadour serenading his lady.



The Great Gate at Kiev, by Viktor Hartmann

- 4 **The Great Gate at Kiev** The last and longest number is also the climactic one. It illustrates—or, rather, spins a fantasy inspired by—a fabulous architectural design by Hartmann that was never executed.

Musorgsky summons up in the imagination a solemn procession with crashing cymbals, clanging bells, and chanting Russian priests. The Promenade theme is now at last incorporated into one of the musical pictures; the promenader himself has become a part of it and joins the parade. In addition, two real Russian melodies appear:



The ending is very grandiose, for grandiosity forms an integral part of the national self-image of Russia—and, unfortunately, of many other nations.

“A nation creates music—the composer only arranges it.”

Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857),
early Russian nationalist
composer

Modest Musorgsky (1839–1881)

Musorgsky (pronounced moo-sorgsky) was the son of a well-to-do landowner. The social class into which he was born dictated that he become an officer in the Russian Imperial Guard. Musorgsky duly went to cadet school and joined a regiment after graduation, but he could not long ignore his deep-seated desire to become a composer.

In the meantime, the emancipation of the serfs and other political and economic changes in Russia caused the liquidation of his family estate. For a time Musorgsky tried to help run the family affairs, but in his twenties he was obliged to work at a clerical job. Meanwhile, he experimented with musical composition, struggling to master the technique of an art that he had come to late in life. It was around this time that he joined the circle of Russian nationalist composers that was dubbed the *kuchka* (the Group; see page 288).

Musorgsky never felt secure in his technique and relied on his skillful *kuchka* friend, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, to criticize his work. But his intense nationalism formed his vision of what he wanted his work to be—truly Russian music. His masterpiece, the opera *Boris Godunov*, is based on the story of the sixteenth-century tsar as told by the great Russian poet Alexander

Pushkin. It hardly had the success it deserved when it was finally revised and performed in St. Petersburg. Indeed, this and other works by Musorgsky only succeeded some time later, after their orchestration had been touched up (some say glamorized) by Rimsky-Korsakov.

Musorgsky led a rather grim life; his was a personality filled with self-doubt, and his instability was a constant concern to his friends. He became an alcoholic early in life. Musorgsky died of alcoholism and epilepsy in an army hospital at the age of forty-two.

Chief Works: Operas: *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshina* ■ Orchestral program compositions: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (originally for piano) and *Night on Bald Mountain* ■ Songs, including the very impressive song cycles *The Nursery* and *Songs and Dances of Death*

Encore: After *Pictures*, listen to *Night on Bald Mountain* and *Boris Godunov*, Coronation Scene (scene ii).



3 Responses to Romanticism

Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* and many works of musical nationalism and exoticism reveal the continuing development of Romantic ideals well after the 1850s. But times were changing, and the new realism of literature and the arts embodied new ideals in keeping with a no-nonsense world increasingly devoted to industrialization and commerce. In the age of Victorian morality, a new work ethic gave short shrift to the heady emotion that the Romantics had insisted on conveying in their art. Romantic music came to seem out of step—or else it was prized exactly because it offered an escape, in the concert hall, to a never-never land with little connection to everyday events.

The work of the two greatest late nineteenth-century German composers can be viewed as two different responses to this situation. Johannes Brahms, though a devoted young friend of Robert Schumann, one of the most Romantic of composers, turned back to the Classicism of the Viennese masters. He saw this as a way of tempering the unbridled emotionalism of Romanticism, which he expressed only in a muted mood of restraint and resignation.

A younger composer, Gustav Mahler, reacted differently. Lament was his mode, rather than resignation; his music expresses an intense, bittersweet nostalgia for a Romanticism that seems to have lost its innocence, even its credibility. The lament for this loss is almost clamorous in Mahler's songs and symphonies.

Other Nationalists

Nationalism enjoyed new life after 1900. Some of the most impressive nationalists were also among the earliest modernists, among them Béla Bartók in Hungary, Charles Ives in the United States, and—most important—Igor Stravinsky in Russia. We examine this new nationalism in Chapters 21 and 22, restricting ourselves here to a listing of the main late Romantic nationalists outside of Russia.

✦ *Bohemia* Bohemia, as the Czech Republic was then called, produced two eminent national composers: Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884), who wrote the symphonic poem *Vltava* (The Moldau) and the delightful folk opera *The Bartered Bride*, and Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), composer of the popular *Slavonic Dances* as well as important symphonies and other large-scale works. Dvořák also spurred nationalist music in a distant land he visited—the United States of America. See page 382.

✦ *Scandinavia* The Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) wrote sets of piano miniatures with titles such as *Norwegian Mountain Tunes*, which were very popular at the time; also a well-known suite of music for *Peer Gynt*, the great drama by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957), a powerful late-Romantic symphonist, produced a series of symphonic poems on the folklore of his native Finland: *The Swan of Tuonela*, *Kullervo*, *Finlandia*, and others.

✦ *Spain* Among Spanish nationalists were Enrique Granados (1867–1916), Joaquín Turina (1882–1949), and Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), best known for his *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* for piano and orchestra. Spain was also a favorite locale for exotic compositions with a Spanish flavor written by Frenchmen—among them Bizet's opera *Carmen* and orchestral pieces by Emmanuel Chabrier (*España*), Claude Debussy (*Ibéria*), and Maurice Ravel (*Boléro*).

✦ *Great Britain* The major English nationalist in music was Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958). His *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* is a loving meditation on a psalm tune that was written by a major composer from Britain's national heritage at the time of Queen Elizabeth I.

Less well known is Irish composer Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), who wrote *Irish Rhapsodies* for orchestra and the opera *Shamus O'Brien*.

The Renewal of Classicism: Brahms

Born in the dour industrial port city of Hamburg, Johannes Brahms gravitated to Vienna, the city of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The move seems symbolic. For Brahms rejected many of the innovations of the early Romantics and went back to Classical genres, forms, and, to some extent, even Classical style.

Brahms devoted his major effort to traditional genres such as string quartets and other chamber music works, symphonies, and concertos. In these works, he found new life in the Classical forms—sonata form, theme and variations, and rondo. The only typical Romantic genre he cultivated was the miniature—the lied and the characteristic piano piece; he never contemplated grandiose works such as philosophical program symphonies or mythological operas. Almost alone among the important composers of his time, he made no special effort to pioneer new harmonies or tone colors.

What impels a great composer—and Brahms *was* a great composer, not a timid traditionalist—to turn back the clock in this way? One can only speculate that he could not find it in himself to copy or continue the enthusiastic, open-ended striving of the early Romantics. In the late nineteenth century, this type of response no longer rang true, and Brahms recognized it.

On the other hand, the nobility and power of Beethoven inspired him with a lifelong model. Seen in this way, Brahms's effort was a heroic one: to temper the new richness and variety of Romantic emotion with the traditional strength and poise of Classicism.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

The son of an orchestral musician in Hamburg, Brahms was given piano lessons at an early age. By the time he was seven, he was studying with one of Hamburg's finest music teachers. A little later he was playing the piano at dockside taverns and writing popular tunes.

A turning point in Brahms's life came at the age of twenty when he met Robert and Clara Schumann. These two eminent musicians befriended and encouraged the young man and took him into their household. Robert wrote an enthusiastic article praising his music. But soon afterward, Schumann was committed to an insane asylum—a time during which Brahms and Clara (who was fourteen years his senior) became very close. In later life Brahms always sent Clara his compositions to get her comments and suggestions.

With another musician friend, Joseph Joachim, who was to become one of the great violinists of his time, the young Brahms signed a foolish manifesto condemning the advanced music of Liszt and Wagner. Thereafter he passed an uneventful bachelor existence, steadily turning out music—chamber music, songs, and piano pieces, but no program music or operas. He was forty-three before his first symphony appeared, many years after its beginnings at his desk; it seemed that he was hesitating to invoke comparison with Beethoven, whose symphonies set a standard for the genre. In fact, this symphony's last movement contains a near-quotation from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony that is more like a challenge. When people pointed out the similarity, Brahms snarled, "Any jackass can see that," implying that it was the differences

between the two works that mattered, not their superficial similarities.

Brahms would eventually write four magnificent symphonies, all harking back to forms used by Beethoven and even Bach, but building a restrained Romantic yearning into their expressive effect.

For a time Brahms conducted a chorus, and he wrote much choral music, including *A German Requiem*, a setting of sober biblical texts in German. As a conductor, he indulged his traditionalism by reviving music of Bach and even earlier composers, but he also enjoyed the popular music of his day. He wrote waltzes (Johann Strauss, the "Waltz King," was a valued friend), folk song arrangements, and the well-known *Hungarian Dances*.

Chief Works: Four symphonies, *Tragic Overture*, and a rather comical *Academic Festival Overture* ■ Violin Concerto, Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, and two piano concertos ■ Much chamber music—including quartets, quintets, and sextets; a trio for French horn, violin, and piano; a beautiful quintet for clarinet and strings ■ Piano music and many songs ■ Choral music, including *A German Requiem* and *Alto Rhapsody* ■ Waltzes, *Hungarian Dances*

Encore: After the Violin Concerto, listen to the Clarinet Quintet; Symphony No. 3.



JOHANNES BRAHMS

Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77 (1878)

Concertos are always written to show off great virtuosos—who are often the composers themselves, as with Mozart, Chopin, and Liszt. Brahms wrote his one violin concerto for a close friend, Joseph Joachim, a leading violinist of the time and also a composer. Even this late in life—Brahms was then forty-five—he accepted advice about certain details of the composition from Joachim, and Joachim wrote the soloist's cadenza for the first movement.

We can appreciate Brahms's traditionalism as far as the Classical forms are concerned by referring to the standard movement plan for the Classical concerto, on page 189. Like Mozart, Brahms wrote his first movement in double-exposition sonata form; this must have seemed extremely stuffy to writers of Romantic concertos who had developed new and much freer forms. Also, Brahms's last movement is a rondo—much the most common Classical way to end a concerto. If it is a relatively simple movement, by Brahms's standards, that is because the last movements of Classical concertos were typically the lightest and least demanding on the listener.



37–42

Third Movement (Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace) *Giocoso* means “jolly”; the first theme in this rondo, A, has a lilt recalling the spirited gypsy fiddling that was popular in nineteenth-century Vienna. Imitating gypsy music in this work and others counts as an exotic feature in Brahms’s music (see page 287).

The solo violin plays the theme (and much else in the movement) in *double stops*, that is, in chords produced by bowing two violin strings simultaneously. Hard to do well, this makes a brilliant effect when done by a virtuoso.

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace
a SOLO VIOLIN, then ORCHESTRA

The theme falls into a traditional a a b a' form; in Brahms's hands, however, this becomes something quite subtle. Since the second a is identical to the first, except in instrumentation, the last a (a') might be dull unless it were varied in an interesting way. Brahms manages to extend it and tighten it up at the same time, by compressing the main rhythmic figure in quicker and quicker repetitions:

a' ORCHESTRA

These seem for a moment to disrupt or contradict the prevailing meter, a characteristic fingerprint of Brahms's style. There are other examples in this movement.

The first rondo episode, B, a theme with a fine Romantic sweep about it, begins with an emphatic upward scale played by the solo violin (high double stops in octaves). This is answered by a *downward* scale in the orchestra in a lower range. When the orchestra has its turn to play B, timpani are added; the upward scale is transferred down to the low register, and the downward scale up to the high register.

The second rondo episode, C, involves another shift of meter; this charming melody—which, however, soon evaporates—is in 3/4 time:

VIOLIN

The coda presents a version of the a phrase of the main theme in 6/8 time, in a swinging march tempo. Again the timpani are prominent. Most of the transitions in this movement are rapid virtuoso scale passages by the soloist, who is also given two short cadenzas prior to the coda.

Brahms was a serious man; this is one of the few pictures of him smiling, with friends at a favorite Viennese tavern.





LISTENING CHART 16

Brahms, Violin Concerto, third movement

Rondo. 7 min., 43 sec.



- 37** 0:00 **A (Tune)** The entire tune is presented.
 0:00 **a** Solo violin, with double stops
 0:11 **a** Orchestra
 0:22 **b** Solo violin
 0:35 **a'** Orchestra
 0:46 The solo violin begins the cadences ending the tune, which lead into a transition.
 1:04 Fast scales prepare for B.
- 38** 1:14 **B (Episode 1)** Melody (emphatic upward scale) in the violin, with inverted motive below it, in the orchestra
 0:20 1:34 Melody in the orchestra, with inverted motive above it
 0:35 1:49 Cadential passage (orchestra), *f*
- 39** 2:00 **A'**
 2:00 **a** Solo
 0:11 2:11 **a''** Orchestra
 0:20 2:20 Transition (orchestra and solo), *p*
- 40** 2:38 **C (Episode 2)** Lyrical tune (solo and orchestra), *p*
 0:33 3:11 Expressive climactic section, solo
 0:44 3:22 Orchestra interrupts, *f*.
 0:49 3:27 Scales prepare for B.
- 0:57 3:35 **B**
- 41** 4:22 **A'** Starts with *b'* (solo)
 0:20 4:43 **a'''** In orchestra, extended; the real feeling of "return" comes only at this point.
 0:46 5:08 **Short cadenza** Solo, double stops again; orchestra soon enters.
 1:02 5:25 Solo trills and scales; motive 
 1:31 5:54 Passage of preparation: motive  in low French horns
- 42** 6:09 **Short cadenza**
- 0:11 6:20 **Coda** Mostly in 6/8 time. Starts with a marchlike transformation of phrase a (solo), over a drum beat
 0:35 6:44 References to B
 1:07 7:16 Final-sounding cadences
 1:20 7:29 The music dies down and ends with three loud chords.



From Brahms's score of his Violin Concerto



Violinist Joseph Joachim, for whom Brahms wrote his Violin Concerto, playing with another Brahms friend, Clara Schumann (see page 247)

Romantic Nostalgia: Mahler

If, like Brahms, Gustav Mahler felt ambivalent about the Romantic tradition, he expressed this ambivalence very differently. He eagerly embraced all the excesses of Romanticism that Brahms had shrunk from, writing huge program symphonies (though he vacillated on the question of distributing the programs to his audiences) and symphonies with solo and choral singing. Mahler thought of the symphony as a mode of expression universal and encompassing—“like a world” in itself, as he once put it. This connects him clearly enough to the most visionary of earlier Romantics. Again and again his works set out to encode seemingly profound metaphysical or spiritual messages.

Yet Mahler felt unable to enter freely into this Romantic world. There is an uneasy quality to his music that sets it apart from other late Romantic music. For while we may feel that the emotion expressed in Tchaikovsky’s music, for example, is exaggerated, we do not feel that Tchaikovsky himself thought so. Mahler’s exaggeration seems deliberate and self-conscious.

Exaggeration spills over into another characteristic feature, distortion. Mahler tends to make more or less slight distortions of melody, motive, and harmony. Sometimes these distortions put a uniquely bittersweet touch on the musical material; sometimes they amount to all-out parody. The parody does not seem harsh, however, but affectionate, nostalgic, and ultimately melancholy. Distortion for Mahler was a way of acknowledging his inability—and the inability of his generation—to recapture the lost freshness of Romantic music.

To give an example: The slow movement of his Symphony No. 1 quotes the cheerful children’s round, “Frère Jacques,” strangely distorted so as to sound like a funeral march. Mahler explained that this march was inspired by a well-known nursery picture of the time, *The Huntsman’s Funeral Procession*, showing forest animals shedding crocodile tears around the casket of a hunter (see page 298). But an innocent children’s song was not distorted in this way in order to mock childhood or childish things. If anything, Mahler used it to lament his own lost innocence, and that of his time.

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

Mahler's early life was not happy. Born in Bohemia to an abusive father, he lost five of his brothers and sisters to diphtheria, and others ended their lives in suicide or mental illness. The family lived near a military barracks, and the many marches incorporated into Mahler's music—often distorted marches—have been traced to his childhood recollections of parade music.

After studying for a time at the Vienna Conservatory, Mahler began a rising career as a conductor. His uncompromising standards and his authoritarian attitude toward the orchestra musicians led to frequent disputes with the authorities. What is more, Mahler was Jewish, and Vienna at that time was rife with anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, he was acknowledged as one of the great conductors of his day and also as a very effective musical administrator. After positions at Prague, Budapest, Hamburg, and elsewhere, he came to head such organizations as the Vienna Opera and the New York Philharmonic.

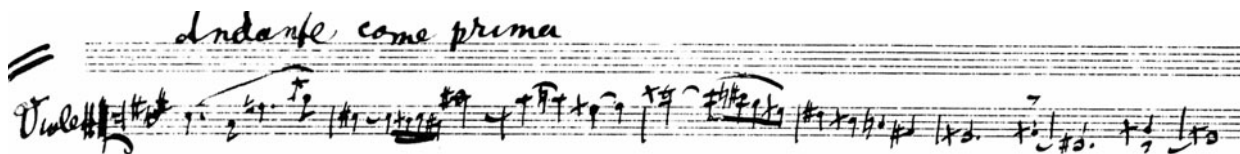
It was only in the summers that Mahler had time to compose, so it is not surprising that he produced fewer pieces (though they are very long pieces) than any other important composer. Ten symphonies, the last of them unfinished, and six song cycles for voice and orchestra are almost all he wrote. The song cycle *The Song of the Earth* of 1910, based on translated Chinese poems, is often called Mahler's greatest masterpiece.

Mahler's wife was a famous Viennese beauty, Alma Schindler. By a tragic irony, shortly after he wrote his grim orchestral song cycle *Songs of the Death of Children*, his and Alma's youngest daughter died of scarlet fever. Alma's second marriage was to the great modernist architect Walter Gropius and her third to the novelist Franz Werfel; she wrote unreliable memoirs, had affairs with other famous men, and ended up among the smart set, first in Los Angeles and then in New Jersey.

Mahler's life was clouded by psychological turmoil, and he once consulted his famous Viennese contemporary, Sigmund Freud. His disputes with the New York Philharmonic directors, which discouraged him profoundly, may have contributed to his early death.

Chief Works: Ten lengthy symphonies, several with chorus, of which the best known are the First, Fourth, and Fifth ■ Orchestral song cycles: *The Song of the Earth*, *Songs of a Wayfarer*, *The Youth's Magic Horn* (for piano or orchestra), *Songs on the Death of Children*

Encore: After Symphony No. 1, listen to the Adagietto from Symphony No. 5; *Songs of a Wayfarer*.



From the score Mahler was working on at his death—the unfinished Symphony No. 10

GUSTAV MAHLER Symphony No. 1 (1888)

5
5–12

2
32–39



Mahler's first symphony went through as complicated a process of genesis as any major work of music. It started out as a symphonic poem in one movement, grew to a five-movement symphony, and was finally revised into four movements. As is also true of several of his other symphonies, Symphony No. 1 includes fragments from a number of earlier songs by Mahler, songs about lost love. The program that Mahler once published for the whole symphony, but then withdrew, concerns the disillusion and distress of disappointed love, with the hero pulling himself together again in the finale.

An important general feature of Mahler's style is a special kind of counterpoint closely tied up with his very individual style of orchestration. He picks instruments out of the orchestra to play momentary solos, which are heard in counterpoint with other lines played by other "solo" instruments. The changing combinations can create a fascinating kaleidoscopic effect, for the various



Mahler's Symphony No. 8, called "Symphony of a Thousand," represents a peak in the nineteenth-century tradition of grandiose compositions (see page 235). One early performance (in Philadelphia) did indeed use 1,069 orchestral players, chorus singers, and soloists.

bright strands are not made to blend, as in most Romantic orchestration, but rather to stand out in sharp contrast to one another.

Third Movement (Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen—"With a solemn, measured gait; do not drag") This ironic funeral march is also a personal lament, for its trio is taken from an earlier song by Mahler about lost love. (Though the musical form of the movement is quite original, it is based on march and trio form, analogous to the Classical minuet and trio.)

Section 1 Mahler had the extraordinary idea of making his parody funeral march out of the French round "Frère Jacques," as we have said. He distorts the familiar tune by playing it in the minor mode at a slow tempo:

TIMPANI

BASS (solo, muted)

pp

(Timpani continue)

A musical score snippet for the beginning of the Third Movement. It features two staves. The top staff is for the Timpani, showing a series of dotted notes in a 4/4 time signature, starting with a piano (pp) dynamic. The bottom staff is for the Bass (solo, muted), showing a melodic line in a minor key, also in 4/4 time. The notation includes various note values and rests, with a 'pp' dynamic marking at the start of the bass line.

Mahler conducting

The mournful, monotonous drumbeat that accompanies the march is derived from the ending of the tune. (Note that Mahler slightly changed that ending of "Frère Jacques" as he transformed it into his march—he wanted only so much monotony.)

The slow march itself is played first by a single muted double bass playing in its high register—a bizarre, deliberately clumsy sonority. An additional figure that Mahler appends to his version of "Frère Jacques," played by the oboe, fits so naturally that we almost accept it as part of the traditional tune. The music dies out on the drumbeat figure (played by the harp), then on a single repeated note.



The Huntsman's Funeral Procession, inspiration for the slow movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 1

Section 2 This section is a study in frustration, as fragmentary dance-music phrases that sound distorted, parodistic, and even vulgar give way to equally fragmentary recollections of the funeral march. One dance starts up in band instruments, with a faster beat provided by pizzicato strings; notice the exaggerated way in which its opening upbeat is slowed down. It is cut short by a new dance phrase—louder, more vulgar yet, scored with bass drum and cymbals. “With Parody,” Mahler wrote on the score at this point:

a: OBOES
Slow . . . in tempo

b: E♭ CLARINETS

This phrase, too, is cut short, and a varied repetition of the material introduced so far does not proceed much further. Instead, a long, grieving cadential passage is heard over the funeral-march drumbeat. Other fragments of “Frère Jacques” are recalled. Mourning gives way to utter exhaustion.

Section 3 A note of consolation is sounded by this contrasting “trio,” which begins with warm major-mode sounds and a triplet accompaniment on the harp. (The funeral-march beat dissolves into a faster but gentler throb.) The melody introduced is the one that belonged originally to a nostalgic song about lost love. Played first by muted strings, then the oboe and solo violins, the song melody soon turns bittersweet.

The rhythm is halted by quiet but dramatic gong strokes. Flutes play a few strangely momentous new phrases, also taken from the song.

Section 4 The final section combines elements from both sections 1 and 2. Soon after the “Frère Jacques” round commences, in a strange key, a new counterpoint joins it in the trumpets—another parodistic, almost whining sound:

TRUMPETS

One of the dance phrases from section 2 interrupts, picking up the tempo; and when “Frère Jacques” and the trumpet tune return, the tempo picks up even more for a wild moment of near chaos. But the mourning passage that ended section 2 returns, with its constant somber drumbeat. The movement ends after another series of gong strokes.

LISTENING CHART 17

Mahler, Symphony No. 1, third movement, Funeral March

10 min., 20 sec.



SECTION 1

5
32

- 0:00 **Funeral March** Drum beat, then four main entries of the round “Frère Jacques” (minor mode), which is the march theme
- 0:07 Entry 1: Double bass, muted
- 0:28 Entry 2: Bassoon (a subsidiary entry follows: cellos)
- 0:48 Entry 3: Tuba
- 1:02 (“Additional” fragment: oboe)
- 1:15 Entry 4: Flute in low register
- 1:35 (“Additional” fragment). The march gradually dies away; the drumbeat finally stops.



OBOE



SECTION 2

6
33

- 2:09 **Dance-Band Phrases** a Oboes, *p*, repeated (trumpets in counterpoint); pizzicato string beat
- 2:39 b Faster, *mf*; high (E-flat) clarinets, bass drum, and cymbals
- 2:53 a Strings, with varied repeat (trumpets in counterpoint)
- 3:24 b' With new continuation
- 3:42 **Conclusion** Descending cadential passage, a little slower, based on a
- 4:12 **Return to Funeral-March Motives** The funeral-march drumbeat, which entered during the previous passage, continues in the background. The march dies away; the drumbeat almost stops.



SECTION 3

2:00

- 4:53 **Trio (Song)** The rhythm gradually picks up: a gentle triplet accompaniment with a throbbing background

8
35

- 5:09 A songlike melody starts in muted strings, then moves to the flute, two solo violins, clarinet, and oboe.



1:16

- 6:25 The trio dies away (violins).

9
36

- 6:43 Gong strokes

0:07

- 6:50 Flutes play two new phrases, as though waiting.

SECTION 4

10
37

- 7:02 **March** Drumbeat, faster, in a new key: march (“Frère Jacques”)
- 7:18 (“Additional” fragment: E-flat clarinet, strings, flute)

11
38

- 7:36 March theme with new, parodistic counterpoint: trumpets

0:23

- 8:00 Dance-band phrase b: clarinets, cymbals, drums

12
39

- 8:17 March theme with new trumpet counterpoint; new sudden speedup: clarinets, *ff*

0:19

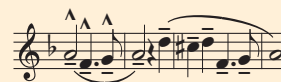
- 8:37 **Conclusion** Descending cadential passage, based on a, with drumbeat as in section 2; slower

1:21

- 9:38 (“Additional” fragment, in low range: bassoon)

1:35

- 9:53 The music dies down; gong strokes



► Access Interactive Listening
Chart 17 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

Global Perspectives 5

Musical Drama Worldwide

We saw earlier (page 62) that most religious traditions make substantial use of singing of one sort or another. Likewise, most traditions of drama worldwide do not consist of plain speech and little else, but instead incorporate chanting, singing, instrumental music, and dance. In this way they resemble the European opera we have studied and other kinds of Western drama, from ancient Greek tragedy and comedy to today's mega-musicals on Broadway.

Perhaps, in fact, this connection of music and drama is related at a very deep level to the connection of singing and religion. Just as the heightening of prayer in song seems to give reader access to invisible divinity, so music seems somehow compatible with the illusory, real-and-yet-unreal enactment of actions and events onstage.

Whatever the reason, from the ancient beginnings of drama down to the present day, music has been joined with acting more often than not.

Japanese Drama

Asia has developed particularly rich traditions of musical drama. These include the shadow plays of Indonesia,

accompanied by gamelan music and relating stories from lengthy epic poems by means of the shadows of puppets cast on a screen (see page 204). In India, religious dance-dramas reach back hundreds of years. Today the main form of musical drama is on screen: Movie musicals are the staple of the huge and lucrative Indian film industry. China, meanwhile, offers hundreds of regional styles of music theater, the most famous of which, Beijing (or Peking) opera, we will study on page 302.

In Japan, the main traditions of musical drama are these:

✶ **Noh** dramas emerged in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and were particularly prized in the elite shogun and samurai culture of the time. Noh dramas are steeped in Zen Buddhist philosophy. Their stage action consists of highly restrained, stylized, and symbolic gestures and movements. They involve singing (both by the actors and a chorus), dance, and complex, carefully predetermined instrumental accompaniment by a strictly limited ensemble: three percussion players and a flutist.



Inside a kabuki theater, c. 1745

🎭 **Bunraku** (bóon-ráh-koo) is a puppet theater, like the Indonesian shadow plays, but instead of casting shadows on a screen, large puppets are skillfully manipulated on-stage, each by three puppeteers. Meanwhile one singer provides narration and the different voices for each of the puppets. He is accompanied by a single three-stringed Japanese lute called *shamisen* (sháh-mee-sen).

🎭 **Kabuki** (kah-bóo-kee) theater arose in the seventeenth century and adopted features from both *noh* and *bunraku*. Kabuki played to an audience different from the samurai class that prized *noh*. It used more modern stories and appealed to a new public made up of members of the urban merchant class that was emerging in Japan at this time. In a strikingly similar way, Baroque opera in Europe evolved from its aristocratic origins to become a cherished entertainment of new, upper-middle-class audiences (see page 88).

Performing Kabuki Theater Kabuki was first performed by women and young boys, but before long both of these types of performance were banned because of their associations with prostitution. From then until recently, only men sang kabuki. Female roles were played by special female impersonators.

The musical forces in kabuki are particularly complex. In addition to the singing actors, they can involve three other musical groups. Onstage, the main group sits behind the actors and accompanies their dialogue and dances. This group consists of a chorus, a number of *shamisen* players, and the three percussionists and flute player of the *noh* orchestra.

A second orchestra is hidden in a room to the left of the stage. Its makeup is variable, and it performs many functions. It can create musical sound effects, provide appropriate mood music and musical interludes, accompany certain onstage actions, and even suggest unspoken thoughts of the actors onstage.

Finally, the singer-narrator and *shamisen* player of *bunraku* may also be present. They sit to the right of the stage.



Kabuki. Behind the elaborately costumed actors are the stage musicians: the four *noh* players (lower row) and the chorus and *shamisen* players (upper row).


Nagauta Music from Dojoji





The most famous genre of music involved in kabuki is the **nagauta** (náh-gah-óo-ta), or “long song,” which usually accompanies dance. It is an extended piece for a singer (or singers in unison) and the onstage orchestra of *shamisen*, percussion, and flute. Sometimes the offstage orchestra takes part too.

We hear part of a *nagauta* from the kabuki play *Dojoji*. The singer and *shamisen* carry the main melody in a free and complex heterophony (see page 202)—you will hear the voice lagging behind or running ahead of the same pitches played by the *shamisen*. The flute contributes either its own version of the main melody or, in the most striking fashion, an independent melody in the style of *noh* music that is often not even in the same tonality as the main melody.

Meanwhile the drummers play either rhythmic patterns synchronized with the *shamisen* and voice or independent, out-of-sync patterns, derived from *noh* music.

**LISTEN**

Nagauta Music from the Kabuki Play *Dojoji*

0:00	Part 1	Instrumental: <i>shamisen</i> play the main melody, accompanied by drums and a bell-like gong. Flute plays an independent melody. Exclamations by percussionists can also be heard.
0:55	Part 2	Main melody in heterophony (singer, <i>shamisen</i> , flute), supported by percussion
1:56	Part 3	Singer pauses; main melody in <i>shamisen</i> and flute
2:12	Part 4	Main melody (singer, <i>shamisen</i>); flute plays independent melody.
3:07	Part 5	Free heterophony for singer and <i>shamisen</i> alone

Chinese Opera

What we know as Beijing opera, the most famous variety of Chinese musical drama, is in China called *jingju* (chéng-chu), meaning “theater of the capital.”

It is a rich amalgam of song, spoken dialogue, instrumental music, dance, elaborate costume, and martial arts.

Beijing opera is a relatively recent product of a long, complex history. Some of its stylistic features were introduced to the capital by provincial theater troupes at the end of the eighteenth century, while others developed through much of the nineteenth. Only by the late 1800s did Beijing opera assume the form we know today, and even that form has more recently undergone striking changes, especially during the Communist period of the last sixty years.

Voice Types in Beijing Opera In European opera, different voice types have been habitually associated with specific character types. In Romantic opera, tenors usually play young, vital, and amorous characters (for example, the Duke in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*), and sopranos play their female counterparts (Gilda). Low male voices, baritone and bass, can variously have comic, evil, or fatherly associations (*Rigoletto*).

Such conventional connections of voice and character type are highly developed in Beijing opera, too—but the voice types are different. Young men of romantic, dreamy inclination sing in a high register and usually in falsetto. Older, bearded men, trusted and loyal advisors of one sort or another, sing in the high baritone range. Warriors sing with a forced, throaty voice;



in addition they must be skilled acrobats in order to enact lively, athletic battle scenes.

Two other special male roles are the male comic, who speaks more than he sings, and the *jing* or face-painted role, who may be a warrior, a dashing bandit, or even a god. His face is painted more elaborately than those of the other actors, with patterns whose colors symbolically reveal much about his character. The *jing* sings in a loud, hoarse manner that takes years to master.

The female roles in Beijing opera were, until the Communist era, almost always sung by male impersonators. They include a mature, virtuous woman, sung in a refined, delicate falsetto (when women sing these roles today, they imitate that male falsetto). A younger woman, lively and flirtatious, is sung in a suggestive, innuendo-laden falsetto. There is also an acrobatic female warrior.

The Orchestra The small orchestra of Beijing opera consists of a group of drums, gongs, and cymbals, a few wind instruments, and a group of bowed and plucked stringed instruments. These are all played by a handful of versatile musicians who switch from one instrument to another during the performance.

The percussion group is associated especially with martial music, accompanying battle scenes. But it also fulfills many other roles: It can introduce scenes, provide special sound effects, use conventional drum patterns to announce the entrances and social status of different characters, and play along with the frequent songs. The most important function of the stringed instruments is to introduce and accompany the songs.

Beijing Opera Songs In a way that is somewhat akin to the Western contrast of recitative and aria, Beijing opera shows a wide range of vocal styles, from full-fledged song through more declamatory song to stylized speech and even, for comic and minor characters, everyday speech. In general, the songs of Beijing opera are, like the arias of Italian opera, the musical heart of the drama, marked off from the other singing around them by their lyrical style. The songs suggest the feelings and internal psychological states of their singers.

The Prince Who Changed into a Cat



Our recording presents the beginning of a scene from *The Prince Who Changed into a Cat*, one of the most famous of Beijing operas. The story concerns an Empress who is banished from Beijing through the machinations of one of the Emperor’s other wives. (Her newborn son,



Beijing opera: a female character and a *jing*



A Beijing opera orchestra: The player in front holds the banjo-like *yueqin*; behind him are an *erhu* player and, standing, percussion players.

the prince of the title, is stolen from his cradle and replaced by a cat.) The present scene takes place many years later, when a wise and just Prime Minister meets the Empress and determines to restore her to her rightful position.

First the percussion plays, and then stringed instruments, along with a wooden clapper, introduce an aria sung by the Prime Minister (0:25). There are only three stringed instruments: a high-pitched, two-string fiddle played with a bow called a *jinghu* (chéng-hoo), a similar but lower-pitched fiddle called *erhu* (ár-hoo),

and a plucked lute called *yueqin* (yuéh-chin). All three play the same melody, the *erhu* doubling the *jinghu* an octave below while the *yueqin* adds characteristic repeated notes created by the quick, banjo-like strumming of a string.

Finally, the singer enters (0:41). He sings the same melody as the stringed instruments, though he pauses frequently while they continue uninterrupted. This heterophonic texture is typical of Beijing opera arias. The Prime Minister is a bearded old-man role and sings in the appropriate high baritone range.

UNIT V

The Twentieth Century and Beyond

This unit, which deals with music from around 1900 on, brings our survey up to the present. Looking back to the year 1900, we can recognize today's society in an early form. Large cities, industrialization, inoculation against disease, advertising, processed food, the first automobiles, telephones, movies, and phonographs—all were in place by the early years of the twentieth century.

Hence many of the phenomena treated in this unit will strike us as fairly familiar, compared to those of earlier centuries. For one thing, the wide availability of art to mass audiences—not just to the various select groups, as in the past—is something we take for granted. The new mass audience emerged because of sociological factors, as mobility between social classes became easier and more common, along with technological factors—the amazing developments of the phonograph, radio, television, and the Internet. We also take for granted the split that has occurred between classical music and popular music. A rift that had widened in the nineteenth century became a prime factor of musical life in the twentieth.

We are also aware of the force of American popular music, whose characteristic features emerged, once again, around the year 1900. With the evolution of ragtime and early jazz, a vital rhythmic strain derived from African American sources was brought into the general American consciousness. This led to a long series of developments: swing, bebop, rhythm and blues, rock, rap. After World War II, when the United States began to play a commanding political role in the world at large, our popular music became a world language.

Looking Forward and Looking Back

What happened to classical music in this same period? It experienced its own split. On the one hand, there was music that we call “modernist,” on the other hand, music of a more traditional nature.

The term modernist requires a word of explanation. It is not the same as modern or contemporary, terms that refer to anything at all that happens to take place in the present; the -ist at the end of the word modern gives it an extra twist. The modernists of 1900 were artists and intellectuals who insisted on a particular kind of modernity: anti-traditionalism. They formed a specific movement marked by radical experimentation. Though its roots go

back earlier, this movement first peaked during the years 1890 through 1918—a period of breakthrough works by such figures as novelists Marcel Proust and James Joyce, poets Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, and painters Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

The chief composers associated with the modernist movement in this early phase were Claude Debussy, Arnold Schoenberg, and Igor Stravinsky. Sometimes they are referred to as members of the “avant-garde.” Avant-garde—meaning “vanguard”—was originally a military term, but it has long been embraced by radical artists and intellectuals to denote the forefront of their activity. Later, about 1950, a second phase of musical modernism set in, involving a new generation of avant-garde composers.

Some twentieth-century artists and composers resisted modernism from the start, and others, after experimenting with modernism, turned back from it. They found they could comfortably continue in the general spirit of late Romanticism, or even look back to earlier styles. Though the avant-gardists often claimed that the old principles of art had been “used up,” there was still plenty of potential left in more traditional forms and styles.

Through the twentieth century, phases of assertive modernism alternated with reactions of a more traditional nature. The heady avant-garde experiments of 1900–1920 gave way to a period of consolidation in the 1920s and 1930s; the new wave of modernism after 1950 turned, in the last decades of the century, to a reaction sometimes called Neoromanticism. In this unit we study the music of modernism and also the reaction against modernism. Our final chapter deals with America’s characteristic music, jazz and rock.

CHAPTER 20

Prelude Music and Modernism

The period from about 1890 to 1940 saw profound changes in European and American societies and the art they created. These changes were outgrowths of trends whose beginnings we traced in Chapter 19—trends such as the collapse of Romantic political aspirations in 1848, accelerating industrialization, and increasingly pronounced nationalism. They came to a climax in the first half of the new century, with the cataclysms of World War I (1914–18) and World War II (1939–45).

The artists of this period responded in ways generally familiar also from the nineteenth century. Some pushed forward with ever bolder expression and technique (think of Wagner). Others searched for new vitality in modes of expression that by now seemed traditional (think of Brahms).

The first of these groups, the modernists, riveted the attention of the artistic world in the period leading up to World War I because of the excitement (many thought scandal) generated by their experimentation and innovation. We take up these innovations in this Prelude and the following Chapter 21. The second, more traditional group came into its own especially in the period between the world wars as a kind of response to the challenges and difficulties of modernism. We consider a sampling of these composers in Chapter 22.

1 Progress and Uncertainty

Industrialization is one of two overriding historical facts of the nineteenth century. The other one, the emergence of the modern nation-state, we spoke of earlier; see pages 286–88. Ever since the first so-called age of science in the seventeenth century, technological discoveries had come faster and faster, and industry was transformed. The harnessing of steam power in the eighteenth century was matched by the capturing of electricity in the nineteenth. Europe and America were crisscrossed with railroads, built for the benefit of industry and commerce. By the early twentieth century, automobile and air travel were in their early stages of development, as were telephones, movies, and sound recordings.

What had been essentially rural societies, controlled by stable aristocracies, turned into modern nations, dominated by urban centers and run by self-made entrepreneurs. These changes occurred at breakneck speed, as people saw at the time. Yet no one could have forecast how the stresses caused by such social

changes would lead on the one hand to the disturbing artistic-intellectual movement known as modernism, and on the other to the catastrophe of World War I.

For at the heart of nineteenth-century culture was a sense of confidence in progress. Progress in science and technology, it was thought, would be matched in due time by progress in human affairs. And although anyone could see evidence to the contrary—for example, in the appalling conditions of the new industrial poor, as exposed by the novels of Charles Dickens and the political writings of Karl Marx—this evidence was easily ignored by the rich and powerful who were profiting from technology's advances.

Another dark side of progress became evident in the development of weaponry. The deadly novelty of the American Civil War was the rifle, effective over five times the range of previous shoulder weapons. In World War I, tanks, submarines, and chemical weapons showed technology's terrible potential for destruction: an estimated forty million military and civilian dead from war, famine, and epidemic, and twenty million wounded. With World War I, nationalism reached its first, horrifying climax, as modern nation-states pitted themselves against one another. Nineteenth-century confidence in progress—a response to the successes of technology—was thrown into question by technology itself.

By this time, however, the groundwork for such loss in confidence had already been laid by science in other areas. Men and women were shaken in their most basic assumptions about life by startling advances in physics, biology, and psychology.

7 The impact of Einstein's theory of relativity made its own contributions to the technology of weaponry later in the century, with the invention of nuclear weapons. At first, however, it was more philosophical than practical in nature. The idea that things depend on the standpoint of the observer, and cannot be counted on according to the objective rules of Newtonian physics, rocked people's sense of certainty.

7 For many, this uncertainty deepened a crisis in religion that the Victorians had already experienced as a result of scientific theories of evolution. Here the key figure was Charles Darwin. Were human beings created by God in God's image, as the Bible teaches, or did they evolve by an impersonal process from lower animals? The disturbance that this idea caused in people's sense of stability is still reflected in today's disputes about creationism and "intelligent design."

7 Meanwhile the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud suggested that in spite of what people thought they were doing or feeling, they were in fact controlled by unconscious drives. The idea of men and women in the grip of irrational forces of their own (or their parents') making was, again, very disturbing. At the same time, the prospect of working out one's problems through psychotherapy gave the new century its paradigm for personality change.

2 The Response of Modernism

If the traditional laws of physics, biblical authority, and psychological certainty could no longer be accepted, it seemed a small enough step to question the rules and assumptions surrounding the arts.

One such assumption was that visual art had to represent something from the external world. Once this idea was questioned, and then abandoned, the materials of painting and the other arts could be used for themselves—and a



world of abstract painting opened up (it is also called “nonrepresentational”). Avant-garde artists developed whole new languages for art—for example, the language of cubism, shown in the painting by Georges Braque, above.

In literature, the basic assumption was that poets and novelists would use ordinary sentence structure, syntax, and grammar. Freedom from these assumptions opened up a whole new sphere of suggestion in tune with Freud’s ideas about the mind’s unconscious and irrational impulses. James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses* of 1922 is one of the most famous instances of the so-called stream-of-consciousness method of writing. His last novel, *Finnegans Wake*, makes use of a language that is half English and half words he invented.

In music, the basic assumptions concerned the composing of melody and its close associates harmony and tonality. These assumptions too were thrown into doubt, and the logic of earlier musical styles was questioned or even rejected. Some avant-garde composers turned away from conventional presentation of rhythm and meter, while others wrote melodies that carried to new lengths the most complex of late-Romantic melodic designs. Still others devised new harmonies more complicated and dissonant than those of earlier generations, or even harmonies derived from new scales, different from the major and minor.

There was a tendency about this time for artists of various kinds to gravitate together in formal or informal groups, both for mutual encouragement and for the exchange of ideas. Thus Claude Debussy was friends with several avant-garde poets. Schoenberg, himself a painter as well as a musician, associated with a group of artists who set forth their ideas in *The Blue Rider*, a magazine named after a picture by the pioneer nonrepresentational painter Wassily Kandinsky (see page 313). Stravinsky and Maurice Ravel belonged to a group who called themselves the Apaches. With all this interchange, it is not surprising that one can sometimes detect similar tendencies in music and the other arts.

Cubism was one of the earliest forms of abstract or near-abstract art, developed around the time of World War I by Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and others. In this Braque painting, one can discern a guitar and the score of *Socrate*, a work by the modernist composer Erik Satie.

“Sheshell ebb music
wayriver she flows”

James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

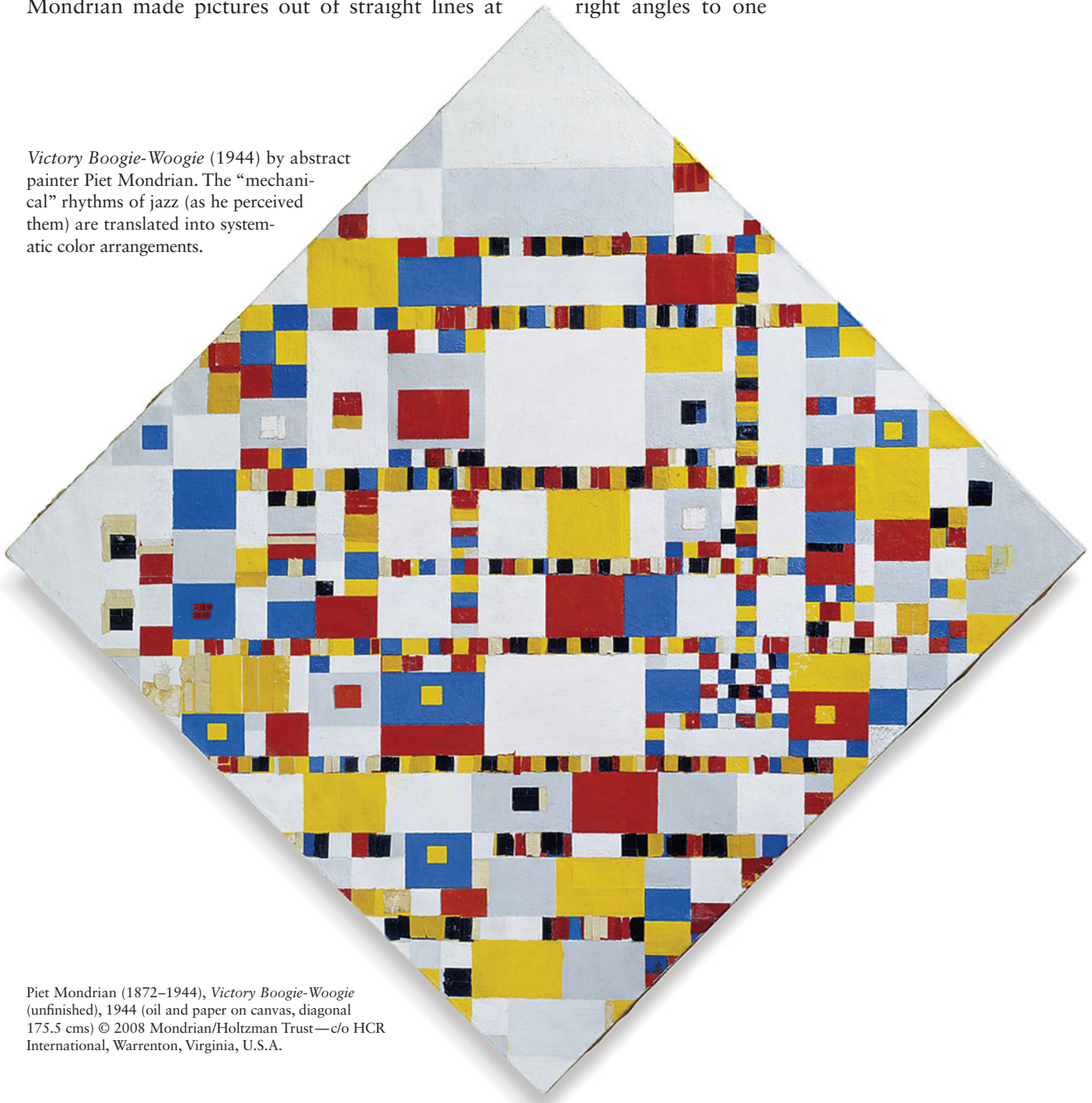
3 Literature and Art before World War I

The new languages for art were unquestionably (and unapologetically) difficult. To this day, few people understand *Finnegans Wake*. Avant-garde art became detached from music's ordinary public, and hence abstracted from a base in society.

At the same time, the modernists' concentration on artistic materials led to abstraction of another kind, the separation of technique from expression. This emphasis on technique was welcomed by some as a relief from the overheated emotionality of late Romantic music of Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and the like. Especially in the 1920s, "objectivity" was an ideal espoused by many artists. Only too often, their works struck the public as abstract in a cold, dry sense.

Characteristic of this phase of the avant-garde were experiments with schematic, even mathematical devices in the arts. The Dutch painter Piet Mondrian made pictures out of straight lines at right angles to one

Victory Boogie-Woogie (1944) by abstract painter Piet Mondrian. The "mechanical" rhythms of jazz (as he perceived them) are translated into systematic color arrangements.



Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), *Victory Boogie-Woogie* (unfinished), 1944 (oil and paper on canvas, diagonal 175.5 cms) © 2008 Mondrian/Holtzman Trust—c/o HCR International, Warrenton, Virginia, U.S.A.

another and juxtaposed planes of bright color. Among composers, Igor Stravinsky was known for his provocative statements extolling objectivity and attacking Romantic music—and certainly the brisk, mechanistic rhythms that characterize Stravinsky's style are diametrically opposed to rubato (see page 231), the rhythmic stretching that contributes so much to nineteenth-century music's emotionality.

Several lesser composers, fascinated by machine rhythms, even tried to evoke machinery in their works: the American George Antheil (*Ballet mécanique*), the Russian A. V. Mosolov (*The Iron Foundry*), and the Swiss Arthur Honegger (*Pacific 231*—a locomotive). An Italian group called the Futurists—more famous for their well-publicized proclamations than for any actual music—called for “music of the machine age” and composed with industrial noises. They invented a mechanized “noise intoner” with dozens of categories ranging from explosions and crashes to crackles and howls.

Impressionists and Symbolists

Modernism got its start in the late nineteenth century and then peaked in the twentieth. The best-known modernist movement, **impressionism**, dates from the 1870s, when people were astonished by the flickering network of color patches used by impressionist painters to render simple scenes from everyday life (as in Edouard Manet's *In the Boat*, above). These painters claimed that they had to develop such a technique to catch the actual, perceived quality of light. They proudly called themselves “realists,” in reaction to the idealized and over-emotional art of Romanticism. Claude Monet's multiple pictures of Rouen Cathedral (see page 175) emphasize (even exaggerate!) how differences in daylight define the impressionist painter's reality.

Symbolism, a consciously *unrealistic* movement, followed soon after impressionism. Symbolist poets revolted against the “realism” of words being used for reference—for the purpose of exact definition or denoting. They wanted words to perform their symbolizing or signifying function as freely as possible, without having to fit into phrases or sentences. The meaning of a cluster of words might be vague and ambiguous, even esoteric—but also rich, “musical,” and endlessly suggestive.

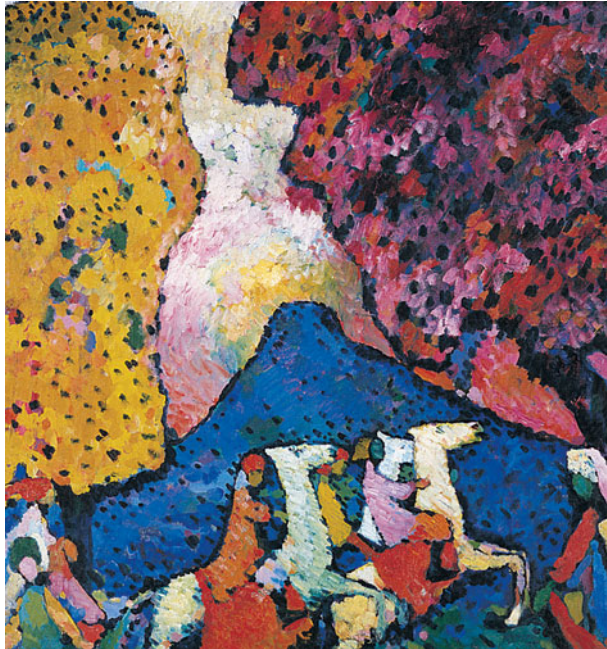
Musical was exactly what the symbolists called their language. They were fascinated by the music dramas of Richard Wagner, where again musical symbols—Wagner's leitmotifs—refer to elements in his dramas in a complex, ambivalent, multilayered fashion. All poets use musical devices such as rhythm and rhyme, but the symbolists were prepared to go so far as to break down grammar, syntax, and conventional thought sequence to approach the elusive, vague reference of Wagner's music.



Top: *In the Boat*, an impressionist painting by Edouard Manet (1832–1883). Bottom: Does nature imitate art? This snapshot of Debussy (second from the left) and some friends is startlingly similar in mood to the (earlier) painting by Manet.

With pure nails brightly
flashing their onyx
Anguish at midnight
holds up (Lucifer!)
A multitude of dreams
burnt by the Phoenix.
...

*Opening of a symbolist
sonnet (Stéphane Mallarmé)*



Horses and riders, painted by Wassily Kandinsky over a four-year period, show his path toward nonrepresentational painting. In the first picture, the figures are quite clear; in the last, they could be missed entirely. Top left: *Couple on Horseback* (1907); top right: *Blue Mountain* (1909); bottom: *Romantic Landscape* (1911).

Claude Debussy is often called an impressionist in music because his fragmentary motives and little flashes of tone color seem to recall the impressionists' painting technique. Debussy can also—and more accurately—be called a symbolist, since suggestion, rather than outright statement, is at the heart of his aesthetic. Famous symbolist texts inspired two famous Debussy works: the orchestral *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun"* (a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé) and the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (a play by Maurice Maeterlinck). In the opera Debussy's elusive musical symbols and Maeterlinck's elusive verbal ones combine to produce an unforgettable effect of mysterious suggestion.

Expressionists and Fauves

In Paris and Vienna—artistic centers that were also centers of avant-garde music—two émigré artists pursued separate but parallel paths toward completely abstract painting.

Our horse-and-rider pictures on page 312 by the Russian-born painter Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) show how the process was accomplished. Kandinsky belonged to a German movement in the arts called expressionism—not to be confused with impressionism—which sought to express the most extreme human feelings by divorcing art from everyday literalness. Anguish, even hysteria, could be conveyed by the harsh clashing of strong colors, irregular shapes, and jagged lines. What seems to be depicted is not something external but the artist's inner turbulence—most violently in the last Kandinsky picture, *Romantic Landscape*, which is almost entirely abstracted from the outer world.

Parallel to the expressionists was a short-lived group in Paris dubbed *Les fauves*, “the wild beasts.” The fauves experimented with distorted images bordering on the grotesque; they also employed motifs from what they called “primitive” art as though in defiance of a decadent European culture. In Pablo Picasso's famous painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* of 1907 (Alger was a street in the red-light district of Barcelona), the quality of abstraction is evident in the angular bodies and the African-mask-like heads—a complete break with conventional European rules of human portrayal (see page 314). Picasso took a further step toward abstraction later when he turned to cubism.

There is violence in both Kandinsky's and Picasso's work of this period. Certainly that is how it struck a generation used to the nonthreatening art of the impressionists—painters of flickering summer landscapes, soft-edged nudes, and diaphanous action pictures of the ballet. Composers, too, courted violence in their music. The Hungarian composer Béla Bartók wrote a “barbarous” piano piece entitled *Allegro barbaro*. Stravinsky, in his ballet *The Rite of Spring*, depicted human sacrifice in the fertility ceremonies of primitive Slavic tribes.

4 Modernist Music before World War I

The art of music never enjoyed (or suffered) a link to the tangible world that was comparable to representation in painting, or to the reference of words in literature. But it did have its own stable, generally accepted set of principles, its own traditional internal logic. This rested upon elements that we have discussed many times in this book: tune, motive, harmony, tonality, tone color, and rhythm.

The music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms was based on this logic, and so was the entire stream of Western European folk songs, popular songs,

Picasso, Pablo (1881–1973) © ARS, NY. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)*. Paris, June–July 1907. Oil on canvas, 8' × 7'8". Acquired through the Lill P. Bliss Bequest. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A.



Picasso's famous shocker *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (1907). Picasso and other abstract painters designed sets for the Diaghilev Ballets Russes, sponsor of Stravinsky and other modernist composers.

dances, military marches, and the rest. Modernist music moved away from this norm. Like abstract, nonrepresentational painting, music worked out new principles based on the materials of the art itself.

With European music before World War I, we can lay special emphasis on developments in melody, harmony, and tonality, for on the whole, these features were the main preoccupations of avant-garde composers in that period. Developments in tone color and rhythm—or, more broadly, musical sonority and musical time—dominated a later stage of modernist music, after World War II.

Experiment and Transformation: Melody

Melody, harmony, and tonality all work closely together. In historical terms, harmony arose as a way of supporting and adorning melody, and tonality first arose as a means of clarifying both melody and harmony; later tonality functioned as a more general way of organizing music. Each of these functions was transformed in the early twentieth century.

The Viennese Classical composers brought tunes to the fore in their music, and the Romantics capitalized on tunes as the most emphatic means of con-

veying powerful emotion. Yet Wagner, despite the melodic quality of many of his leitmotifs, was criticized for the confusing quality of his singing lines, and Mahler's audiences were puzzled and irritated by the bittersweet distortions that he applied to folklike tunes. In his later works, his long melodies surge, swoop, and yearn in a strange, almost painful manner.

By that time another Viennese composer, Arnold Schoenberg, was writing even more complex melodies that made little sense to contemporary listeners. The intense rhythms and the anguished intervals of Romanticism were exaggerated almost beyond recognition:



Outside of Vienna, the disintegration of traditional melody was accomplished in other ways. In many (not all) of his works, Claude Debussy used only the most shadowy motives—a constant suggestion of melody without clear tunes. A little later Igor Stravinsky, writing in Paris, seized upon Russian folk songs but whittled them down into brief, utterly simple fragments, blank, “objective,” and without emotion.

New Horizons, New Scales

We have mentioned the influence of African masks on Picasso's *Demoiselles*. Non-European musics, too, began to make inroads into European classical music. At a World's Fair that fascinated Paris in 1889—the fair for which the Eiffel Tower was built—Debussy heard his first non-Western music played by native musicians, under simulated native conditions. He tried to recapture the sounds of the Indonesian gamelan (see page 204) in several compositions, even taking a Balinese melody for the theme of a concerto movement.

Debussy sensed a resonance between his own music and the shimmering timbres of the gamelan, and also the scales used in Indonesian music. The traditional diatonic scale had served as the foundation of Western music for so long that it was almost regarded as a fact of nature. But now composers were beginning to reconsider the basic sound materials of music. Notable among these experimenters was Charles Ives, in America. New scales were employed for themes or even whole movements, first among them the **pentatonic scale**, a five-note scale playable on the black notes of the piano, imported from folk song and Asian music. Debussy featured a pentatonic theme in *Clouds*, which we take up in Chapter 21.

Two other new scales introduced at this time are (significantly enough) abstract constructions, which anyone can figure out by systematically analyzing the total chromatic scale. The **whole-tone scale** divides the octave into six equal parts—all of its intervals are whole steps; it yields a dreamy, ambiguous sound that Debussy in particular prized. The **octatonic scale**—a specialty with Stravinsky—fits eight pitches into the octave by alternating whole and half steps.

More important as a means of composition than the use of any of these scales was **serialism**, the “new language” for music invented in the 1920s by Arnold Schoenberg. As we will see in the next chapter, serialism in effect creates something like a special scale for every serial composition.



“The Emancipation of Dissonance”

As melody grew more complex, more fragmentary, or more vague, harmony grew more and more dissonant. The concepts of consonance and dissonance, as we noted on page 32, rest on the fact that certain combinations of pitches (consonant chords) sound stable and at rest, whereas others (dissonant chords) sound tense and need to resolve to consonant ones. In a famous phrase, Schoenberg spoke of “the emancipation of dissonance,” meaning emancipation from that need to resolve. Dissonance was to be free from the rule that says it must always be followed by the appropriate consonance.

Tonality, as we know, is the feeling of centrality, focus, or homing toward a particular pitch that we get from simple tunes and much other music. As melody grew more complex and harmony grew more dissonant, tonality grew more indistinct. Finally, some music reached a point at which no tonal center could be detected at all. This is **atonal** music.

Melody, harmony, tonality: All are closely related. Beleaguered conservatives around 1900 referred to them jokingly as the “holy trinity” of music. The “emancipation” of melody, harmony, and tonality all went together. This joint emancipation counts as the central style characteristic of the first phase of twentieth-century avant-garde music.

► Find Flashcards and a Reading Quiz for Chapter 20 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 21

Early Modernism

The first major phase of avant-garde music—what we now call modernist music—took place in Paris and Vienna from around 1890 to 1914. Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky (a young Russian working in Paris), and Arnold Schoenberg were the leading figures in this brilliant era. And there were strong modernist rumblings in Russia, Hungary, Italy, and the United States.

It was a period of rapid development in all the arts, as we have seen, in which the basic tenets of nineteenth-century art were everywhere challenged. In music in particular, nineteenth-century ideas of melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, and tone color came under attack. Above all, it was the revolution in tonality—which went along with a radical reconsideration of melody and harmony—that caught the imagination of the early twentieth century.

1 Debussy and Impressionism

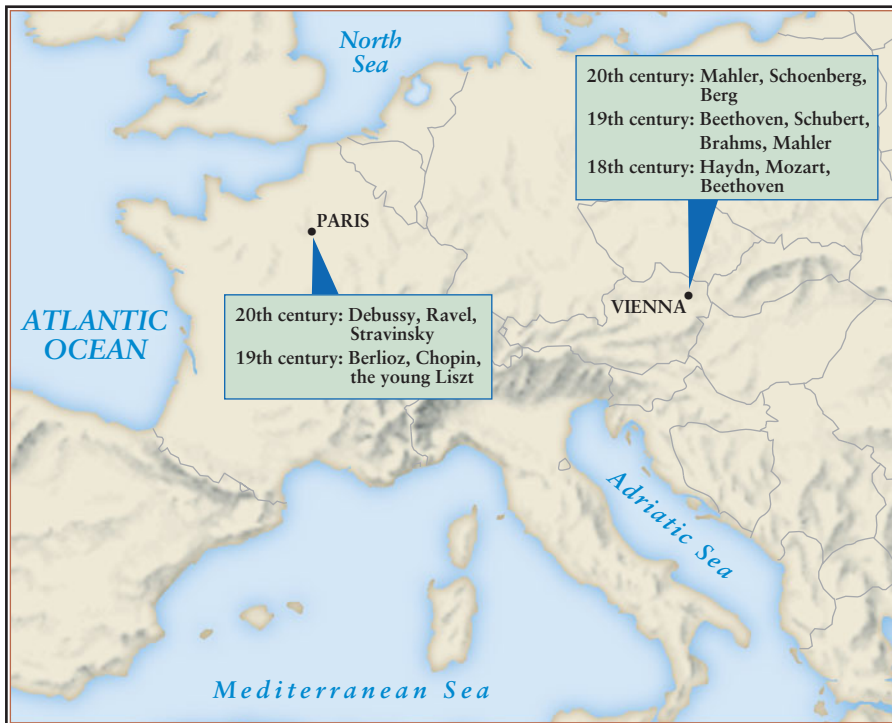
Claude Debussy occupies the border area between late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century styles. His investigation of sensuous new tone colors for orchestra and for piano, his development of new rich harmonies, and his search for new ways to express emotion in music all remind us of the Romantics. Yet while in some ways his work seems tied to Romanticism, in others it represents a direct reaction against it.

Debussy's tone colors avoid the heavy sonorities that were usual in late Romantic music, merging instead into subtle, mysterious shades of sound. His themes and motives are usually fragmentary and tentative, his harmonies sound strangely vague, and the tonality of his music is often clouded. His themes often draw on the vague-sounding new scales mentioned in Chapter 20.

Debussy's orchestral sound differs sharply from that of his contemporary, Gustav Mahler, another great innovator in orchestration. Mahler treated the orchestra more and more contrapuntally; each instrument tends to stand out from the others like a Romantic hero striving for his own say in the world. Debussy's orchestra is more often a single, delicately pulsing totality to which individual instruments contribute momentary gleams of color. In this it reminds us of an impressionist picture, in which small, separate areas of color, visible close up, merge into unified color fields as the viewer stands back and takes in the painting as a whole (see page 311).

“ (. . . Sounds and perfumes sway in the evening air)”

Title of a Debussy “miniature” for piano; the parentheses and dots are his.



Paris and Vienna as musical centers

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Three Nocturnes (1899)



Debussy's *Three Nocturnes*, like most of his orchestral works, might be described as impressionist symphonic poems, though they have titles only, not narrative programs. They suggest various scenes without attempting to illustrate them explicitly.

The word *nocturne* evokes a night-time scene, the great examples before Debussy being the piano nocturnes of Chopin (see page 250). But in fact Debussy's reference was to famous atmospheric paintings by an artist who was close to the impressionists, James McNeill Whistler (see page 319). The first of the nocturnes, *Clouds*, is a pure nature picture, the least nocturnal of the three. The second, *Festivals*, depicts mysterious night-time fairs and parades. The third nocturne, *Sirens*, includes a women's chorus along with the orchestra, singing not words but just vowels and adding an unforgettable timbre to the usual orchestra. The women's voices evoke the legendary sea maidens of the title, who tempt lonely sailors and pull them into the deep.

Clouds We first hear a quiet series of chords, played by clarinets and bassoons, that circles back on itself repeatedly. The chords seem to suggest great cumulus clouds, moving slowly and silently across the sky.

As a theme, however, these chords do not function conventionally. They make no strong declarations and lead nowhere definitive. This is also true of the next motive, introduced by the English horn—a haunting motive that occurs many times in *Clouds*, with hardly any change. (It is built on an octatonic scale; see page 315.) Yet even this muted gesture, with its vague rhythm and its fading conclusion, seems sufficient to exhaust the composition and bring it to a near halt, over a barely audible drum roll:

“The title ‘Nocturnes’ should be taken here in a more general and especially in a more decorative sense. . . . *Clouds*: the unchanging aspect of the sky, the slow, melancholy motion of the clouds, fading away into agonized grey tones, gently tinged with white.”

Claude Debussy

Moderato

CLARINETS

pp BASSOONS etc.

OBOE *piu pp*

ENGLISH HORN *p*

FIRST VIOLINS *pp*

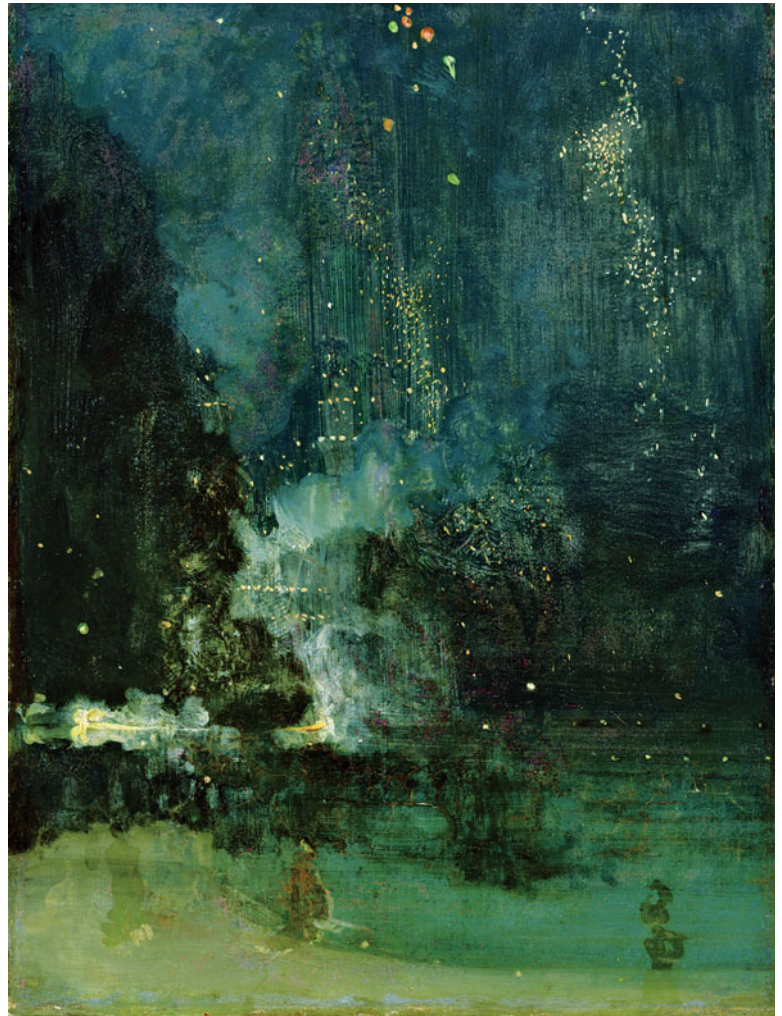
8va

ppp TIMPANI (roll)

After this near stop, the “cloud” music begins again, leading this time to a downward passage of remarkably gentle, murmuring chords in the strings. These chords all share the same rich, complex structure. Their pitches slip downward, moving parallel to one another without establishing a clear sense of tonality. This use of *parallel chords* is one of Debussy’s most famous innovations.

Clouds might be said to fall into an A B A’ form—but only in a very approximate way. Debussy shrinks from clear formal outlines; the musical form here is much more fluid than A B A structures observed in earlier music. Such fluidity is something to bear in mind when following *Clouds* and other avant-garde music with Listening Charts. By design, avant-garde composers break down the sharp and (to them) oversimple divisions of older musical styles. If they use form types such as rondo or sonata form at all, they do so in very free, imaginative ways.

In the A section of *Clouds*, the return of the cloud theme after a more active, restless passage suggests an internal a b a’ pattern as well. The next idea, B, sounds at first like a meditative epilogue to A; it is built on a pentatonic scale (see page 315). But when the little pentatonic tune is repeated several times, it begins to feel like a substantial section of contrast. The return, A’, is really just a reference to some of A’s material, notably the English-horn figure. Then at the end the bassoons play a dim, disturbed fragment of the cloud theme; the flute hovers for a moment on the B tune; and the drum roll is extended—so as to suggest distant thunder, perhaps.



Nocturne in Black and Gold—The Falling Rocket. This impression of the night sky with fireworks, by American expatriate James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), shocked London viewers when it was shown in 1878. The most powerful critic of the day likened it to “flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face”; Whistler sued him.

LISTENING CHART 18

Debussy, *Clouds*

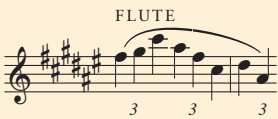
7 min., 3 sec.



13 14	0:00	A	a	Cloud theme: clarinets and bassoons
	0:15			English-horn motive
	0:20			Quiet timpani roll—music almost stops
	0:34			Cloud theme: high strings
14 15	0:47			Downward parallel chord passage
0:15	1:02			Further development: strings
0:34	1:21			English-horn motive, with a new echo in the French horn
1:02	1:49			Downward chord passage
15 16	2:10	b		Rising section, more restless: woodwinds added
0:30	2:41			Brief climax
0:37	2:48			English-horn motive (with new even-note rhythm accompaniment) is repeated several times, until it dies away.
16 17	3:38	a'		Cloud theme, with new solo viola counterpoint
0:16	3:54			Downward chord passage
17 18	4:12	B		A new tune enters tentatively, but then repeats itself; flute and harp
0:27	4:40			Tune in strings and solo violin
0:44	4:56			Tune in flute and harp
		(A')		<i>Not a real "return" of A, only of selected elements standing in for A</i>
18 19	5:19			English-horn motive, with its echo
0:31	5:51			Quiet timpani and low strings—prominent until the end
				<i>Recollection of thematic fragments:</i>
0:54	6:14			Cloud theme: bassoons, then cellos
1:13	6:32			B tune
1:21	6:40			French-horn echo to the English-horn motive



ENGLISH HORN



FLUTE

2 Stravinsky: The Primacy of Rhythm

Stravinsky's earliest work followed from that of his teacher, the Russian nationalist composer Rimsky-Korsakov. But in three famous ballet scores written for the Ballets Russes in Paris, Stravinsky rapidly developed his own powerful, hard-edged avant-garde style, a style that can be compared to the contemporary fauve style in French painting (see page 313). These ballets reveal a fascinating progression toward a more and more abstract use of folk tunes. Compare the development of abstraction in art by Kandinsky and Picasso (pages 312 and 314).

The first ballet, *The Firebird* (1910), spins a romantic fairy tale about the magical Firebird, the ogre Kastchei, and Prince Ivan Tsarevitch, son of the tsar. Its rich, half-Asian setting is matched by beautifully colored folk music and orchestral sound worthy of Debussy. But in the next ballet, Stravinsky moved from the steppes to the urban marketplace, to Mardi Gras in St. Petersburg.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Claude Debussy went through the strict curriculum of the famous Paris Conservatory of Music, which he entered at the age of ten. He did not do well in the piano exams, or at least not well enough, but won various awards in theory and composition. He was finally awarded the coveted Grand Prix (Top Prize)—a three-year fellowship to study in Rome.

Before this, Debussy took a job with Madame von Meck, the eccentric patron of Tchaikovsky, playing in a trio at her house in Moscow. Russian music (see page 288) was one of several vivid influences on the young composer; another was the Indonesian gamelan (see page 204), which he encountered at the World's Fair in Paris in 1889. Visits to Bayreuth, the shrine of Wagner's music dramas, afforded another, even stronger influence. But Debussy soon turned against Wagner and German music in general.

Debussy settled into Parisian café life, becoming a familiar bearded figure in his broad-brimmed hat and flowing cape. A long-term relationship with a mistress came to a bad end, as did Debussy's first marriage when he eloped with a married woman, who later became his wife. They had a daughter—Debussy wrote the well-known *Children's Corner* Suite for her before she was old enough to play the piano.

In his early thirties Debussy seems to have rather suddenly crystallized his musical style, reflecting the influences of the French symbolist poets and impressionist painters. One remarkable work after another was given its premiere, greeted with a flurry of controversy, and then generally accepted by the critics and the public. His one opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), was written directly to the words of a play by the prominent symbolist Maurice

Maeterlinck. He planned a second opera, on Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Fall of the House of Usher," but never finished it.

Debussy is famous for his innovations in orchestration and in piano writing. His Preludes and Études for the piano are the most impressive "miniatures" since the time of the early Romantics; some would say the same for his songs. One of his later works, music for the ballet *Jeux* (Games), dissolves melody, theme, and rhythm so far that it was taken up as a model by the avant-garde after World War II.

For a short time Debussy wrote music criticism, in which he expressed in pungent prose the anti-German attitudes that were already manifest in his music. Debussy died of cancer in Paris during World War I, while the city was being bombarded by the Germans he hated.

Chief Works: For orchestra, *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun"* (a famous poem by the French symbolist poet Mallarmé); Three Nocturnes; *La Mer* (The Sea); *Ibéria*; *Jeux* (Games) ■ The opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* ■ For piano: Preludes and Études, *Children's Corner* Suite, and *Suite bergamasque*, including "Clair de lune" ■ Songs to poems by Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé ■ A string quartet and other chamber music ■ *Syrinx* for solo flute

Encore: After *Clouds*, listen to *Fêtes* (Festivals), *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun,"* "Clair de lune."



Petrushka (1911), the story of a carnival barker and his puppet, encouraged him to put a hard, satirical edge on his folk material. Then in *The Rite of Spring* (1913), Stravinsky boldly and brutally imagined the fertility cults of prehistoric Slavic tribes. Here Russian folk music, broken down into repeated, fragmentary motives, is treated as the source of primitive rhythmic and sexual energy, rather than picture-postcard charm.

The musical style that Stravinsky brought to a head in the *Rite* has many features that struck listeners of the time as barbaric, apart from its use of deliberately crude folk-tune fragments. The music was abstract in the sense that it sounded utterly unemotional, by Romantic standards. It was grindingly dissonant. It emphasized meter in a very heavy, exciting way, and the rhythms themselves were dazzling and unpredictable. Finally, the score is enormously loud: It demands a colossal orchestra, as though the composer wanted to show how he could control—and transform—the chief powerhouse of musical Romanticism.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

The Rite of Spring (1913): Part I, “The Adoration of the Earth”



The first performance of *The Rite of Spring* caused a riot; the audience was shocked and infuriated by the violent, dissonant sounds in the pit and the provocative choreography on the stage, suggesting rape and ritual murder.

The ballet has no real story, and Stravinsky even said that he preferred to think of the music as an abstract concert piece. However, inscriptions on the score specify a series of ancient fertility rites of various kinds, culminating in the ceremonial choice of a virgin for sacrifice. After this she is evidently danced to death in the ballet’s second part, entitled “The Sacrifice.”

Introduction The halting opening theme is played by a bassoon at the very top of its normal register. Avant-garde composers strained all the elements of music, including the ordinary capabilities of instruments. The bleating bassoon is joined by odd hootings on other woodwinds, gradually building up an extraordinary polyphony that is highly dissonant. The whole section sounds rather like a static series of preliminary fanfares—or, as Stravinsky later suggested, like the calls of prehistoric wildlife.

“Omens of Spring”—“Dance of the Adolescents” After a brief introduction, in which the dancers presumably register an awareness of spring’s awakening, the “Dance of the Adolescents” commences with a famous instance of Stravinskian rhythmic irregularity. (Probably the original audience started their cat-calls at this point.) A single very dissonant chord is repeated thirty-two times in even eighth notes—but with heavy accents reinforced by short, fat chords played by eight (!) French horns on the most unexpected beats:

These accents completely upset ordinary meter. Instead of eight standard measures of four eighth notes—1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, etc.—Stravinsky makes us hear 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2, 1 2 3 4 5 6, 1 2 3, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3. (For a truly bewildering experience, try beating time to this passage.) Yet these irregular rhythms are also exhilarating, and they certainly drive the music forward in a unique way.

The repeating chords are now overlaid with new motives, derived from Russian folk song. The motives are repeated with slightly different rhythms and at slightly different lengths. This is Stravinsky’s distinctive type of ostinato, a technique we have met with in many other kinds of music (pages 92, 98, 124); the ostinato is indicated by brackets on the example on page 323. Like Debussy, Stravinsky tends to concentrate on small melodic fragments, but whereas Debussy soon abandons his fragments, Stravinsky keeps repeating his in this irregular, almost obsessive way.

Folk-song fragment no. 1

Fragment no. 2

“My idea was that the Prelude should represent the awakening of nature, the scratching, gnawing, wiggling of birds and beasts.”

Igor Stravinsky, reminiscing in 1960 about *The Rite of Spring*

Fragment no. 3



“The Game of Abduction” New violence is introduced with this section, a whirlwind of brilliant rhythms, with much frantic pounding on the timpani.

“Round Dances of Spring” After a moment of respite, a short, quiet introduction conveys a remarkably desolate, empty feeling, partly as a result of its novel orchestration: a high (E \flat) clarinet and low (alto) flute playing two octaves apart. Then a slow dragging dance emerges, built out of the third folk-tune fragment from the “Dance of the Adolescents.”

The strong downbeat makes the meter hypnotic—but one or two added or skipped beats have a powerful animating effect. The dance reaches a relentless climax with glissando (sliding) trombones, gong, cymbals, and big drum. After a sudden fast coda, the introduction returns to conclude the section.



Stravinsky, drawn by Picasso during the period when they were associated at the Ballets Russes

Four more sections follow our selection in Part I of *The Rite of Spring*. The dynamic “Games of the Rival Tribes” introduces two more folk-tune fragments. A huge masked figure is borne aloft by the male dancers in a slower section, the “Procession of the Sage”; the Sage then performs a brief ceremony, “Adoration of the Earth.”



The climax of *The Rite of Spring*


LISTENING CHART 19

Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, from Part I

Ballet score. 10 min., 45 sec.



19–25 20–26

19 20	0:00 Introduction	Bassoon “fanfare,” <i>p</i> , twice interrupted by English horn
	1:04	Fanfares in oboe, high (E \flat) clarinet, bass clarinet
	1:40	Buildup
20 21	2:04	New motive in the oboe and E \flat clarinet
0:29	2:33	Stop; return of the bassoon fanfare, <i>p</i>
0:37	2:41 Omens of Spring	Dance of the Adolescents is foreshadowed; the music stops and starts, ending with a high violin chord.
0:58	3:02	Tempo is established; trill,  rhythm introduced.
21 22	3:08 Dance of the Adolescents	Loud rhythmic passage with irregular accents (French horns); various motives are introduced.
0:36	3:44	Rhythmic passage again
22 23	3:53	Folk-song fragment no. 1—bassoons and contrabassoon, etc.
0:28	4:21	Abrupt interruption of the regular rhythm
0:37	4:30	Return of the introductory “Omens” music
0:53	4:46	Folk-song fragment no. 2—French horn, flutes
1:27	5:20	Folk-song fragment no. 3—trumpets (triangle)
1:50	5:44	Folk-song fragment no. 2—piccolos; big buildup
23 24	6:16 The Game of Abduction	Faster; frantic rhythms. Brass is prominent; sliding horn calls
0:56	7:12	Ending passage: alternation between scurrying figures in the winds and heavy booms in the drums
24 25	7:33 Round Dances of Spring	Slower; introduction: flute trills, clarinet melody
0:34	8:08	The main slow dance rhythm is introduced; woodwind motive
25 26	8:45	Folk-song fragment no. 3 (slower than before)—violas, <i>mf</i>
0:54	9:39	Folk-song fragment no. 3, <i>ff</i> , with cymbals
1:16	10:01	Climactic passage—brass
1:34	10:19	Short coda: faster, with violent rhythmic interjections
1:50	10:34	Brief return of the slow introduction, <i>p</i>



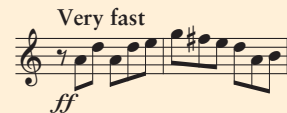
no. 1



no. 2



no. 3



► Access Interactive Listening
Chart 19 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

The concluding orgiastic “Dance of the Earth” is built on a fast and furious ostinato.

What is conspicuously absent from any of this is emotionality. Tough, precise, and barbaric, it is as far from old-line Romantic sentiment as it is from the delicate, shadowy vision of Debussy. In Stravinsky’s later works the barbarism was tamed, but the dry, precise quality remained, and so did the exhilarating irregular rhythms. Throughout his long career they provided him with a powerful strategy for movement, unlike that of any other composer. It was the primacy of rhythm that produced Stravinsky’s “new language” for music.

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The son of an important opera singer, Igor Stravinsky studied law and did not turn seriously to music until he was nineteen. He was fortunate to be able to study with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a survivor of the nationalist *kuchka* (see page 288) who was still composing actively.

Rimsky's brand of nationalism served young Stravinsky well in the famous (and still outstandingly popular) ballet scores *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring*, which he wrote for the Ballets Russes, a Russian company centered in Paris. This enormously dynamic organization, run by a brilliant producer and man-about-the-arts named Sergei Diaghilev, astonished the blasé Parisian public with its exotic spectacles combining the newest and the most sensational in dance, music, scenery, and costume design. Among Diaghilev's dancers were Vaslav Nijinsky, also choreographer of *The Rite*, and Anna Pavlova; among his designers were Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

After World War I Stravinsky composed more ballets for Diaghilev as well as other works in a dazzling variety of styles, forms, and genres. One of his most impressive scores, *The Wedding*, was choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska, Nijinski's sister, who was less famous as a dancer than her brother but much better as a choreographer. Among the first classical composers to be interested in jazz, Stravinsky wrote *Piano Ragtime* in 1917 (and, much later, *Ebony Concerto* for clarinetist Woody Herman's jazz band; clarinets are made of ebony). He became an outspoken advocate of "objectivity" in music, the rejection of Romantic emotionality. For many years after World War I he modeled his music on pre-Romantic composers such as Bach, Handel, and Mozart, transforming the music by his own unique rhythmic and harmonic style. This style is sometimes called Neoclassicism.

His final work in this vein was an opera, *The Rake's Progress*, which is a kind of modern transformation of

Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. This was written in America (to English words), where Stravinsky had moved in 1939. After World War II his music grew more abstract and formal in style.

For a quarter of a century people had regarded Stravinsky (and he regarded himself) as the leading Neoclassical composer in the French orbit, at the opposite pole from Schoenberg and the Viennese serialists (see page 332). So he created yet another sensation when, in his seventies, he produced a remarkable group of late compositions employing serial technique. One of the first of these, *Agon*, was written for the great choreographer George Balanchine of the New York City Ballet, who had worked on Stravinsky's Neoclassical *Apollo* twenty-five years earlier with the Ballets Russes.

After some scary stays in American hospitals, on which the composer's comments were particularly caustic, Stravinsky died at his home in New York in 1971. He is buried in Venice, near the grave of Diaghilev.

Chief Works: Ballet scores, including *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*, *The Wedding*, *Orpheus*, *Agon* ■ *The Soldier's Tale*, an unusual chamber-music piece with narrator ■ An "opera-oratorio," *Oedipus the King*; *The Rake's Progress*, an opera in English (words by the poet W. H. Auden) ■ Two symphonies; concertos; *Symphony of Psalms* for orchestra and chorus ■ Other religious works: a Mass, *Requiem Canticles*

Encore: After *The Rite of Spring*, listen to *Petrushka* and *Symphony of Psalms*. Read *Conversations with Stravinsky* by Robert Craft, a protégé of Stravinsky for many years.

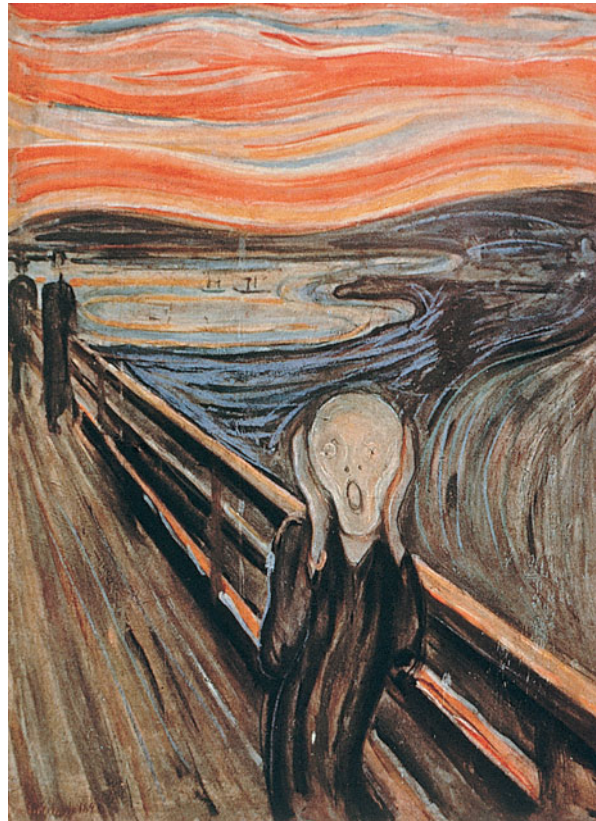


3 Expressionism

Even as Stravinsky was rejecting Romantic sentiment, in Austria and Germany composers pressed forward with music that was increasingly emotional and complex. As though intent on taking Romantic fervor to its ultimate conclusion, they found themselves exploiting extreme states, extending all the way to hysteria, nightmare, even insanity. This movement, known as *expressionism*, shares its name with important parallel movements in art and literature (see page 313).

These years also saw the publication of the first works of Sigmund Freud, with their new analysis of the power of unconscious drives, the significance of dreams, and the central role of sexuality. Psychoanalytic theory had a clear impact on German expressionism; a vivid example is *Erwartung* (Anticipation), a monologue for soprano and orchestra written by Arnold Schoenberg in 1909. In it, a woman comes to meet her lover in a dark wood and spills out all her terrors, shrieking as she stumbles upon a dead body she believes to be his. One cannot tell whether *Erwartung* represents an actual scene of hysteria, an allegory, or a Freudian dream fantasy.

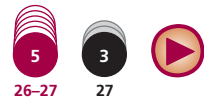
Schoenberg was the leading expressionist in music. He pioneered in the “emancipation of dissonance” and the breakdown of tonality, and shortly after World War I he developed the revolutionary technique of serialism (see page 332). Even before the war, Schoenberg attracted two brilliant Viennese students who were only about ten years his junior, and who shared almost equally in his innovations. Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg are often referred to as the Second Viennese School, by analogy with the earlier Viennese triumvirate of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.



Nightmarish images recur in expressionist art. Perhaps the most famous expressionist image is *The Scream*, by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944).

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

Pierrot lunaire (Moonstruck Pierrot; 1912)



This highly influential song cycle sets poems by a minor symbolist poet, Albert Giraud. Like many artists of the time—poets as well as composers—Giraud is not easy to figure out at once. Pierrot is the eternal sad clown, and perhaps represents also the alienated artist; but why is he called “moonstruck” or “lunar”? In poems that are dotted with Freudian imagery, we hear about his obsession with the moon, his amorous frustrations, his nightmarish hallucinations, his pranks and his adventures.

To match all this, Schoenberg wrote music that utterly lacks the tunes one might expect to find in a set of songs. The soprano does not exactly sing or exactly speak, but performs in an in-between style of Schoenberg’s invention called *Sprechstimme* (“speech-song”). *Sprechstimme* is an extreme example of the avant-garde composers’ search for new expressive means—here, sound that is not even fully organized into pitches. Through *Sprechstimme*, Giraud’s strange moonstruck poems are somehow magnified, distorted, parodied, and haunted all at the same time.

In addition to the soprano, *Pierrot lunaire* calls for five instrumentalists. Altogether they play eight instruments, since three of the players switch between

“I only know that on the two occasions I heard *Pierrot lunaire* I was conscious of the most profound impression I have ever experienced from a work of art, and that the enigmatic power of these pieces has left permanent traces on my innermost being. But when I look at the score it still remains completely mysterious. . . .”

Letter to Schoenberg from student Alban Berg, 1914

two: flute and piccolo, clarinet and bass clarinet, violin and viola, cello, and piano. Not all the songs involve all the players, so nearly every song has its own unique accompaniment, ranging from flute alone in No. 7 to all eight instruments in No. 21 (the players switching instruments in the middle of this song). Schoenberg's dazzling variety of instrumental effects compensates for the inherent strangeness of the *Sprechstimme*, and it is clear in the two songs we will examine, which are vastly different in sound and expressive tone.

- 26 **No. 8: "Night"** (voice, piano, bass clarinet, cello) The poem presents the nightmarish aspect of expressionism; we could easily imagine the screaming figure of Edvard Munch's famous painting (on page 326) responding to a vision of this sort:

Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.
Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,
Ruht der Horizont—verschwiegen.

Sinister giant black butterflies
Eclipse the blazing disk of sun.
Like a sealed-up book of wizard's spells
The horizon sleeps—secretly.

Aus dem Qualm verlornen Tiefen
Steigt ein Duft, Erinnerung mordend!
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.

From dank forgotten depths
A scent floats up, to murder memory.
Sinister giant black butterflies
Eclipse the blazing disk of sun.

Und vom Himmel erdenwärts
Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen
Unsichtbar die Ungetüme
Auf die Menschenherzen nieder . . .
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.

And from heaven downward dropping
To the earth in leaden circles,
Invisible, the monstrous swarm
Descends upon the hearts of men,
Sinister giant black butterflies.

Schoenberg used the lowest instruments of his ensemble to depict these ominous insects, weighty in a way utterly unlike real butterflies. Through the last section of the poem we can hear their swarm settling heavily downward, blotting out the light of day.

Schoenberg called this song a *passacaglia*, recalling a type of ostinato piece from the Baroque period (see page 97). In fact, his music is dominated by the three-note ostinato shown in the margin.



The ostinato is announced at the very beginning by the piano, then taken up by the cello and bass clarinet; it also ends the song. Throughout, the instrumental accompaniment is largely constructed from overlapping versions of it, moved freely to various pitch levels. The soprano is even asked to sing it, at the eerie bottom of her range, on the word *verschwiegen* (secretly)—the only moment in the entire song cycle when Schoenberg has her abandon *Sprechstimme* for conventional singing.

Note, however, that the ostinato is chromatic in essence, its last pitch set a half-step below its first. From such simple materials, Schoenberg can both unsettle conventional tonality and match the scary tone of Giraud's words.

- 27 **No. 18: "The Moonfleck"** (voice, piano, piccolo, clarinet, violin, cello) The piano plays a short introduction, or transition from the previous number. Listen to this piano passage several times. Dense, dissonant, atonal, and alarmingly intense in its motivic insistence, this passage sums up Schoenberg's uncompromising version of musical modernism. It also seems devised to recall the loudest, scariest moments of "Night," one of many such musical connections across Schoenberg's cycle.

In the song itself, the tone shifts abruptly from this intensity; now it is not horror but the nagging bother of an obsession. Pierrot can neither forget nor bear the moonfleck that has soiled his tuxedo:

Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes
Auf dem Rücken seines schwarzen Rockes,
So spaziert Pierrot im lauen Abend,
Aufzusuchen Glück und Abenteuer.

With a fleck of white—bright patch of moonlight—
On the back of his black jacket,
Pierrot strolls about in the mild evening air
On his night-time hunt for fun and good pickings.

Plötzlich stört ihn was an seinem Anzug,
Er beschaut sich rings und findet richtig—
Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes
Auf dem Rücken seines schwarzen Rockes.

Suddenly something strikes him as wrong,
He checks his clothes over and sure enough finds
A fleck of white—bright patch of moonlight—
On the back of his black jacket.

Warte! denkt er: das ist so ein Gipsfleck!
Wischt und wischt, doch—bringt ihn
nicht herunter!
Und so geht er, giftgeschwollen, weiter,
Reibt und reibt bis an den frühen Morgen—
Einen weissen Fleck des hellen Mondes.

Damn! he thinks, There's a spot of plaster!
Rubs and rubs, but can't get rid of it.
So goes on his way, his pleasure poisoned,
Rubbing and rubbing till dawn comes up—
At a fleck of white, a bright patch of moonlight!

In his setting Schoenberg explores timbres completely different from those of “Night.” He uses high-pitched, quicksilver motives, scattered through the whole ensemble, to depict flickering moonlight. Simultaneous fugues and canons are at work, but what the listener perceives is a fantastic lacework of sounds, with hardly a hint of tonality, as Pierrot frantically but in vain brushes at himself. “The Moonfleck” uses extremely complicated technical means to achieve a unique sonorous effect.



A modern Pierrot

Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951)

Arnold Schoenberg grew up in Europe's most intense musical environment, the Vienna of Johannes Brahms and Gustav Mahler. He was largely self-taught in music, though he found a mentor in the conductor and composer Alexander von Zemlinsky, whose sister became Schoenberg's first wife. (His second wife also had a musical brother, the leader of an important string quartet that featured Schoenberg's music.) A man of unusual versatility, Schoenberg produced important books on music theory, painted (and gave exhibitions of) pictures in expressionist style, and wrote the literary texts for many of his compositions.

His early music—notably *Transfigured Night* of 1899, still his best-known work—extended the late Romantic tradition of Brahms and Mahler. But Schoenberg soon came to feel that he was destined to carry this tradition through to its logical modern development, by way of increasing chromaticism and atonality. Listeners felt otherwise, and Schoenberg's revolutionary compositions of the 1900s probably met with more hostility than any other works in the entire history of music. At the same time, they attracted the sympathetic interest of Mahler and Richard Strauss (see page 340), and drew a coterie of brilliant young students to Schoenberg.

Schoenberg's music grew progressively more and more atonal, but he was nearly fifty before he developed the twelve-tone (or serial) system (see page 332). Of all the “new languages” for music attempted by the early avant-garde composers, serialism was the most radical and also the most fruitful. After World War II, even though some leading radicals rejected Schoenberg's music, they still used his fundamental idea of a serial language for music.

As a Jew, Schoenberg was forced to leave Germany when the Nazis came to power, and he spent the rest of his life in Los Angeles, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1941. His un-

finished opera *Moses and Aaron* of 1933 is both a Judaic epic and an allegory of the problem of modernist communication with the public. *A Survivor from Warsaw* was written in memory of the slaughter that occurred in the Warsaw Jewish quarter when the Nazis crushed the uprising there in 1943.

Arnold Schoenberg was a strange personality: gloomy, uncompromising, inordinately proud, and also highly superstitious. Of all the major composers, he was the first great teacher since Bach; besides his close associates of the Second Viennese School, he strongly influenced many other musicians who sought him out as a teacher. Near the end of his life he taught at UCLA.

Chief Works: An early “symphonic poem” for string sextet, *Transfigured Night*; Five Orchestral Pieces; two chamber symphonies, a piano concerto and a violin concerto; five string quartets ■ *Erwartung* (“Anticipation”), an expressionist monologue for singer and orchestra; the unfinished opera *Moses and Aaron* ■ *A Survivor from Warsaw* ■ Songs, including *The Book of the Hanging Gardens*, to texts by the German symbolist poet Stefan George; *Pierrot lunaire* (Moonstruck Pierrot)

Encore: After *Pierrot lunaire*, listen to *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) and Five Orchestral Pieces.

Photo: Man Ray (1890–1976) © ARS, NY. *Arnold Schoenberg*. 1926. Gelatin silver print, 11⅞ × 8¾". Gift of James Thrall Soby. (109.1941) The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A.



ALBAN BERG (1885–1935)

Wozzeck (1923)

After Schoenberg, the most powerful exponent of expressionism in music was his student Alban Berg. Berg's opera *Wozzeck*, first conceived during World War I, was completed in 1923. In general plan, this opera can be described as Wagnerian, in that it depends on musical continuity carried by the orchestra. It uses leitmotifs, and contains no arias. In more specific matters, its musical style owes much to Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*.

Background Berg set a remarkable fragmentary play by the German dramatist Georg Büchner, a half-legible draft that was discovered after his death in 1837. In a series of brief, savage scenes spoken in the plainest vernacular, Büchner presents an almost paranoid vision of the helpless poor oppressed by



society. Berg's music for the play's dialogue is all highly intense, and he kept the tension up by writing continuous orchestral interludes during the blackouts between one scene and the next.

Franz Wozzeck is an inarticulate and impoverished soldier, the lowest cog in the military machine. He is troubled by visions and tormented for no apparent reason by his captain and by the regimental doctor. Wozzeck's lover, Marie, sleeps with a drum major, who beats Wozzeck up when he objects. Finally Wozzeck murders Marie, goes mad, and drowns himself. Büchner's play provided the perfect material for an expressionist opera.

Act III; Interlude after scene ii Scene ii is the murder scene. When Wozzeck stabs Marie, she screams, and all the leitmotifs associated with her blare away in the orchestra, as if all the events of her lifetime were flashing before her eyes.

A blackout follows, and the stark interlude between the scenes consists of a single pitch played by the orchestra in two gut-bursting crescendos—another example of modernist stretching of musical effects to the limit.

Scene iii The lights snap on again. In a sordid tavern, Wozzeck gulps a drink and seeks consolation with Marie's friend Margret. Berg's idea of a ragtime piano opens the scene—one of many signs that European music of the 1920s had woken up to American influences. But it is a distorted, dissonant ragtime, heard through the ears of someone on the verge of a breakdown.

The music is disjointed, confused, shocking. When Margret gets up on the piano and sings a song, her song is distorted, too:

The image shows two musical examples. The first, labeled 'Fast Rhythm', is in 2/4 time and features a piano part with a 'ff' dynamic. The second, labeled 'Slow', is also in 2/4 time and features a vocal line for Margret. The lyrics for Margret's song are: 'In's Schwa - ben - land da ____ mag ich nit But Swabia will never be . . .'

Suddenly she notices blood on Wozzeck's hand. It smells like human blood, she says. In a dreadful climax to the scene, the apprentices and street girls in the inn come out of the shadows and close in on Wozzeck. He manages to escape during another blackout, as a new orchestral interlude surges frantically and furiously.

The whole of scene iii is built on a single short rhythm, repeated over and over again with only slight modifications—but *presented in many different tempos*. This twitching “master rhythm” is marked above the two previous examples, first at a fast tempo, then at a slow one; we first heard it in the timpani in the interlude between scenes ii and iii. Another obvious instance comes when Margret first notices the blood:

The image shows a 'Master rhythm' example and a vocal line for Margret. The 'Master rhythm' is a short, repeating rhythmic pattern. The vocal line for Margret is in 4/4 time and features the lyrics: 'A - ber was hast Du an der Hand? But what's that on your hand?'

Here is yet another kind of ostinato—very different from Stravinsky’s kind (see page 322) or Schoenberg’s in the song “Night” (page 327). Even though this master rhythm may elude the listener in a good many of its appearances, its hypnotic effect contributes powerfully to the sense of nightmare and fixation.

Scene iv Fatefully, Wozzeck returns to the pond where he murdered Marie. The orchestra engages in some nature illustration; we can even hear frogs croaking around the pond. Wozzeck’s mind has quite cracked. He shrieks for the knife (in powerful *Sprechstimme* reminiscent of *Pierrot lunaire*: see page 326), discovers the corpse, and sees the blood-red moon and the pond, too, seemingly filled with blood. He falls into the water to wash himself.

At this point, his principal tormenters walk by. The captain and the doctor hear the macabre orchestral gurgles and understand that someone is drowning, but like people watching a mugging on a crowded city street, they make no move to help. “Let’s get away! Come quickly!” says the terrified captain—in plain, naturalistic speech, rather than the *Sprechstimme* used by Wozzeck.

In the blackout after this scene, emotional music wells up in the orchestra, mourning for Wozzeck, Marie, and humanity at large. Here Berg adopts and even surpasses the late Romantic style of Gustav Mahler. Anguished leitmotifs from earlier in the opera, mainly in the brass, surge into a great climax, then subside.

Scene v Berg (following Büchner) has yet another turn of the knife waiting for us in the opera’s final scene. Some children who are playing with Wozzeck’s little son run off to view his mother’s newly discovered corpse. Uncomprehending, he follows them. The icy sweetness of the music here is as stunning as the violent music of the tavern scene and the weird pond music. In turning Büchner’s visionary play fragment into an expressionist opera, Berg created one of the great modernist theater pieces of the twentieth century.

Wozzeck, London, 2006



Schoenberg and Serialism

Of all early twentieth-century composers, Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) was the most keenly aware of the problem caused by ever-broadening dissonance and atonality. The problem, to put it simply, was the clear and present danger of chaos. In the early 1920s Schoenberg found a way that he felt would impose order or control over the newly “emancipated” elements of music.

This resulted in the **twelve-tone system**, defined by Schoenberg as a “method of composing with the twelve tones solely in relation to one another”—that is, *not* in relation to a central pitch, or tonic, which is no longer the point of reference for music. This method became known as **serialism**. Serialism can be regarded as a systematization of the chromaticism developed by Romantic composers, especially Richard Wagner (see page 232).

The Twelve-Tone System

Schoenberg’s method of composing with the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale held them to a *fixed order*. An ordered sequence of the twelve pitches is called a **twelve-tone row**, or **series**: hence the term *serialism*. For any composition, he would determine a series ahead of time and maintain it (the next piece would have a different series).

What does “maintain” mean in this context? It means that *Schoenberg composed by writing notes only in the order of the work’s series*, or of certain carefully prescribed other versions of the series (see below). As a general rule, he went through the entire series without any repetitions or backtracking before starting over again. However, the pitches can appear in any octave, high or low. They can stand out as melody notes or blend

into the harmony. They can assume any rhythm: In the example below, pitch 10 lasts sixteen times as long as pitch 7.

And what are those “versions” of the series? The series can be used not only in its original form but also *transposed*, that is, the same note ordering can start from any note in the chromatic scale. The composer can also present the series *backward* (called “retrograde”) or *inverted*, that is, with the intervals between notes turned upside down. The basic idea of serialism may seem to impose order with a vengeance by putting severe limits on what a composer can do. But once the versions are taken into consideration, an enormous number of options becomes available.

Serialism and Unity

Part of the point of twelve-tone composition is that each piece has its own special “sound world” determined by its series. This permeates the whole piece. The next piece has a new series and a new sound world.

Serialism can be regarded as the end result of an important tendency in nineteenth-century music, the search for ever stronger means of unity within individual compositions. We have traced the “principle of thematic unity” in music by Berlioz, Wagner, and others (see page 236). A serial composition is, in a sense, totally unified, since every measure of it shares the same unique sound world. On its own special terms, Schoenberg’s serialism seemed to realize the Romantic composers’ ideal of unity.

The Second Viennese School

The two composers after Schoenberg quickest to adopt his serialism, Anton Webern and Alban Berg, had both studied



Phrase of a Schoenberg melody using a twelve-tone series



LISTEN

Berg, *Wozzeck*, Act III, scenes iii and iv

SCENE iii: A tavern

28

0:28 Wozzeck: *Tanzt Alle; tanzt nur zu, springt, schwitzt und stinkt, es holt Euch doch noch einmal der Teufel!*

*Es ritten drei Reiter wohl an den Rhein,
Bei einer Frau Wirtin da kehrten sie ein.
Mein Wein ist gut, mein Bier ist klar,
Mein Töchterlein liegt auf der . . .*

Dance, everyone! Go on, dance, sweat and stink, the devil will get you in the end.

*(Gulps down a glass of wine)
(Shouts above the pianist:)
Three horsemen rode along the Rhine,
They came to an inn and they asked for wine.
The wine was fine, the beer was clear,
The innkeeper's daughter . . .*



28–32



4–5

with him in Vienna before World War I. Together the three are sometimes referred to as the Second Viennese School. They were very different in musical personality, and serialism did not really draw them together; rather it seems to have accentuated the unique qualities of each composer.

Anton Webern (1883–1945) was an unspectacular individual whose life revolved around his strangely fragile artistic accomplishment. Despite his aristocratic background, he became a devoted conductor of the Vienna Workers’ Chorus, as well as holding other, rather low-profile conducting positions.

From the start, Webern reacted against the grandiose side of Romanticism, as represented by the works of Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler. He turned his music about-face, toward abstraction, atomization, and quiet: so quiet that listening to his music, one listens to the rests almost as much as to the notes themselves. His compositions are all extremely brief and concentrated (we discuss one of the briefest on page 360). Webern’s entire musical output can fit on three CDs.

But both Webern’s vision of musical abstraction and his brilliant use of serialism made him a natural link between the first phase of modernism, around World War I, and the second. Though he was killed in 1945, shot in error by a member of the American occupying forces in Austria, his forward-looking compositions caught the imagination of an entire generation of composers after World War II.

Alban Berg (1885–1935), in contrast, looked back; more than Schoenberg and certainly more than Webern, he kept lines of communication open to the Romantic tradition by way of Mahler. Berg’s first opera, *Wozzeck*, was an immediate success on a scale never enjoyed by the other “Second Viennese” composers. His second opera, *Lulu* (1935), is now also a classic, though it made its way slowly—Berg had only partly orchestrated Act III when he died, and both operas were banned by the Nazis.

Like Webern, Berg met a bizarre end: He died at the age of fifty as a result of an infected insect bite. After his



For once, a composer picture that’s different: Alban Berg looks out over a life-sized portrait of himself painted by Arnold Schoenberg.

death, it came out that he had been secretly in love with a married woman, and had employed a musical code to refer to her and even to address her in his compositions—among them a very moving Violin Concerto (1935), his last work, which also refers to two other women.

0:58	Wozzeck:	Verdammt! Komm, Margret! Komm, setzt dich her, Margret! Margret, Du bist so heiss. . . . Wart’ nur, wirst auch kalt werden! Kannst nicht singen?	Hell! Come on, Margret! (<i>Dances with her</i>) Come and sit down, Margret! Margret, you’re hot! Wait, you too will be cold! Can’t you sing? (<i>She sings:</i>)
1:36	Margret:	In’s Schwabenland, da mag ich nit, Und lange Kleider trag ich nit. Denn lange Kleider, spitze Schuh, Die kommen keiner Dienstmagd zu.	But Swabia will never be The land that I shall want to choose, For silken dresses, spike-heeled shoes, Are not for servant girls like me.
	Wozzeck:	Nein! keine Schuh, man kann auch blossfüssig in die Höll’ geh’n! Ich möcht heut raufen, raufen. . . .	No shoes! You can go to hell just as well barefoot! I’m feeling like a fight today!

- 29 2:22 Margret: Aber was hast Du an der Hand? But what's that on your hand?
 Wozzeck: Ich? Ich? Me? My hand?
 Margret: Rot! Blut! Red! Blood!
 Wozzeck: Blut? Blut? Blood? Blood? (*People gather around*)
 Margret: Freilich . . . Blut! Yes, it is blood!
 Wozzeck: Ich glaub', ich hab' mich geschnitten, I think I cut myself, on my hand. . .
 da an der rechten Hand. . .
 Margret: Wie kommt's denn zum Ellenbogen? How'd it get right up to the elbow, then?
 Wozzeck: Ich hab's daran abgewischt. I wiped it off there. . .
 Apprentices: Mit der rechten Hand am rechten Arm? Your right hand on your right arm?
 Wozzeck: Was wollt Ihr? Was geht's Euch an? What do you want? What's it to you?
 Margret: Puh! Puh! Da stinkt's nach Menschenblut! Gross! It stinks of human blood! (*curtain*)

Confusion. The people in the Inn crowd around Wozzeck, accusing him. Wozzeck shouts back at them and escapes.

SCENE iv: A pond in a wood

- 30 3:45 Wozzeck: Das Messer? Wo ist das Messer? The knife! Where is the knife? I left it
 Ich hab's dagelassen . . . Näher, there, around here somewhere. I'm
 noch näher. Mir graut's! Da regt scared! Something's moving.
 sich was. Still! Alles still und tod Silence. Everything silent and dead . . .
 . . . Mörder! Mörder! Ha! Da Murderer! Murderer! Ah, someone
 ruft's! Nein, ich selbst. called! No, it was just me.
 Marie! Marie! Was hast Du für eine Marie, Marie! What's that red cord
 rote Schnur um den Hals? Hast around your neck? A red necklace,
 Dir das rote Halsband verdient, payment for your sins, like the
 wie die Ohringeln, mit Deiner earrings? Why is your dark hair so wild?
 Sünde? Was hängen Dir die schwartzen
 Haare so wild?
- 1:12 4:56 Mörder! Mörder! Sie werden nach Murderer! Murderer! They will
 mir suchen. . . Das Messer verrät come look for me. . . The knife
 mich! Da, da ist's! will betray me! Here, here it is.
 So! da hinunter! Es taucht ins There! Sink to the bottom! It
 dunkle Wasser wie ein Stein. plunges into the dark water like a stone.
 Aber der Mond verrät mich . . . But the moon will betray me. . .
 der Mond ist blutig. Will denn The moon is bloody. Is the whole
 die ganze Welt es ausplaudern?! — world going to betray me?
 Das Messer, es liegt zu weit vorn, The knife is too near the edge —
 sie finden's beim Baden oder wenn they'll find it when they're swimming or
 sie nach Muscheln tauchen. gathering mussels.
 Ich find's nicht . . . Aber ich muss I can't find it. But I have to get washed.
 mich waschen. Ich bin blutig. Da There's blood on me. Here's one
 ein Fleck . . . und noch einer. spot . . . here's another. . .
 Weh! Weh! Ich wasche mich mit Blut! Oh, woe! I am washing myself in blood!
 Das Wasser ist Blut . . . Blut. . . The water is blood . . . blood. . .
 (*drowns*)
- 31 6:46 Captain: Halt! Wait!
 Doctor: Hören Sie? Dort! Don't you hear? There!
 Captain: Jesus! Das war ein Ton! Jesus! What a sound!
 Doctor: Ja, dort. Yes, there.

Captain:	Es ist das Wasser im Teich. Das Wasser ruft. Es ist schon lange Niemand ertrunken. Kommen Sie, Doktor! Es ist nicht gut zu hören.	It's the water in the pond, the water is calling. It's been a long time since anyone drowned. Come away, Doctor! This is not good to hear.
Doctor:	Das stöhnt . . . als stürbe ein Mensch. Da ertrinkt Jemand!	There's a groan, as though someone were dying. Somebody's drowning!
Captain:	Unheimlich! Der Mond rot und die Nebel grau. Hören Sie? . . . Jetzt wieder das Achzen.	It's weird! the red moon, the gray mist. Now do you hear? . . . That moaning again.
Doctor:	Stiller, . . . jetzt ganz still.	It's getting quieter—now it's stopped.
Captain:	Kommen Sie! Kommen Sie schnell!	Let's get away! Come quickly! (<i>curtain</i>)

32

8:15 ORCHESTRAL MUSIC (LAMENT)

Berg, *Wozzeck*. © 1926 by Universal Edition A.G., Vienna. English translation © 1952 by Alfred A. Kalmus, London W.1. © renewed. All rights reserved. Used by permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, U.S. and Canadian agent for Universal Edition A.G., Vienna.

4 Modernism in America: Ives

As we have seen, Paris and Vienna, centers of intense activity in all the arts, were also the first centers of modernist music. Echoes of modernism, some loud, some soft, were heard elsewhere in Europe: in Italy, where there was a short-lived movement called Futurism, and in Germany, Russia, Hungary, and England.

America, meanwhile, had no rich tradition of classical music, and what we did have was resolutely conservative. So it is amazing that a major modernist composer should have emerged in the United States as early as around 1900. *Emerged* is not quite the word, for what also amazes is that Charles Ives worked in isolation, composing in his spare time. His music was little performed until the 1950s.

Many of Ives's compositions have American subjects, such as *Central Park in the Dark* and *Some Southpaw Pitching*. His *Holidays* Symphony includes movements titled "The Fourth of July," "Thanksgiving," and so on. These pieces regularly employ American music: folk songs, popular songs by Stephen Foster, gospel hymns, and ragtime are all quoted, sometimes in great profusion. Ives especially favored the hymns he remembered from his youth.

Ives was our first important nationalist composer. But he was also more than that: a true American original, a man with amazingly radical ideas about music, and an insatiable experimenter with musical materials. Ives anticipated many of the most talked-about musical innovations of the early part of the twentieth century—and of the later part, too.

Writing highly dissonant music was the least of it. He also wrote music for pianos tuned to quarter tones, and several works in which certain elements can be played, or not played, or played differently, depending on the performer's choice. For the whole length of his *Psalm 90*, for chorus, organ, and bells, low C sounds continuously in the organ pedals—for nearly eleven minutes. In one of his major works, the *Concord* Sonata of 1915, the pianist has to use his elbow and a special wooden block that holds sixteen notes down at a time.

To get an idea of the extraordinary range of Ives's work, we examine two works—one of them little known, the other very famous.

“Get up and try to use your ears like a man!”

Charles Ives

Charles Ives (1874–1954)

Charles Ives was the son of a Civil War military bandmaster and music teacher from Danbury, Connecticut, near New York City. Ives senior was an extraordinary character who enjoyed musical games such as playing two tunes simultaneously in different keys. His father's unconventionality—and his association with popular music—left a lasting impression on Charles.

Ives was a church organist as a teenager, and then went on to Yale, where he was a popular undergraduate (with a D+ average). He absorbed everything that his professor, the eminent composer Horatio Parker, had to teach him. But the American musical climate in the 1890s was basically hostile to modern trends; Parker wrote in a tame, traditional style. For Ives, this was not only dull but somehow also unmasculine. His vision was of a much more vigorous, rough-grained, enthusiastic, experimental kind of music.

When he got his B.A. he hedged his bets and took a job in insurance as well as another church organist position. After a few years he relegated music entirely to his spare time, while pursuing a very successful and innovative business career during the day. He seldom mixed with musicians and for years made little effort to get his works performed or published.

All the while Ives was developing his unique mystical notions about music, notions that have been linked to nineteenth-century New England transcendentalism. To Ives, the actual sound of music seems to have counted less than the idea of music making as a basic human activity. All kinds of music were equally valid, then, whether popular or sophisticated, harmonious or wildly dissonant, played in or out of tune. What mattered was people's communal joy in music making. Believing that all musical experiments have

equal validity, Ives launched into visionary projects that no other composer of the time would have considered.

Ives's late years were clouded by pathos, for after 1920 he gave up music almost entirely due to discouragement and bad health. He also sometimes tinkered with his old music to make

it appear even more revolutionary than it was—though the music as he originally wrote it still amazes music historians. For his last thirty years Ives lived in quiet affluence with his wife, Harmony, the sister of a college friend—he had taken her to his junior prom; Harmony seems to have had a strong influence on her husband's ideas about music and life. They lived long enough to see his music admired first by a growing number of American musicians and then by the public at large.

Chief Works: For orchestra, 4 symphonies and the *Holidays Symphony*, several “Orchestral Sets,” *Central Park in the Dark* and *The Unanswered Question* ■ *Concord Sonata* for piano (movements entitled “Emerson,” “Hawthorne,” “The Alcotts,” “Thoreau”) ■ *Variations on “America”* for organ (written at age 17; best known in its arrangement for orchestra) ■ Chamber music, much of it programmatic ■ Church music, choral music, and important solo songs, among them “General William Booth enters into Heaven”

Encore: After *Orchestral Set No. 2* and *The Unanswered Question*, listen to *Putnam's Camp*, *The Fourth of July*.



CHARLES IVES

Second Orchestral Set, second movement: “The Rockstrewn Hills Join in the People's Outdoor Meeting” (1909)

This orchestral piece is the second of three that make up Ives's Second Orchestral Set. Ives wrote four symphonies; if his orchestral sets are thought of as (very) informal examples of the same genre, this movement would count as the scherzo. For all its obscurity, the title has a true Ivesian ring: The grandeur of nature joins a human festival, apparently some sort of revival meeting.

The piece begins with several false starts, as though any effort to formulate a melody is bound to be defeated by other sounds, rhythms, and bits of tunes coming from this way and that. A dance fragment, first in the strings, then in the woodwinds, is interrupted by snatches of brass band music and piano ragtime. The hubbub gets more and more dissonant and atonal.

Gradually this array of “sound bites” builds up to a passage of forceful irregular rhythms. We catch a fragment of a cakewalk, a ragtime dance of the



1890s. At the climax, the confused juxtaposition of various ideas gives way for just a moment to homophony; the irregular pounding rhythms here remind us of Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*—a work written four years after Ives wrote this one. There is a slowdown and a quiet pause.

A new section begins with a fragmentary march in the trombones. Then at last a phrase of a hymn tune begins to crystallize. Only at the fourth try does the melody become clear. “I am coming, Lord!,” the rousing chorus from one of Ives’s favorite hymns, is orchestrated like a march:

Hymn, “I Hear Thy Welcome Voice”

f I am coming, Lord! Com-ing now to Thee! Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood That flowed on Calva-ry.

Ives

Slow, swinging tempo

f *p* *rit.* 4 *pp* (tune fades)

After this collapses, the piano can be heard playing four-note segments of the whole-tone scale (a hallmark of Debussy—but Ives probably learned it from his inquisitive father). The outdoor meeting ends on an intense but quiet dissonance that is strangely serious, even spiritual—a characteristic Ivesian gesture.

Whole-tone scale

No. 63. I Hear Thy Welcome Voice.
"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATTHEW 11:28
REV. L. HARRINGTON. REV. LEWIS HARRINGTON, ly. per.
1. I hear Thy welcome voice That calls me, Lord, to Thee For
2. The com-ing weak and vile, Thou dost my strength assure; Thou
cleans-ing in Thy pre-cious blood That flowed on Cal-va-ry,
dost my vil-ly-ness fol-ly cleanse, Till spot-less all and pure.
CHORUS.
I am com-ing Lord! Com-ing now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood That flowed on Cal-va-ry.
3 'Tis Jesus calls me on To perfect faith and love,
To perfect hope, and peace, and trust,
For earth and heaven above.
4 'Tis Jesus who confirms The blessed work within;
By adding grace to welcomed grace,
Where reigns the power of sin.
5 And He the witness gives To loyal hearts and true,
That every promise is fulfilled,
If faith but brings the plea.
6 All hail, atoning blood! All hail, redeeming grace!
All hail, the Gift of Christ, our Lord,
Our Strength and Righteousness!

A gospel hymn book of the time, open at the hymn used in Ives’s Second Orchestral Set



A revival meeting

LISTENING CHART 20

Ives, “The Rockstrewn Hills”

4 min., 47 sec.



33	0:00	Introductory
28	0:17	Dance fragment, strings; interrupted
	0:29	Dance fragment, woodwinds; interrupted
	0:49	Ragtime fragment, piano
		Kaleidoscopic array of fragmentary ideas; buildup
	1:27	Brass becomes prominent.
	1:58	Cakewalk fragment
	2:07	Climax: homophony
	2:34	Slowdown and pause (solo stringed instruments)
	2:44	March fragment, trombones
	3:00	The hymn is prefigured.
34	3:14	Dance fragment from beginning, brass—collapse
29	3:27	Hymn, clearer
0:13	3:57	At last the hymn emerges clearly: “I am coming, Lord!”
0:43	4:08	Fades: a fragmentary whole-tone scale in the piano
0:54		

“I remember, when I was a boy—at the outdoor Camp Meeting services in Redding (Conn.), all the farmers, their families and field hands, for miles around, would come afoot or in their farm wagons. I remember how the great waves of sound used to come through the trees . . . There was power and exaltation in those great conclaves of sound from humanity.”

Charles Ives

► Access Interactive Listening Chart 20 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHARLES IVES

The Unanswered Question (1906)



This famous work—utterly quiet, serene, and solemn—is as different as could be from the cheerful clatter of “The Rockstrewn Hills.” It requires two conductors. Ives himself described it best:

The strings play *ppp* throughout, with no change in tempo. They represent “The Silences of the Druids” who know, see, and hear nothing. The trumpet intones “The Unanswered Question of Existence” and states it in the same tone of voice each time. But the hunt for “The Invisible Answer” undertaken by the flutes and other human beings [Ives is personifying the other woodwind instruments] gradually becomes more active and louder. The “Fighting Answerers” seem to realize a futility, and begin to mock “The Question”—the strife is over. . . . After they disappear, “The Question” is asked for the last time, and the “Silences” are heard beyond in “Undisturbed Solitude.”

What is so novel here—what rivals in innovativeness any of the experiments of the European modernists of the time—is the concept of three distinct, independent levels of music. The smooth string choir, playing consonant harmonies, is one. Another is provided by the dissonant woodwinds, a more and more taunting modernist challenge to the strings. Then there is the single trumpet, sounding like a voice, all the more solemn and haunting for asking its Question only about half a dozen times in the whole composition.

These simultaneous levels do not fit together in the least, in terms of traditional polyphony. Their precise rhythmic or contrapuntal relationship is left to chance. Yet this unusual nondialogue between “Silences,” “Questioner,” and “Answerers” proves to be both coherent and poignant: a foretaste, perhaps, of our own age, an age marked by the quiet desperation of noncommunication.

LISTEN

IVES
The Unanswered
Question

1:50 Question, *ppp*
(trumpet)

2:44 Question
again at 3:41, 4:16, 4:57

5:42 Question, *f*

6:34 Question, *ppp*



► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 21 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 22

Alternatives to Modernism

In music, as in all the arts, modernism was a primary source of creative energy in the period from before World War I until after World War II. The vision of new “languages” to express the new conditions of modern life was a powerful one, even if the public at large often found those languages hard to understand. The success of some avant-garde works of art—Alban Berg’s opera *Wozzeck*, for one—shows that they met with a deep response from minds and hearts battered by the events of the early twentieth century.

Not everyone was as successful as Berg, however; most modernist music played to a small, esoteric audience. A figure like Schoenberg, convinced that music’s progress depended on his leadership, could accept this and hold uncompromisingly to modernist principles. Many others, too, never blinked—including, after Ives, several modernists in America, chief among them Carl Ruggles (1876–1971), Roger Sessions (1896–1985), and Edgard Varèse (1883–1965; Varèse came to America from France).

Twentieth-Century Traditionalism

Other composers, both here and abroad, took a more ambivalent view of modernism. The force of Romantic tradition was still strong. Some famous twentieth-century names never joined the avant-garde at all and kept on mining the reliable quarries of Romanticism for their own private veins of (they hoped) musical gold. One area where this tendency is particularly clear, as we will see, is early film music.

Other composers worked with the ideas of Schoenberg or Stravinsky, selectively adopting no more than they needed to fulfill their own creative needs. Still others started out wholeheartedly in the avant-garde, only to turn back to more traditional styles. American figures who fall somewhere in this spectrum are Charles Griffes (1884–1920), William Grant Still (1895–1978), Samuel Barber (1910–1981), and William Schuman (1910–1992), as well as Aaron Copland (1900–1990), whom we come to at the end of this chapter. Both Still, the first important African American composer in the concert music tradition, and Copland also recall nineteenth-century nationalism in their use of American musical idioms.



The formality of concert life grew in the early twentieth century. Here it is captured in a magnificent, full-dress portrait of Portuguese cellist Guilhermina Suggia (1885–1950), one of the first women to pursue her instrument professionally.

Of the many impressive composers active in the first half of the twentieth century, several have maintained and even increased their hold on audiences up to the present day—including the opera composers Puccini (see page 278) and Richard Strauss (1864–1949). Strauss started out as a composer of sensational symphonic poems, and then in 1905 created a furor with the modernist opera *Salome*. But soon he retreated to a more Romantic style. It is evident in his opera *Der Rosenkavalier* (The Knight of the Rose, 1911), a dizzying mixture of Wagner, Mozart, and Johann Strauss, the Waltz King (no relation).

Two more major composers were Russians who (like Stravinsky) fled the Russian Revolution of 1917: Sergei Prokofiev, who is discussed on page 354, and Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943). Rachmaninov was one of the greatest pianists of his time, and his Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3 are among the most popular works in the concert repertory. There is a section from Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, a concerto-like work for piano and orchestra, on our DVD.



1 Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel, born in 1875 in the south of France, was later attracted to Paris. From the very start, his music was marked by refinement, hyperelegance, and a certain crispness; musicians admire him for his superb workmanship and high style. As Debussy occupied the middle ground between Romanticism and modernism, Ravel carved out a place for himself between impressionism and Neoclassicism (see page 325). While his harmonies and chord progressions often remind us of Debussy, he favored clarity, precision, and instant communication, qualities he found in earlier musical forms and styles.

Few composers have ranged as widely in imagination as Ravel. His music visited Spain, Madagascar, Asia, ancient Greece, America, and—again and again—the world of childhood. He even evoked Vienna, in a bitter anti-German parody of waltz music, *La Valse*, composed right after World War I (1919).

MAURICE RAVEL

Piano Concerto in G (1931)



A light-hearted piece for piano and small orchestra, the Piano Concerto in G is Ravel's tribute to jazz (his most outspoken tribute, but not his first; like Debussy and Stravinsky, Ravel was fascinated by jazz long before he came to the United States in 1928 and haunted night-spots in Harlem). Americans like George Gershwin and Aaron Copland incorporate jazz accents in their compositions in a fairly direct way (see page 394). With Ravel everything is slightly skewed, as if through a special filter, with a delicacy and elegance that we think of as characteristically French, perhaps, and that Ravel projects more clearly than any other composer.

First Movement (*Allegrement*) The first theme is *not* jazzy. A long, lively, folklike tune is presented in the sort of fabulous orchestration that is this composer's hallmark: After a whiplash—literally—a piccolo plays the tune with syncopated *pizzicato* (plucked) string chords and the piano shimmering in the background. But the tune really belongs to a special high trumpet (trumpet in C), with the syncopated chords barked out by the other brass.

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The piano now introduces a second theme that recalls the blues—not directly, but clearly enough. A third theme suggests romantic popular songs of the 1930s. Typical of early jazz is Ravel's use of short *breaks*, instrumental interludes between lines of a song lasting just one or two measures (see page 382). He catches this device perfectly with the high clarinet (E-flat clarinet) and a muted trumpet cutting into theme 2, with swishing sounds from the piano and the harp.

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LISTENING CHART 21

Ravel, Piano Concerto in G, first movement

Free sonata form. 8 min., 15 sec.



1 EXPOSITION

- 0:00 Theme 1, piccolo, syncopated strings *pizzicato*
0:24 Theme 1, trumpet, syncopated brass
0:36 Sudden modulation
Second group
0:44 Theme 2, piano: slower; interrupted by the “break”

2 1:40 Theme 3, piano

- 0:37 2:17 Theme 3, orchestra—bassoon, trumpet
0:55 2:35 Vigorous, driving music for the piano
1:14 2:54 Break
1:47 3:27 Approach to a cadence

3 3:36 Retransition: upward scales in the piano

RECAPITULATION

- 0:09 3:45 Theme 1, piano, *ff*; returns to the tonic key
0:20 3:57 Sudden modulation

Second group

- 0:29 4:05 Theme 2, piano—with gong
4 4:30 Dreamlike episode: theme 2, harp
0:38 5:08 Break; melody continues in the French horn
1:14 5:44 “Cadenza”: theme 3, with extensive trills
2:04 6:34 theme 3, piano and orchestra
2:34 7:04 Piano: vigorous, brilliant
3:07 7:37 Approach to a cadence

CODA

- 5 7:42 Orchestra (trumpet), *f*, in the original tonic key, with motives derived from theme 1
0:17 7:59 *ff*

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At a later point, the harp plays theme 2 itself, in a dreamlike episode that brings this busy movement to a state of near suspension.

After the piano and orchestra have presented themes 2 and 3, the piano engages in vigorous, propulsive music of the sort that often leads to cadences in concertos (see page 190). A new syncopated motive strongly implies that a cadence is coming, though the actual resolution is disguised.

Ravel uses the classical form for a concerto first movement (see page 190), but in the freest possible way. He skips both the orchestra exposition and the development section entirely. A passage that he labels “cadenza” resembles a true cadenza in that it comes near the end of a concerto first movement and the piano plays entirely solo, yet it feels nothing like a free improvisation; in fact, the unaccompanied piano plays theme 3. Ravel drew on classical tradition but at the same time invented his own super-clear and listener-friendly form for the Piano Concerto in G.

At the very end of the first movement, Ravel borrows a favorite device invented by Debussy, a long series of parallel chords. The effect could hardly be more different: Debussy’s chords—in *Clouds*, for example; see page 318—are *piano*, legato, silky, vague, and atmospheric; Ravel’s are *fortissimo* and staccato, crisp and clear.

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Ravel (right) with the legendary dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, the star of his ballet *Daphnis and Chloé* in 1912. A year later Nijinsky was responsible for the riot-inducing choreography of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

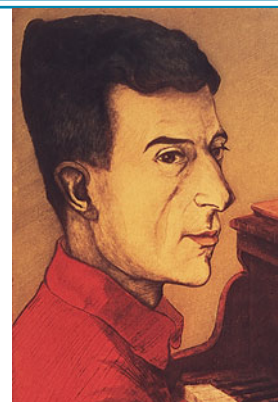
Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Maurice Ravel was born in a little town in the south of France, two miles from the Spanish border, and was brought to Paris at an early age. His mother came from the Basque region of Spain, and many of his compositions have exotic Spanish resonances—*Boléro*, most famously; also *Habanera*, *The Spanish Hour*, and others.

Ravel spent no fewer than sixteen lackluster years at the Paris Conservatory, the gateway to French musical life in those days, while his older contemporary Claude Debussy emerged as a leader in the music of modernism. When Debussy died in 1918, Ravel was acknowledged as the leading composer of war-ravaged France. Ravel hated Germany and German music, and he was young enough to volunteer for military service against the Germans in World War I, despite his frail body and retiring personality.

From the time of his first major success, with the impressionistic piano piece *Jeux d'eau* (Fountains; 1901), it was clear Ravel had an amazing ear for sonority, and the magical sound of his music for piano or orchestra is unmatched. In the following years he associated with modernist artists and writers, but he never really warmed to the modernist spirit. He was the most meticulous and exquisite of composers, and his aim was for clarity above all. Some of his most famous compositions make use of classical forms, such as the *Sonatine* for Piano and the Piano Concerto in G.

Ravel never married, seems to have had no close relationships, and lived an uneventful life at his home in Paris. His one big trip, in 1928, was to America; here he met George Gershwin (and Charlie Chaplin) and came back with a small fortune. In 1932, Ravel contracted a rare brain disease; among other symptoms, it rendered him unable to write down the music in his head. He died five years later. The Piano Concerto in G of 1931 was his last work but one.



Chief Works: Orchestral works: *Mother Goose Suite*, *La Valse*, the ballet scores *Boléro* and *Daphnis and Chloé* ■ One-act operas: *L'Heure espagnole* (The Spanish Hour) and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (The Child Bewitched), a delightful childhood fantasy ■ Piano concertos; *Gaspard de la nuit*, one of the hardest pieces ever written for piano; *Jeux d'eau*; and a charming piano *Sonatine* ■ Songs; a string quartet ■ Many arrangements for orchestra, including Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (see page 288)

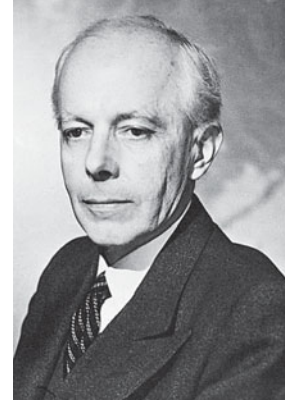
Encore: After the first movement of the Piano Concerto in G, listen to the second movement; *Boléro*; *Sonatine* for Piano.

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Béla Bartók showed unusual talent as a pianist and composer at an early age. Music was the avocation of his father, who was principal of an agricultural school in Hungary; after his death Bartók's mother worked as a piano teacher, tirelessly promoting her son's career.

Few musicians have ever had as varied a career as Bartók. He was a prolific composer and a fine pianist, as was his second wife; they appeared as a two-piano team. (Both of his wives had been his students.) In conjunction with another important Hungarian composer, Zoltán Kodály, he directed the Budapest Academy of Music, where the two men tried out new ideas in music teaching. An outcome of this side of Bartók's career is his *Mikrokosmos*, a series of 153 graded piano pieces starting with the very easiest. Well known to most piano students today, the *Mikrokosmos* has probably done more than any other work to introduce modernism to large numbers of musicians in their impressionable years.

Also with Kodály, Bartók undertook a large-scale investigation of Hungarian (and other) folk music, writing several standard books on the topic. He published many folk-song and folk-dance arrangements, and his other compositions are saturated with folk rhythms, modes, and melodic turns. The outstanding nationalist composer of the twentieth century, Bartók left a body of work that equals or surpasses that of any of the nineteenth-century nationalists.



Bartók was strongly opposed to the Nazis. After they came to power in Germany, he refused to concertize there and broke ties with his German publisher. And his liberal views caused him a good deal of trouble from right-wingers in Hungary. In 1940,

after the outbreak of World War II, Bartók came to America, but he was not well known here and there was little interest in his music. His last years were a struggle to complete his Third Piano Concerto and the Viola Concerto. His important works earned a wide, enthusiastic audience only after his death.

Chief Works: Concerto for Orchestra, 3 piano concertos, Violin Concerto, Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (for small orchestra) ■ Six string quartets; a fascinating Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion ■ An opera, *Bluebeard's Castle*, and a ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin* ■ *Mikrokosmos* and other works for piano ■ Many folk-song arrangements for various ensembles, including Six Rumanian Dances

Encore: After Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, listen to the Violin Concerto and Quartet No. 6.

2 Béla Bartók

Growing up in Hungary in the 1890s, the young Béla Bartók was first swept away by the international avant-garde leaders Debussy and especially Richard Strauss. Later in his career he was also influenced by his close contemporary Stravinsky. Bartók was, however, a man of multiple careers—pianist, educator, and musicologist as well as composer. His deep commitment to folk music—much deeper than Stravinsky's—and his professional involvement with it as a collector had a decisive impact on his music. Many would say that Bartók was more successful in integrating folk music into classical music than any other composer.

Folk music assured that Bartók's music would never (or seldom) become as abstract as much modernist music was. There is always an earthy feel to it; even at its most dissonant, there will be an infectious folk-dance swing or a touch of peasant melody. This is true even in works of his most modernist period, about 1925–35. The austere String Quartet No. 4 of 1928 is often regarded as Bartók's masterpiece.

After that time Bartók's music gradually became more accessible, and the references to folk songs in it became more mellow and, often, more poignant. He now used established forms such as sonata form and rondo; this made his music easier to follow for listeners already accustomed to these forms from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. And many of his last works include passages reminiscent of Romanticism: Violin Concerto No. 2, the popular Concerto for Orchestra, and Quartet No. 6 of 1939.

“The right type of peasant music is most perfect and varied in its forms. Its expressive power is amazing, and at the same time it is devoid of all sentimentality and superfluous ornaments. It is simple, sometimes primitive, but never silly. . . . A composer in search of new ways cannot be led by a better master.”

Béla Bartók



Bartók collecting folk songs: He was using recording equipment just a few years after commercial recordings began coming out. Around 1906, these rural Hungarians seem less amazed by the primitive phonograph than by the camera.

BÉLA BARTÓK
Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (1936)



This interesting composition can be thought of as an informal symphony in the usual four substantial movements, composed for a specially constituted small orchestra. Much of the time the instruments are divided into two sections that answer each other back and forth.* Besides strings, Bartók includes piano, harp, celesta (see page 20), timpani—very important—and other percussion. We do not learn this all at once, however. The celesta makes its first entrance with an exquisite effect halfway through the first movement. The piano and harp arrive in the second, and the xylophone only in the third.

Second Movement (Allegro) The music bubbles over with variety, an exhilarating rush of melodic fragments, striking rhythms, folk-dance fragments, and novel percussion sounds. It is all held together by sonata form.

A “preface” played by *pizzicato* (plucked) strings precedes theme 1:

Preface

Theme 1
SECOND SECTION: *bowed*

FIRST SECTION: *pizzicato*

SECOND SECTION: *bowed*

The preface, theme 1, and the contrapuntal bridge passage are all energized by motive *a*. One thinks of the motivic single-mindedness of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony (page 215). Bartók’s motive works especially well in the timpani, which play a powerful role in this movement.

*This is a principle that goes back at least as far as Giovanni Gabrieli in the early Baroque era: See page 85.

LISTENING CHART 22

Bartók, Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta,
second movement (Allegro)

Sonata form. 7 min.



EXPOSITION

6	0:00	Theme 1	With pizzicato “preface”
	0:22		Held note, drum
	0:25	Bridge	
			CADENCE Big stop, after drumbeat
7		Second group	
	0:56	Theme 2	
0:14	1:10	Theme 3	Folklike tune, strong beat
			Developmental
0:36	1:32	Theme 4	Over a string trill
1:08	2:04	Cadence theme	Piano
8			CADENCE Exaggerated cadence; drumbeat
		DEVELOPMENT	
	2:24	Section 1	Irregular rhythms: piano and percussion, leading to the Stravinskian passage
0:49	3:14	Section 2	Pizzicato scales, from the “preface”
9	3:34		New folklike tune
			Drum prepares:
0:30	4:04	Section 3	Crescendo
1:20	4:54	(retransition)	Drum grows insistent; slowdown —————>



RECAPITULATION

10	5:10	Theme 1	With timpani; meter change
0:18	5:28	Bridge	
11		Second group	
	5:40	Theme 2	Transformation: triple meter
0:11	5:51		New continuations
0:24	6:04	Theme 4	Transformation: triple meter
0:44	6:24	Cadence theme	Piano, as before
		CODA	
12	6:32		New fast dialogue on theme 1

There is a full stop after the bridge, so self-conscious that one wonders if Bartók is making fun of sonata-form conventions. The second theme group contains at least three very short themes. Theme 3 has a folk-dance lilt about it:

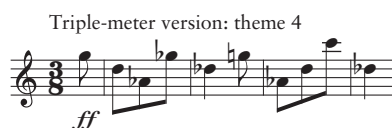
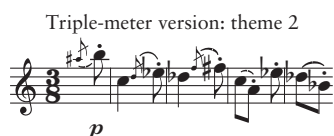


Suddenly the piano enters with a theme containing odd note-repetitions. Since the pianist has hardly played at all up to this point, this new theme feels more like a beginning than like a conclusion. Still, it functions as a cadence theme; very soon the *exposition* ends with another exaggerated cadence.

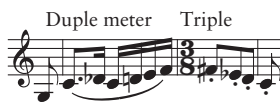
The timpani introduce the *development section*. Motive **b**, played *pizzicato*, comes in for an extensive workout. After a moment the strings drop down into an accompaniment for an amazing passage for piano, snare drum, and xylophone, punching out syncopated notes. This must have been inspired by the riot-producing “Dance of the Adolescents” in Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* (see page 322).

Next, pizzicato string scales in imitative polyphony weave endless new knots and tangles. The scales blend into another folklike tune, similar to theme 3, which is repeated very freely. Introduced by the timpani, a fugue starts up in the lowest register, preparing for the recapitulation. The fugue subject is derived from theme 1, with the meter askew.

And when the *recapitulation* comes, after much signaling from the timpani, and after an expectant slowdown, the meter is changed throughout. Theme 1 vacillates between duple and triple meter, and the second group tips the balance: themes 2 and 4 each return in swinging triple meter.



Theme 3 returns more freely. It takes the piano’s odd “cadence theme” to bring us back to the solid duple meter of the start. As a *coda*, Bartók stages a fast, intense dialogue on theme 1.



3 Aaron Copland

America’s leading composer of the generation after Charles Ives was Aaron Copland. (Ives was active from around 1895 to 1920; Copland wrote his main works from 1925 to 1950.) Young composers after World War I found many more options open to them than Ives had around 1900. The musical climate was much more favorable to new ideas, partly because the United States had been growing more aware of all things European, including European new music. Like important American writers who lived abroad—Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, Edith Wharton, Ernest Hemingway—composers now associated themselves with European modernism in a way that their predecessors never did before.

The chief modernist influence on Copland was Stravinsky, and one of Copland’s most impressive works is a strenuous set of twenty Variations for Piano (1930) that reflects Stravinsky’s dry rhythmic style and his “objective” aesthetic. But after this, Copland’s music grew more traditional. Like Strauss, Bartók, and many others of the time, he held back from the most extreme manifestations of modernism and forged his own style using such elements of modernism as he needed.

“It bothers me not at all to realize that my range as a composer includes both accessible and problematic works. To have confined myself to a single compositional approach would have enhanced my reputation for consistency, no doubt, but would have afforded me less pleasure as a creator.”

Aaron Copland, 1941

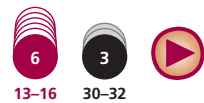
Music for Americans

Again like Bartók, Copland adopted a nationalist agenda. From the start he felt that as an American, he should write music that would speak to his fellow Americans. Copland reached out for American music of all kinds, regions, and ages.

He first turned to jazz, in orchestral pieces called *Music for the Theater* and *El salón México*. Later he incorporated cowboy songs in the ballets *Rodeo* and *Billy the Kid*, an old Shaker melody in *Appalachian Spring*, and square dancing in *The Tender Land*, an opera about growing up in the corn belt. Old hymns make an appearance in his song cycle *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. In this eclectic attitude we can perhaps again trace the influence of Stravinsky, who over his long career also tapped many musical sources, from Russian folk song to Bach, Tchaikovsky, and Schoenberg.

AARON COPLAND

Appalachian Spring (1945)



The ballet *Appalachian Spring* was choreographed and danced by Martha Graham, a towering figure in American modern dance. She conceived of “a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills,” set in the early nineteenth century. Copland composed the ballet music, and later arranged from it a concert suite in six continuous sections. Our recording is conducted by the composer.

‘Tis the gift to be simple,
 ‘tis the gift to be free,
 ‘Tis the gift to come down
 where you ought to be,
 And when we find our-
 selves in the place just
 right
 ‘Twill be in the valley of
 love and delight. . . .
 When true simplicity is
 gained
 To bow and to bend we
 shan’t be ashamed,
 Turn, turn will be our
 delight,
 Till by turning, turning we
 come round right.

“Simple Gifts”

13
30

Section 1 The ballet begins with a very still, clear, static passage of a kind that Copland made very much his own. It seems to catch the spirit of a vast silent landscape at dawn, perhaps, or just before dawn. Solo instruments play meditative figures in counterpoint; an occasional solemn pulse is heard in the harp.

14
31

Section 2 Here “the bride-to-be and the young farmer husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invited.” The celebration of their new house starts with a lively square dance. Soon a slower melody—something like a hymn—rises up in counterpoint to the dance figures, first in the wind instruments and then in the strings:

Allegro

WINDS: Hymn

STRINGS, PIANO: Square Dance

After a section of irregular rhythm, reminiscent of Stravinsky, the music dies down into a prayerful version of the hymn. We also hear little fragments of the dance.

Sections 3 and 4 The next two sections pick up the tempo: Section 3 evokes another whirling square dance and section 4 is a danced sermon by a revivalist and his followers. Both sections include quiet statements of the hymn.

15 **Section 5** The next dance is choreographed to a set of variations on a Shaker song, “Simple Gifts.” The Shakers, a religious sect adhering to celibacy and common ownership of property, founded scattered communities from Massachusetts to Kentucky in the late eighteenth century.

CLARINET

a

p simply expressive

b

f *mf*

The four variations are extremely simple—little more, really, than playings of the tune or part of the tune by different instruments, in different keys, and in different tempos. Sometimes melodic phrases are heard in imitation.

16 **Section 6** Finally, after some music that the program says is “like a prayer,” the hymn and the landscape music return once again. We realize that Copland has ingeniously made one grow out of the other. The ballet concludes very quietly. Perhaps the housewarming celebrations have gone on all night, and we are now experiencing another clear gray dawn, a reminder of the many lonely dawns the pioneer couple will face together in the years to come.

LISTEN

COPLAND
Appalachian Spring
SECTION 5

0:00	5:14	Theme
0:37	5:51	Variation 1
1:06	6:20	Variation 2
1:51	7:05	Variation 3
2:31	7:45	Variation 4



Martha Graham (1894–1991) was one of the legendary group of women who created modern dance—with jazz, one of the great American art forms. She is shown here, with some pioneer women, dancing *Appalachian Spring*, which she commissioned.

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Aaron Copland was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants living in Brooklyn. After a solid musical education at home, he went abroad to study in Paris. Like many other overseas students, Copland was fortunate to be able to work with a remarkable musician named Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979). For fifty years Boulanger was a revered teacher and mentor of composers, even though she gave up composition herself in deference to the talent of her sister Lili, also a composer, when Lili died tragically at the age of twenty-four. Boulanger encouraged Copland's interest in Stravinsky, whose avant-garde style influenced him greatly.

Back in America, Copland tirelessly promoted American music. He organized an important series of concerts (with another composer, Roger Sessions) to showcase new American scores, wrote articles and books, and formed a Composer's Alliance. Like many artists and writers of the 1930s, he was attracted by leftist ideology and the idea that art should "serve the people." Many works drawing on American folk materials stem from this period of Copland's career, as does his high-school opera *The Second Hurricane*. During World War II he wrote *A Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*, patriotic works, and *Appalachian Spring*, a celebration of traditional American values.



After 1940 Copland headed up the composition faculty at the important summer school at Tanglewood, Massachusetts, in association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, but his output as a composer decreased. Among his students was Leonard Bernstein. Devoid of the egoism characteristic of so many artists, Copland was one of the most beloved figures of modern American music.

Chief Works: For orchestra: 3 symphonies, *A Lincoln Portrait* (with a speaker), *El salón México* (incorporating Latin American jazz), a favorite Clarinet Concerto, written for jazzman Benny Goodman ■ Film scores: *Of Mice and Men* and *Our Town* ■ Operas: *The Second Hurricane* and *The Tender Land*; ballet scores *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *Appalachian Spring* ■ For piano: Variations (Copland's outstanding modernist work; 1930), a sonata, Piano Fantasy (a fine late work; 1957) ■ A song cycle to poems by Emily Dickinson

Encore: After *Appalachian Spring*, listen to *El salón México*, Clarinet Concerto, and *Fanfare for the Common Man*.



Ben Shahn, *Trio*, 1955. © Estate of Ben Shahn/VAGA, NY, NY

A worker, a farmer, and a boss are shown "harmonizing": a political allegory by New York painter Ben Shahn (1898–1969), a friend of Copland.

4 The Rise of Film Music

From the early twentieth century on, film music has provided a fertile terrain for composition in many styles. Avant-garde modernism, minimalism, jazz, pop music, rock, and rap have all found a place on film soundtracks. Most prevalent of all, however, have been soundtracks employing the symphony orchestra in styles reminiscent of late Romanticism. Film music, in other words, has been a chief outlet for orchestral music in traditional styles.

This connection of film music to Romanticism was natural, given the Romantics' interest both in opera and in program music. It began with the earliest history of cinema—when some late Romantic styles were still new. In the era of silent film (especially the 1910s and 1920s), live musicians were hired by theaters to provide music to accompany films as they were projected. Pianists or organists would improvise, responding moment by moment to the images on-screen; but their improvisations were often based on published catalogues of favorite themes from Romantic symphonies and operas. In matching these themes to the situations on-screen, the musicians produced something akin to Wagner's leitmotiv technique (see page 270), and indeed many of the melodies in their catalogues were drawn from Wagner's operas.

When new technologies in the late 1920s allowed for soundtracks to be recorded on the filmstrip itself, this leitmotiv procedure evolved. Now composers wrote more-or-less continuous scores for full orchestra, teeming with leitmotivs synchronized precisely to the filmed action. An early monument to this new relation of music and film is the horror classic *King Kong* of 1933, with a soundtrack by the most important of early Hollywood composers, the Viennese émigré Max Steiner. This leitmotiv style has remained prominent in cinema composition ever since. (Many films you might see at the movie theater today use it in some form, but it is particularly apparent in mythic blockbusters such as the *Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter* series.)

Composers for Film

Composers who lavish attention on film music tend not to turn up in textbooks such as this one, yet they represent an important strain of twentieth-century orchestral composition. Along with Max Steiner, who composed the score for *Gone with the Wind* in addition to *King Kong*, we might point to the Italian Nino Rota, who collaborated with Federico Fellini on many films and with Francis Ford Coppola on *The Godfather*; to Tōru Takemitsu, collaborator with the giant of Japanese cinema, Akira Kurosawa (*Ran*); and to John Williams, whose scores for the *Star Wars* films have been fashioned into a regular repertory piece for pops orchestras across the United States.

Meanwhile, twentieth-century concert, or classical, composers have often turned to film as a creative outlet. In the Soviet Union Sergei Prokofiev devoted much energy to the new medium; so did his younger compatriot Dmitri Shostakovich. (Shostakovich had started his career as a silent-film pianist.) Prokofiev fell into a rewarding collaboration with the greatest of Soviet filmmakers, Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948). In America Aaron Copland and his student Leonard Bernstein (see page 395) both wrote soundtracks. Copland's work in this vein, for example *Our Town*, strongly evokes the American heartland; in this it is related to his ballet *Appalachian Spring*. Bernstein brought a harder edge, and with it a tint of modernism, to his soundtrack for *On the Waterfront* (1954).

Music and Totalitarianism

European composers of the early twentieth century, like everyone else, found their lives profoundly affected by the economic, political, and military upheavals of the time. Besides the sheer threat of annihilation in a time of war, other, less dramatic difficulties loomed. Many institutions that composers' careers depended on—orchestras, opera companies, and the like—disappeared or fell into disarray. Some were victims of changing governments with new priorities. Others did not survive staggering inflation in parts of Europe in the 1920s, worldwide depression in the 1930s, or war in the 1940s.

Modernist composers in particular faced threats that were not only physical and social but also *ideological*—that is, threats made not on their lives or livelihoods but on their ideas, including musical ideas. This was most evident in (though not restricted to) the two most powerful repressive totalitarian regimes of the era. In Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, artistic modernism in most of its guises was rejected and banned.

In each country the rationale for repression was the same distorted outgrowth of nineteenth-century nationalism: Art ought to speak straightforwardly to the national "folk" and give voice to its aspirations and history. This was foreign to modernist art's emphasis on originality and individualism, its formal intricacies, and its experimentation—its elitism, as the culture czars in Russia and Germany saw it. For Nazis and Stalinists alike, modernist art had no reason to exist.

Nazi Germany

Hitler's regime promoted music of the great German masters; Beethoven and Wagner were special favorites. But it banned explicitly modernist music, supporting instead the latter-day Romanticism of the aging Richard Strauss, for example (see page 340). Meanwhile Jewish composers and other musicians faced extermination. Those who could fled to countries all over the world, many of them to the United States. Arnold Schoenberg is the best known of these refugees (see page 329), but there were many others, including Kurt Weill, composer of "Mack the Knife," who established a second career on Broadway. Béla Bartók, who was not Jewish but also decided to emigrate when his native Hungary finally joined with Hitler, had a harder time (see page 344).

The Soviet Union

Perhaps the most famous victim of ideological muz- zling was one of Russia's greatest composers, Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975; Shos-ta-kó-vich). Growing up under Communism, he originally followed the dictates of the state without question. Shostakovich was certainly no radical modernist of the Schoenberg sort; but his music did show novel tendencies, including especially strong

dissonant harmonies. A darling of the regime in the early 1930s, he nevertheless walked a dangerous path.

With his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensky Region* of 1934, when he was twenty-eight, he went over the edge. Subject matter and music were equally shocking. The worldwide clamorous success of this work brought Stalin himself to see it. Two days later the official Communist Party newspaper condemned the work and issued a scarcely veiled threat to the composer: "The power of good music to affect the masses has been sacrificed to a petty-bourgeois, formalist attempt to create originality through cheap clowning. It is a game of clever ingenuity *that may end very badly*."

In fact, Shostakovich was back in favor a year afterward. But his troubles were not over; he was condemned again ten years later—only to be rehabilitated once more when Stalin died. To what extent Shostakovich accommodated the regime, or criticized it by means of half-secret musical signals in his later compositions—signals recognized by his audiences—is a fascinating question still debated.



Dmitri Shostakovich (left), on one of his rare trips to the West (1962). Looming over him is the Communist Party functionary who came along.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
Alexander Nevsky (1938)



Eisenstein’s *Alexander Nevsky* ranks among the most monumental and innovative of early sound films. It is also a propaganda piece. The title names a Russian hero from the thirteenth century who, having already defeated marauding Vikings, was called upon to unite Russian forces against invading Germans. The film was produced at a moment when tensions between Germany and the Soviet Union were on the rise. In case its allegory was not clear, the last words of the film are Nevsky’s proclamation, “He who comes to Russia with a sword, shall die by the sword.”

A year after *Alexander Nevsky* was made, Prokofiev refashioned his soundtrack music as a cantata so that it could be performed in concert. Our excerpts (which stay especially close to the original soundtrack) come from the beginning of the climactic scene in the film, when the Russians and the Germans meet in battle on the frozen surface of Lake Chudskoe. The reenactment is the most astonishing battle scene anywhere in early cinema. At its end the Germans, fleeing in disarray, crash through the ice and perish, to harrowing music for percussion only—which Prokofiev omitted, however, from his cantata.

From the music we get a series of vivid sound-pictures of the action, interspersed with moments when the orchestra stops entirely in favor of the noise of battle itself. Prokofiev begins with the frozen lake and apprehensive Russians watching in silence for the German army (compare the still morning landscape of Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*). Sustained, minor-mode string chords, ominous drum rolls, a rising tremolo melody in the cellos, and strange, scraping noises from the violas set the shivering tone.

The mood is broken by a battle call in the distance—the signal for the Germans to advance; Prokofiev specifies a muted trombone, played backstage.

LISTENING CHART 23



Prokofiev, *Alexander Nevsky* Cantata, 5: “The Battle on Ice”

FIRST EXCERPT

- 36 0:00 The frozen lake; the Russians wait.
- 1:19 The German battle call: muted, offstage trombone
- 1:45 Staccato eighth notes in strings, drum
- 1:53 Tuba and saxophones state battle call, overlapping.
- 2:14 Trumpet and tuba state three-note threat motive; then descending chromatic melody for trumpet and violins
- 2:55 German chant
- 3:58 Climactic statements of battle call
- 4:08 The armies meet.

SECOND EXCERPT

- 37 0:00 The Russians close in.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Sergei Prokofiev was a child prodigy who became a concert pianist, a conductor, and an enormously versatile, productive, and popular composer.

Born in present-day Ukraine, he spent many years at the St. Petersburg conservatory (like Debussy and Ravel in Paris). His early reputation was as a radical, and one ambitious work was written under the direct influence of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. But he made an about-face a year later with his *Classical Symphony*, a gentle parody of a Haydn symphony. Easy to hear in Prokofiev's music is a sound that's hard to describe—within a clear (“Haydnish”) tonal framework, the use of very simple chords placed in an unexpected way. The *Classical Symphony* was a forerunner of Neoclassicism, which Stravinsky also embraced after World War I, when both Russian composers lived in Paris, keeping their distance.

Prokofiev moved away from modernist extremes and toward clear tonality, tunefulness, and the use of Russian folk themes. But the good-humored parody of *Classical Symphony* turned into a sharper satirical style that could become positively grotesque in scherzos—another Prokofiev characteristic (“scherzo,” remember, means joke).

By the 1930s Prokofiev was a recognized star worldwide, but his thoughts turned back to his Soviet homeland, which had been tempting him with many commissions. He returned to live in Russia in 1936, to much acclaim. He must have known that his freedom of expression would be limited, but he cannot have anticipated how much. Even pieces he wrote to exalt Stalin and the Soviet Union ran

into trouble, increasingly so with the approach of World War II. Time and again the ever-fluent Prokofiev rewrote his works, but only too often they were never approved or performed. Twelve years after his welcome back to Russia, his music was publicly denounced by a Soviet arts commissar and performances were banned.

After years of ill health, Prokofiev died on the same day as Stalin—within the hour. His impressive opera based on Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, begun with official support in 1941, was still in limbo at his death.

A slight but much-loved work by Prokofiev is *Peter and the Wolf*, a narrated children's story with orchestral interludes; each of the characters is represented by his or her own instrument and leitmotiv. The hero, needless to say, is a sturdy little Russian.

Chief Works: Operas *The Love of Three Oranges* and *War and Peace* ■ Ballet scores *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* ■ Film scores for *Alexander Nevsky*, *Lieutenant Kije*, and others ■ Seven symphonies, including the *Classical Symphony*; piano sonatas and concertos; a beautiful violin concerto (No. 2) ■ *Peter and the Wolf* for children (of all ages)

Encore: Listen to *Lieutenant Kije* and *Classical Symphony*.



German invaders and Russians square off in the battle on ice from Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*—a spectacular sequence that set a high standard for later cinematic war scenes.

The last six notes of this call will be heard again and again in the brass, sometimes in long note-values and sometimes in quicker ones, as the Germans move forward. The energy picks up with the introduction of steady eighth notes in the strings and percussion, while the brass—tuba and horns, later trumpets and trombones also—present the call motive and alternate it with another, ominous motive, using three chromatic notes out of order.

Gradually the dynamics swell and the texture grows. A chorus is heard singing over and over a homophonic phrase; it is the Germans, intoning a liturgical hymn associated with their cruelty earlier in the film. At the climax, finally, the armies meet. Prokofiev's music abruptly breaks off, and only the noise of battle is heard.

After more than three minutes of cinematic sword-to-sword combat, the Russian trick is revealed: They have lured the Germans onto the lake while keeping much of their force in reserve on the flanks. Now Nevsky gives the order for the flanks to close in ("For Russia! For Russia!"). Prokofiev's music strikes up again, with none of the threatening German sounds from before but now with several new, rousing melodies of victory, alternating helter-skelter in violins, brasses, and other instruments.

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 22 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 23

The Late Twentieth Century

Only twenty-one years, from 1918 to 1939, separated the two cataclysmic wars of the twentieth century. It was an uneasy period. The devastation of World War I had stunned artists as well as everybody else, and the sorts of extravagant experimentation that had marked the prewar period no longer seemed appropriate. There was a turn back to earlier styles and genres—the alternatives to modernism we examined in Chapter 22—and also a search for solid standards and norms.

These efforts were undercut by a new round of devastating events. First came the economic depression, long and worldwide, that began in the late 1920s. Then, in the 1930s, the ominous rise of Hitler and the unbelievable (and, by many, disbelieved) tyranny of Stalin led to a second world war. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor at the end of 1941, the United States was thrown into this war to an extent that made our involvement in World War I seem minor. The occupation of France, the siege of Leningrad, the bombings of London, Dresden, and Tokyo, the mass murders in the concentration camps, the detonation of atom bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki—these events were virtually impossible for human beings (including artists) to take in. History seemed to be showing that all human conceptions of the world were inadequate.

In music, these events and uncertainties helped to prompt a new phase of experimental modernism in the 1950s and 1960s. In some respects this phase was even more radical and searching than the avant-garde before World War I. Just as with that earlier avant-garde, however, the challenge of new ideas stimulated a consolidating, consoling reaction. By the 1970s yet another set of styles had begun to appear, turning away from the most extreme implications of the second phase of modernism. Today the avant-garde of the 1950s is a somewhat distant memory, and concert music composition is dominated by the styles that arose in reaction to it. In this chapter we sample both of these stylistic waves.

1 Modernism in Music: The Second Phase

Modernism reemerged as the driving force in music during the third quarter of the twentieth century, modernism in a new, more extreme phase. It was a fascinating phase—and no less fascinating because two of its main tendencies seem almost contradictory.



Of all the conflicts in the war-ridden twentieth century, World War II was the most terrible. Here the crew of an aircraft carrier in the Pacific takes time out for a concert.

First of all, highly intellectual constructive tendencies came to the fore, inspired by Schoenberg's serialism (see page 332) but going far beyond it. There were even efforts to "serialize" rhythm, dynamics, and timbre—that is, to set up predetermined series of note durations or tone colors or dynamic levels and compose with them in a fixed order. Never before had such complex mathematical theories been advanced to compose and explain music.

Meanwhile, other composers moved in the opposite direction, relinquishing control over some elements of musical construction and leaving them to chance. (We have already discussed an early anticipation of this move, *The Unanswered Question* by the ever-original Ives.) Some of these same composers also worked toward an extreme simplification of musical materials, offering a stark alternative to the cerebral complexities of post-World War II "total serialism."

It may seem strange to find composers who followed such different paths grouped together under the same general rubric of avant-garde modernism.

However, both groups, the complex constructivists and the chance composers, pursued the same goal: They all wanted to question the most fundamental premises that had guided music composition before them. Debussy might have blurred the identity of melodic themes, Stravinsky might have undermined the regularity of musical meter, and Schoenberg might have dispensed altogether with tonality. But mainstream modernism after 1945 questioned every one of these features of the musical tradition at once and others as well—to the point of even questioning the composer's role in structuring a work at all.

New Sound Materials

In this light another general tendency of modernist composers after World War II is not at all surprising: their demand for new sound materials. The ordinary orchestra, even as expanded by Debussy, Stravinsky, and others, now struck them as stiff and antiquated. They explored new sonorities—nonmusical noises, unexpected new sounds squeezed out of old instruments, and an infinite range of musical materials produced not by instruments at all, but by electronics.

It began with composers making new demands on the standard sources of music. Singers were instructed to lace their singing with hisses, grunts, clicks, and other “nonmusical” noises. Pianists had to stand up, lean over the piano, and pluck the strings or hit them with mallets. Using a special kind of breath pressure, clarinetists learned to play chords called *multiphonics*—weird-sounding chords by conventional standards but fascinating to those attuned to the new sound universe.

Western orchestras and chamber music groups had always been weak in percussion, as compared to their counterparts in many non-Western cultures, and to jazz. But in the postwar era marimbas, xylophones, gongs, bells, and cymbals of many kinds—percussion instruments that had been used only occasionally in the art music of earlier times—became standard.

However, the truly exciting prospect for new sonorities in music emerged out of technology developed during the war: the production of music by electronic means.

Electronic Music

Recording equipment can *reproduce* sounds of any sort—music, speech, and all the sounds and noises of life. Electronic sound generators can *generate* sounds from scratch—in principle, any sounds that can be imagined, or calculated using formulas derived from the science of acoustics.

A technological breakthrough during World War II, the development of magnetic tape, made the storing and handling of sound much easier. It also opened up exciting possibilities for modifying it by manipulating the tape: making tape loops, changing speed, cutting and splicing, and so on. Across the second half of the twentieth century, we can discern three stages in the evolution of electronic music, each of them defined by new technological possibilities:

🎧 *Musique concrète* Shortly after World War II composers began incorporating the sounds of life into their compositions. This they called “concrete” music because it used actual sound, as contrasted with the “abstract” products of electronic sound generators. Sounds (traffic street noise was a favorite) were recorded on tape, painstakingly manipulated, and then (usually) put on phonograph discs.



Electronic music: from a synthesizer of the 1960s to a mixing board of the 2000s

Musique concrète lives on, in a sense, in *sampling*, now that technology has made it easy for anything that is recorded—traffic noise, commercial records, special effects—to be put under keyboard control for easy combination.

7 *Synthesizers* In the first years after World War II, electronic sound generation was unbelievably clumsy, requiring whole rooms full of radio equipment and complicated machinery to carry out tape manipulations. Only after the advent of transistors (silicon chips were still in the future) could viable equipment be envisaged. In the 1960s various *synthesizers* appeared, designed specifically for music, with arrays of sound-producing modules connected by “patch cords” to create complex sounds.

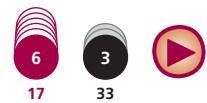
At first synthesizers worked one note at a time. Still, they allowed many composers to produce taped music and also to combine music on tape with performed live music. It was still difficult to produce customized sound in real time.

7 *Computer music* The amazing evolution of computers over the last thirty years has allowed for an equally amazing evolution in music. Today electronic music can be produced on a laptop, using sequencer software to record, edit, and reproduce digital sounds in patterns and sequences at will. Synthesizers can interact via computer with live musicians as they perform to produce today’s cutting-edge interactive computer music.

On the Boundaries of Time

Sonority is one of two areas in which avant-garde music in its post-World War II phase made the greatest of its breakthroughs. The other area was time and rhythm.

ANTON WEBERN (1883–1945)
Five Orchestral Pieces (1913)



To understand one aspect of this development, let us try to contrast two radically different pieces of music. One is a tiny piece by Schoenberg’s student and friend Anton Webern (see page 333), the fourth of his Five Orchestral Pieces of 1913. The whole piece—it is all of six measures long—can be shown on one line of music:

Listen to it several times: The music feels exceptionally concentrated because the relationship between the notes is so strained by the “atomized” orchestration and the complex network of pitches and rhythms. Each note somehow becomes a separate little source of tremendous energy. This might be described as a *very short* time segment of *very high* intensity.

Webern, *Five Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 10, No. 4. © 1923 by Universal Edition A.G., Vienna. © Renewed. All rights reserved. Used by permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, U.S. and Canadian agent for Universal Edition A.G., Vienna.

Contrast this with *In C*, a famous avant-garde work from the 1960s by the American composer Terry Riley. *In C* lasts for about forty-five minutes. During this time the instruments freely repeat over and over again a set of fifty-three tiny melodic figures that spell out only three harmonies—three harmonies drawn out over the music’s total span. The pitches and rhythms are simple, indeed deliberately soothing. This might be described as a *very long* time segment of *very low* intensity.

With both Webern and Riley, we measure time (because we have no other way) in the same units: minutes and seconds. Yet the *feeling* of time is very different in the two. It is like the difference between one minute at the end of a tied basketball game and one minute in the middle of an all-night truck run across South Dakota.

Such contrasting perceptions of time were now widely explored and exploited by musicians of the avant-garde. Webern’s intense experience of time

made him a major influence in the postwar years, even though he died at the end of World War II. Riley's *In C* and works like it became prophetic of a later development in music which gathered force in the 1970s and 1980s, *minimalism* (see page 367).

Chance Music

In playing his motives, the instrumentalists in Riley's *In C* interact with each other in ways largely unspecified by the composer. *In C* thus exemplifies the chance music we mentioned earlier. This term covers a great variety of music in which certain elements usually specified by the composer are left to chance. Another element of *In C* that is left up to the performer is its instrumentation—who plays what. Riley says only that it can be played by “any number of any kind of instruments.”

In an extreme case, a chance composer would work out a way of throwing dice so as to determine which instruments, which pitches, and so on were to be used. In a less extreme case, a performer getting to a certain place in a piece would be told to play anything at all, so long as it was (for example) loud and fast. Strictly speaking, what would be heard would be determined by chance, but the composer could count on a type of controlled chaos for a limited span of time, a span situated between two passages of fully written-out music.

Whereas earlier modernists had questioned traditional assumptions about melody and dissonance, chance composers questioned even more basic assumptions about musical time. The musical forms we have studied throughout this book tend to mark off time as a clear linear progress and even make it goal-directed: Think of the move from development to recapitulation in a Beethoven sonata form.

Is time always (chance composers would ask: is it *ever*) actually experienced in this way? Even *In C* is felt to be goal-directed in a certain sense, for as the snippets in the margin indicate, as the piece proceeds the pitches get a little higher and the rhythmic activity intensifies. But must music convey such an experience? Could it instead mark time as a random sequence of events, or even as timeless, like the suspended consciousness we experience in certain kinds of meditation? Such questions, and a passive sense of time that cuts against our goal-directed culture, lie at the root of chance music.

2 The Postwar Avant-Garde

After World War II, promising composers seemed to appear like magic from almost every corner of the globe. Among the leaders from France, Germany, and Italy were Olivier Messiaen (1908–1994), Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), and Luciano Berio (1925–2003). They were joined by the Poles Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994) and Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933), the Hungarian György Ligeti (1923–2006), the Greek Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001), the Americans Milton Babbitt (b. 1916), John Cage (1912–1992), and Elliott Carter (b. 1908), and the Japanese Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996).

The history of the second half of the twentieth century is saturated with the music of these composers. Their works resonate with the anxiety and turmoil of the era, celebrating its technological triumphs and mourning its tragedies; it would be impossible to maintain that the music of Boulez, Ligeti, and Takemitsu



Violet, Black, Orange, Yellow on White and Red, by the American painter Mark Rothko (1903–1973). The overwhelming yet placid sheets of color merging into one another recall the musical technique in compositions such as Ligeti's *Lux aeterna*.

is any less varied, intense, moving, or magnificent than that of any other like period of music history. Yet as the twenty-first century gets under way, by and large the music of these composers has not found its way into the experience of most ordinary listeners. There are many reasons for this, both sociological and aesthetic, which we cannot take up here. As we have seen, modernism's first phase—the phase just before World War I—produced works that now count as “classics”: Berg's *Wozzeck*, a fixture in the opera house; Bartók's six string quartets, played by every professional string quartet; and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, an all-time favorite on recordings. For acknowledged masterpieces written after World War II, however—such as Boulez's song cycle *Le Marteau sans maître* (The Hammer without a Master) or Berio's *Sinfonia*—similar acceptance has been slow in coming.

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

György Ligeti studied at the Budapest Academy of Music and as a young man was appointed professor there. Unable to pursue his unique sound visions under the Communist restrictions prevailing in Hungary, he left for the West in 1956. Ligeti was past thirty before his advanced music became known.

Ligeti exemplifies both the search for new sonorities that occupied the postwar avant-garde and also their new attitudes toward time. Some of his music uses no clear pitches or chords; or, more accurately, while he may start with pitches and chords, he soon adds so many more pitches that all sense of

“My idea was that instead of tension-resolution, dissonance-consonance, and other such pairs of opposition in traditional tonal music, I would contrast ‘mistiness’ with passages of ‘clearing up.’”

From an interview with György Ligeti, 1978

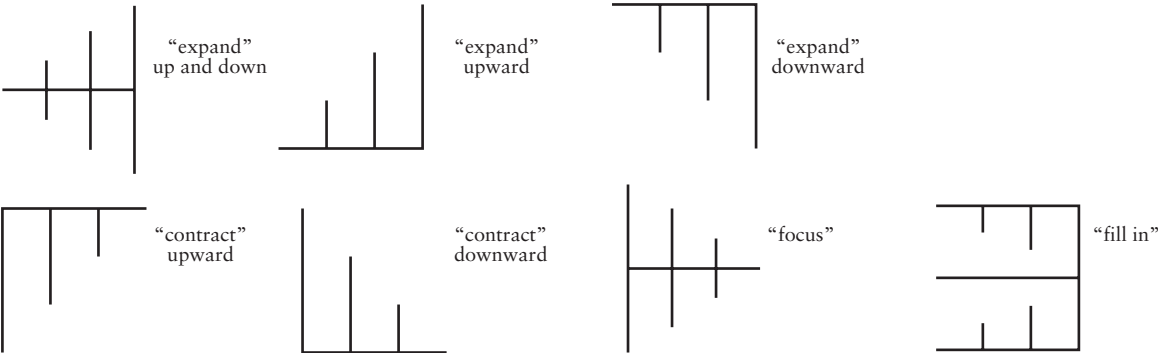
consonance, dissonance, and even the quality of pitch itself is lost. What remain are “sound complexes” that slowly change with time, blocks of sound that can be experienced better than they can be described.

And in the time dimension, there is no discernible meter or rhythm. Rather, there is a sense of gradual, almost glacial surging of the sound complexes, followed by a sense of receding—all the while revealing diverse new tone colors.

GYÖRGY LIGETI
Lux aeterna (1966)



Ligeti’s *Lux aeterna* is written for sixteen solo singers and chorus; often they sing chords that include all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. We need a new vocabulary even to talk about music such as this, and some new diagrams—our pitch-time graph on page 29, which indicated melodies by lines, doesn’t work for Ligeti’s sound complexes. To represent them and show how they develop over time, we can use nonmusical figures:



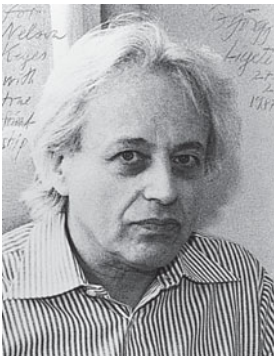
Lux aeterna luceat eis,
Domine, cum sanctis tuis in
aeternum, quia pius es. . . .
May everlasting radiance
shine upon them, O Lord,
with thy saints in eternity:
for you are merciful. . . .

Lux aeterna starts with a single pitch, which Ligeti “expands” both upward and downward by slowly adding a dense mix of pitches above and below it. At other times he starts with a single pitch and expands it upward (adding mainly higher pitches) or downward (adding lower ones). Starting with a full-range sound, Ligeti can “contract” it: either downward (by removing notes till only a single low pitch remains), or upward, or to some pitch in the middle—an effect that can be called “focusing,” by analogy to a camera lens.

The interest of this music, as we have said, is in the astonishing rich sonorities that are revealed by the slow ebbing and flowing of the sound complexes. Once we have accustomed our ears to this, we can appreciate that the musical form of *Lux aeterna* is simplicity itself. Of the four lengthy sound surges that constitute the piece, No. 1 (going up) seems to be “resolved” by No. 4 (going down). Nos. 1 and 4 are parallel, too, in that a high pitch is added halfway through—in this music, a very dramatic effect.

The words of *Lux aeterna* are taken from the Requiem Mass, but they can scarcely be heard and understood; the piece is a study in sheer vocal sonority. Ligeti wrote other sound-complex pieces employing other forces, such as *Atmosphères* for full orchestra; *Lux aeterna* is his most famous work, thanks to its use in the 1968 Stanley Kubrick film classic *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

In the years since, Ligeti wrote music in different styles. With Luciano Berio, he now stands out as one of the most impressive figures of the brilliant postwar generation.



György Ligeti

LISTENING CHART 24

Ligeti, *Lux aeterna*

7 min., 54 sec.



18	0:00	WOMEN'S VOICES	Single pitch, high voices (<i>Lu</i>) The sound expands, <i>up and down</i> .	
	1:39		A high pitch is added softly: SOPRANO.	
	2:02		The sound contracts <i>upward</i> , ending in . . .	
	2:22		a single pitch (octave).	
19	2:28	MEN'S VOICES	The high pitch stops, replaced by a chord (<i>Domine</i>) in the high men's voices.	
0:08	2:36		The sound expands <i>downward</i> .	
0:36	3:04		More lower voices; higher men's voices drop out; the sound slowly "focuses" to . . .	
1:30	3:58		a held, dissonant chord.	
20	4:03	MEN AND WOMEN	Complex sound, <i>f</i> (with a clear high, low, middle) The sound contracts <i>downward</i> to a lengthy focus, ultimately to a single pitch.	
1:30	5:33			
21	5:45		Complex sound—low voices (<i>Domine</i>) Sound expands, <i>up</i> .	
0:28	6:13		A high note is added: SOPRANO.	
0:58	6:43		The high note is dropped, replaced by a very low note: BASS. Sound contracts <i>downward</i> to . . .	
1:45	7:30		a two-note dissonant chord.	

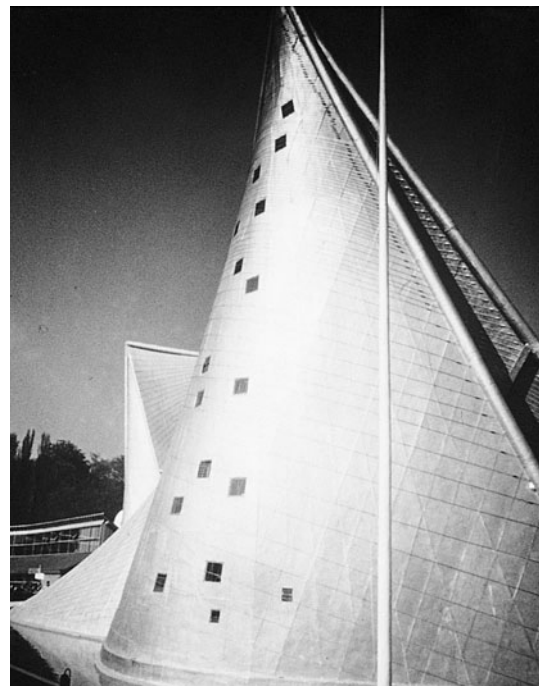
Modernist Music and Architecture

The *Poème électronique* of Edgard Varèse was just one part of an extraordinary multimedia experience. It was written for an exhibit at the 1958 Brussels World Fair by the Philips Radio Corporation, held in a pavilion designed by the famous modernist architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965). Corbu, as he was called, also designed a sequence of colored lights and images to be projected while Varèse's three-track tape was played from 425 speakers.

Here is an example of modernist artists of various kinds working in tandem. Architect Le Corbusier himself had been a painter in his youth.

As visitors entered the pavilion and walked around, the music came at them from various angles. Likewise, as they kept turning corners they kept seeing different parts of the superb building and of the light show. All this seems tame to us today, but it was very new at the time.

There was obviously an element of chance in the way one got to experience *Poème électronique*—an element that the composer of course encouraged. John Cage would have concurred enthusiastically. So it is quite in Varèse's spirit for us to take a quick tour of the pavilion, as it were, and happen to hear just the last few minutes of this music, rather than the entirety.



Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2002.R.41)

Edgard Varèse (1883–1965)

Edgard Varèse is an interesting case of a composer who bridged both phases of modernism in twentieth-century music. Though he had started his career in Paris and Berlin before World War I, most of his early scores were destroyed in a fire. He emigrated to America in 1915, and it was here that he found his voice (late in life, like Haydn).

The music Varèse wrote in the 1920s was among the most radical in the world at that time. He developed an approach to rhythm and especially to sonority that surpassed anything the other early avant-garde composers had attempted. *Hyperprism* is scored for seven wind instruments and seven percussion, and *Ionisation* is for percussion alone—thirteen percussionists playing forty-five instruments, including a siren. The manipulation of what had been thought of as “noise” into coherent musical patterns was a heady forecast of modernist music of the post–World War II era.



Edgard Varèse, composer of “noise”

EDGARD VARÈSE

Poème électronique (1958)

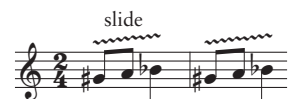
Indeed, it was after World War II that this veteran of many a modernist battle really came into his own. About 1930, Varèse had unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Bell Telephone Company to set up a research center for electrically produced music. Now the introduction of electronic composing equipment was a vindication of his vision. His *Déserts* (1950–54), for instruments and tape, was one of the most ambitious early essays in electronic music. And his entirely electronic *Poème électronique* is recognized as one of the masterpieces of the genre.

Poème électronique (1958) (ending) As we stroll within earshot of *Poème électronique* (see page 364), an electronic crash is followed by various seemingly random rustles. Then a brilliant section displays a variety of electronic effects: low sliding groans, rattles, bell-like noises, and watery sounds. Suddenly something human joins these space-age sounds—a short vocal hum. This tells us that Varèse makes use of *musique concrète* in *Poème*: that is, he uses prerecorded sounds from real life, such as humming, singing, bells, and train noises, as well as material that is generated electronically from scratch.

The rhythm has been highly irregular. Now it slows down, and a sustained chord appears quietly, grows almost unbearably loud, and then fades. Varèse introduces isolated pitches that appear to be arbitrary, though in fact they merge into another sustained chord. We hear drum rhythms, too, and a *musique concrète* snare drum (remember Varèse’s affection for percussion instruments in his earlier compositions).

Humanity seems to reassert itself in the form of a soprano solo—but this is manipulated electronically so as to shriek its way out of hearing in the high register. Sharp punctuations decimate the men’s voices that follow. A mournful three-note motive (also heard earlier in *Poème*) is played twice with the notes sliding into one another. Then a momentous-sounding siren moves up, falters, and moves up again until it becomes a violent noise, which ceases abruptly and mechanically.

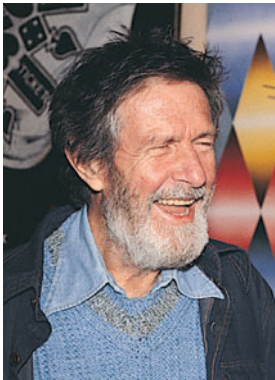
So ends the Varèse *Poème électronique*: for some, on a strange note of unspecified disquiet.



John Cage (1912–1992)

The most consistent radical figure of postwar music was John Cage, the father of chance music (Charles Ives has to count as the grandfather). He studied with Schoenberg, among others—when Schoenberg was teaching in California, Cage’s home state—and early developed an almost bewildering variety of interests. Cage exhibited specially prepared prints, toured as music director of avant-garde dancer Merce Cunningham’s dance company, and was a recognized mycologist (mushroom authority). In the 1950s, his study of Zen Buddhism led him to a fresh attitude toward music, time, and indeed all experience.

Cage posed questions that challenge all the assumptions on which traditional music rests. Why should music be different from the sounds of life? Why compose with “musical” sounds, rather than noises? Why work out music according to melodies, climaxes, twelve-tone series, or anything else that gives the impression of one thing following another in a purposeful order? Why not leave it to chance? The basic message that Cage conveyed is that we should open our ears to every possible kind of sound and every possible sound conjunction. In this, too, he was following in the footsteps of Ives.



John Cage

JOHN CAGE
4'33" (1952)

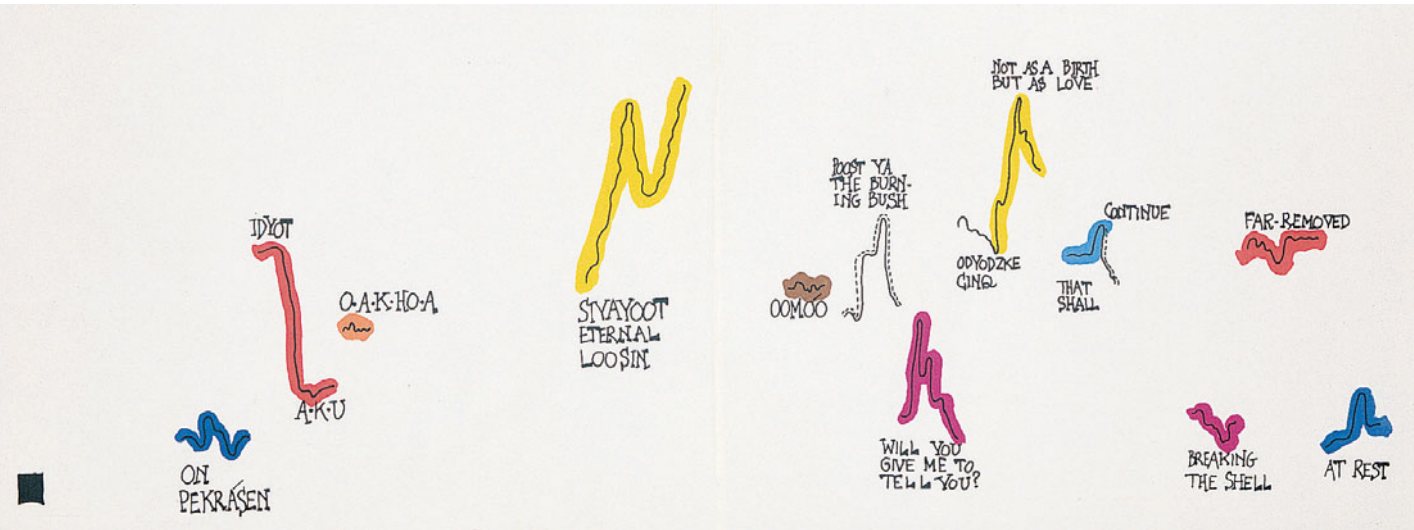
Often, indeed, the actual sounds Cage produced were less crucial than the “statement” he was making about sound by means of his music. This is the case with 4'33", perhaps his most celebrated work (or statement). Any number of players can perform it. They sit silently on the stage for 4 minutes and 33 seconds.

Is this just an exasperating hoax? What Cage is saying is that silence is an entity, too, as well as sound. When did you last really concentrate on silence? (Try it.) In fact, 4'33" consists not of silence but of little bits of random

“When you get right down to it, a composer is simply someone who tells other people what to do. I find this an unattractive way of getting things done.”

John Cage

Aria by John Cage. Copyright ©1960, renewed 1988 by Henmar Press, Inc. Used by permission of C. F. Peters Corporation. All rights reserved.



Score for a multilingual solo vocal work by John Cage, *Aria* (1958). The lines represent general melodic contours, the colors different styles of vocal delivery; both are left to be specified by the performer, not the composer. Much is left to the singer’s imagination!

audience noise, sounds from outside the hall, perhaps the thump of the irate listener's heartbeat. And how does the experience of concentrating on near silence for exactly 4 minutes and 33 seconds compare with concentrating for exactly three minutes, or exactly five?

We seldom really analyze our experience freshly. Life is unpredictable and full of surprises; music should be, too. This is the philosophy represented by Cage and his music. It has had a major impact on avant-garde composers all over the world, and also on some innovators in popular music.

3 Music at the End of the Millennium

The second wave of modernist composers after World War II questioned the traditional features of music in more basic ways than any other generation in European history. But they did not, on the whole, succeed in convincing concert-going audiences to explore these questions with them.

By the 1950s, the concert hall and opera house resounded with a familiar series of established works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with some nonmodernist works of the twentieth century and a few modernist classics (such as *The Rite of Spring* and *Wozzeck*) added into the mix. The works of the new avant-garde, instead, tended to be performed in small university halls and at occasional new-music festivals. One arch-modernist composer of the 1950s, Milton Babbitt, wrote an essay about the situation. He proclaimed that the new music could thrive only in the university, and he patiently explained why no listener without specialized musical training should hope to understand it. Babbitt's publisher gave the essay the inflammatory title "Who Cares If You Listen?"

But by the late 1960s many composers began to tire of the difficulty and elitism, as some said, of avant-garde music. New styles emerged that communicated more directly and openly with listeners and renounced the complications of some avant-garde styles.

In a way, composers forging these styles (like the non-avant-gardists of the 1930s) enjoyed the best of both worlds. They could exploit whatever modernist resources they wanted to, all the while referring back to earlier, more accessible modes of musical expression.

Minimalism

The earliest and most famous of the new styles, emerging in the mid-1960s, is called **minimalism**. A sharp reaction to the complexities of modernist composition, minimalist music uses very simple melodies, motives, and harmonies repeated many, many times. Terry Riley's *In C*, mentioned on page 360, is an ancestor of minimalism (some say the first great example of it). As this example suggests, minimalist composers carried on at least one aspect of modernist experimentation: its presentation of long, slowly changing blocks of musical time.

Minimalism has worked wonders for American opera, which has become the success story of modern music since *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) by a leading minimalist composer, Philip Glass (b. 1937). Later works such as *Satyagraha* and *Akhnaten*, by Glass, and *Nixon in China* and *The Death of Klinghoffer*, by John Adams (b. 1947), have been performed again and again in this country and abroad, all of them in spectacular productions.



The 2005 opera by John Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, deals with political and ethical issues raised by nuclear warfare. “Doctor Atomic” is a nickname for physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the so-called father of the A-bomb.

STEVE REICH (b. 1936)

Music for 18 Musicians (1974–1976)



23–24

Steve Reich, a philosophy major at Cornell, studied music subsequently and has become the acknowledged old master of the minimalist style. A keyboardist, he has performed his work with his own special group—a practice that a number of other contemporary composers follow, including Glass. Though much of his early music was rather abstract, one of his most impressive works, *Different Trains* (1988), introduced recorded speech and personal memories, and Reich went on to write operas—*The Cave* (1998) and *Three Tales* (2002)—with his wife, video artist Beryl Korot. *Music for 18 Musicians* is one of the early classics of the minimalist style.

The eighteen musicians include four singers (they sing no words, but only syllables like “doo” and “ah”), a cellist, a violinist, two clarinetists (who sometimes switch to bass clarinets), and a large percussion group: four pianos, three marimbas, two xylophones, and a vibraphone (see page 20). This ensemble produces a timbre favored by the early minimalists—a percussive sound variously ringing and dry and brittle, reminiscent of the gamelan orchestras of Indonesia (see pages 204–07). Reich was much influenced by their music; *Music for 18 Musicians* is directed not by a conductor but by the resonant vibraphone, and Reich likened this procedure to the role of the drummers who direct gamelans.

LISTENING CHART 25

Reich, *Music for 18 Musicians*, opening

8 min., 3 sec.



23 INTRODUCTION

- 0:00 Neutral pulse
- 0:19 First harmony
- 0:40 Second harmony
- 0:58 Third harmony
- 1:16 Fourth harmony
- etc.
- 3:47 Neutral pulse

24 SECTION 1

- 0:00 3:57 Theme begins to emerge.
- 0:26 4:24 Vibraphone cue: Theme extended, cello prominent
- 0:44 4:41 Vibraphone cue: Theme extended again, voices prominent
- 1:15 5:12 Vibraphone cue: cello shifts harmony slightly; pulsing clarinets
- 2:31 6:28 Clarinets resume theme (with voices).
- 2:51 6:42 Vibraphone cue: Disassembly of theme begins.
- 4:01 7:58 Vibraphone cue begins Section 2.

MIDPOINT



Steve Reich

Throughout *Music*, each time the vibraphone plays its cues changes in the melodies and harmonies.

The piece is rigorously, almost schematically, organized. It falls into an introduction, twelve connected sections lasting about four minutes each, and a conclusion mirroring the introduction—all adding up to almost an hour of performance time. Our excerpt includes the introduction and first section.

Introduction *Music for 18 Musicians* begins with another feature beloved by minimalist composers: a regular, repeating pulse, seemingly objective and cool—a pulse that will continue for the whole work. Over this pulse, the introduction presents a set of rich harmonies on which the later sections of the work are based. But it does not present them in a conventional manner, as a harmonic progression that might accompany a melody. Instead the musicians linger over each harmony, repeating it over the even pulse for fifteen or twenty seconds or more before shifting to the next one. This is our first hint that musical time for the minimalists moves differently than for conventional composers. The most notable event in the midst of each harmony is contributed by the bass clarinets, which fade in and out twice with their own quick pulses.

Section 1 This four-minute section is based on a single harmony, the first harmony of the introduction, repeated by the pulsing instruments throughout the section. Reich compared this huge extension of a single harmony to the technique of the medieval organum composer Pérotin, who took individual notes of a Gregorian chant as the basis for long sections of polyphony (see page 58).

As the pulsing of the percussion instruments smoothly continues, the clarinets, joined later by the voices, begin to present the section's melodic material.



← *Orpheus, Study 6* (1977), by Bridget Riley, leading proponent of “op art” (art making use of optical effects and illusions). The effect of repeated gesture and motion is analogous to the impact of minimalist music.



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One cartoonist's reaction to op art

A theme builds up gradually from fragments to something much more continuous; it also rises gradually to higher and higher pitch levels. Each change to greater continuity and higher pitch is cued by the vibraphone.

When the theme, which has a lively, syncopated feel, is completely assembled, the clarinets give it over entirely to the voices and play even pulses, fading in and out, as they did in the introduction. This is the midpoint of the section.

Soon the clarinets take up the main theme again, with the voices. Now the process of assembly we heard before is reversed; at each cue from the vibraphone the theme moves lower in pitch and grows more fragmentary, until little is left. Finally it drops out altogether. All that remains is the endless background pulse, before another cue from the vibraphone signals the beginning of the second section.

Two more general features of much minimalist music emerge from our listening to this section of *Music for 18 Musicians*. First is the minimalists' love of *symmetrical musical forms*. The gradual assembly and disassembly of the theme of this section, with the midpoint of the pulsing clarinets, yields an arch form of the sort that could be diagrammed **A B C B A**; most of the other sections of *Music* are similarly symmetrical.

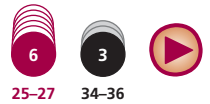
Second is the minimalists' ability to make us hear *musical process* in a new way, or at least with a new concentration. The incessant repetition of musical materials focuses our attention on the gradual changes they undergo; we hear this music as a process of slow building and unbuilding.

A New Expressionism

Many composers at the end of the twentieth century, as we have noted, exploited experimental and unconventional techniques pioneered by the modernists but with a clarity of emotional expression that recalls earlier styles. Often this emotion explored dark reaches of the psyche and recalled the anxiety, paranoia, and terror of the expressionists from the beginning of the century (see page 325).

The composer George Crumb (b. 1929), whose works were especially prized during the 1970s and 1980s, offers many examples of this new expressionism. He has a special fondness for the disturbing and surreal poetry of the Spaniard Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), which he has set to music in works exploring novel timbres and instrumentation (a toy piano and a musical saw, for instance) and presented with theatrical trappings such as masks and dance. His most famous work, *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970), is a song cycle setting Lorca's verse; the complete text of one song reads (in translation): "Every afternoon in Granada a child dies." The song transforms Lorca's reaction to the atrocities of the Spanish civil war of the 1930s (to which he fell victim) into Crumb's response to the war in Vietnam.

KAIJA SAARIAHO (b. 1952) *From the Grammar of Dreams* (1988)



The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho represents a generation of European composers who have combined the experimentation of earlier modernism with a resistance to its most arcane complexities and a frank emotive expression. Her modernist pedigree is clear; she works often at IRCAM, a famous center for electronic music in Paris directed by the older modernist Pierre Boulez. But her special interest is vocal music, particularly the soprano voice. Saariaho has written the operas *L'Amour de loin* (Love from Afar), which received its U.S. premiere in 2002, and *Adriana Mater* (2006).

From the Grammar of Dreams is a cycle of five songs for two unaccompanied sopranos. The songs set words of Sylvia Plath, a moving American poet who struggled with depression and took her own life at an early age in 1963. The words of the songs bring together prose excerpts from Plath's most famous work, the novel *The Bell Jar*, and a multistanza poem entitled "Paralytic." The poem recounts the impressions and sensations of a polio patient lying in an iron lung. (This was a huge medical machine, all too common in the years before vaccinations, that pumped air in and out of the lungs of patients paralyzed by polio.)

Saariaho departs in a number of ways from a conventional musical setting of these words. First, she scatters the stanzas of the poem unevenly across her five songs. Songs 1 and 3 set stanzas 1–4 and 8, respectively. Second, Saariaho often superimposes two different texts sung simultaneously, a treatment rarely encountered in songs. Finally and most strikingly, Saariaho employs her restricted performing forces with great versatility, presenting a miniature catalogue of unorthodox—and vividly expressive—vocal techniques.



Kaija Saariaho



LISTEN

Kaija Saariaho, *From the Grammar of Dreams*25
34

SONG 1

Soprano 1 (“Paralytic,” stanzas 1–4)

It happens. Will it go on? —
 My mind a rock,
 No fingers to grip, no tongue,
 My god the iron lung
 That loves me, pumps
 My two
 Dust bags in and out,
 Will not
 Let me relapse
 While the day outside glides by like ticker tape.
 The night brings violets,
 Tapestries of eyes,
 Lights,
 The soft anonymous
 Talkers: “You all right?”
 The starched, inaccessible breast.

Soprano 2 (from *The Bell Jar*; sung simultaneously with soprano 1)

A bad dream.
 I remembered everything.

26
35

SONG 3

Sopranos 1 and 2 (“Paralytic,” stanza 8—the last stanza)

The claw
 Of the magnolia,
 Drunk on its own scents,
 Asks nothing of life.

27
36

SONG 4

Soprano 1 (*The Bell Jar*)

I thought I would swim out
 until I was too tired to swim back.
 As I paddled on, my heartbeat
 boomed like a dull motor in my ears.
 I am I am I am

Soprano 2 (*The Bell Jar*)

I took a deep breath and listened
 to the old brag of my heart.
 I am I am I am

Song 1 The more active soprano here sings stanzas 1–2 of “Paralytic” to a violent, leaping, swooping melody. At first she tears apart the words, delivering the sounds of individual letters and word fragments with distorted emphasis: for “happens” we hear *huh—huh—app—enzzzzzzz*, and so on. Meanwhile the other soprano unfolds a gentler line in counterpoint, filled with warbling trills, in which we gradually come to hear words from *The Bell Jar*: “A bad dream. I remembered everything.” Is she casting the experience of the paralytic as a nightmare, and nothing more?

Finally, at about 1:20, the violent soprano begins to shift to her partner’s more lyrical style (stanza 3). In the end, each soprano is reduced in turn to deliberate, monotonal speech, accompanied by a lingering trill from the other singer.

Song 3 This is the lyrical and emotional heart of the cycle—and also its most conventional song. Its words, the last stanza of “Paralytic,” are sung by both voices. The singers, like the poetic image of their words, seem to convey a calm, quiet renunciation—perhaps even a renunciation of life altogether. The song is organized around an arch of shifting pitch levels, as the voices gradually rise to a climax (at 1:35), then fall back to their starting places.

It is organized also by a technique we have heard often since the Renaissance: imitative polyphony. Listen for this especially in the half-step motives at the beginning and end, which wind together like the clawed tree roots and branches alluded to in the poem, or at the repeated word *magnolia* starting at 1:01.

Song 4 Here images from *The Bell Jar* eerily summon up Plath's own suicidal thoughts, only to turn to the life force of a beating heart. We can hear this song as a free A B A' form, with the A section formed of harsh, impassioned panting. The longer, fully sung B section (starting at 0:19) rises steadily to an ecstatic, almost unbearable climax on "I am I am I am"; along the way, the panting from A, now sung, returns. An abrupt collapse (at 1:25) ushers in A', made up of fading, panting repetitions of "I am" in heartbeat-like rhythms. Song 4 seems to affirm that the renunciation of life hinted at in Song 3 does not come without struggle.

Back to the Future

Concert music composition following the turn of the millennium points in many directions. Most composers are now far from avant-garde modernism. Many have embraced a frank emotional expression akin to Saariaho's while using whatever new techniques can aid them in achieving it. Others have turned back to premodernist styles and genres; their music, in its clear tonality, rich instrumentation, and impassioned melodies, has been termed Neoromantic.

Today's compositional scene is most noteworthy for three tendencies: its eclecticism, that is, its free juxtaposing of many different styles and gestures; its self-conscious reference to earlier styles and genres; and its strong, straightforward expression. The forbidding, challenging attitude of high modernism is a thing of the past, replaced by a more welcoming, approachable stance. All these tendencies remind some observers of analogous trends in architecture and the visual arts termed *postmodern*. Postmodern composers are not exactly *anti*-modernist; rather, they pick and choose from modernist and many other styles in order to achieve their expressive ends.



Postmodern architecture: the Sony building in Manhattan (1984), designed by Philip Johnson. Unlike modernist skyscrapers (see page 41), this building looks back knowingly on history. Its alternating wide and thin stripes recall early skyscrapers like the Empire State Building, and its top-most ornaments gesture toward antique furniture—a highboy or a grandfather clock.

JOHN ADAMS (b. 1947)

El Niño (2000)

John Adams is doubtless the premier concert music composer in America today. He has emerged as a true American original, and however different from Ives and Copland, he ranks along with them. Raised (like Ives) in New England, he moved west to San Francisco in 1971. At first he was strongly influenced by Steve Reich's minimalism; we have already mentioned Adams's early opera *Nixon in China* as a foremost work from the minimalist camp. Many of his other works also have American themes—for example, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, a powerful memorial for September 11, 2001, and *Doctor Atomic*, about J. Robert Oppenheimer and the testing of the first atom bomb at Los Alamos. A scene from *Doctor Atomic* is shown on page 368.



6–8

But Adams always showed a tendency to range more widely in his musical tastes than the hard-core minimalists. His music (again like that of Ives) is inspired by vernacular as well as cultivated styles and genres; we can hear in it echoes of the classical tradition from Bach through Schoenberg and Stravinsky, brushing up against marches, dance-band music, rock, rap, and even cartoon music. Whatever else it means, being an “American original” suggests this kind of eclecticism.

Adams’s *El Niño* returns to a genre we haven’t mentioned since our discussion of the late Baroque period: the oratorio. However, oratorios continued to be written and played to large, appreciative audiences long after Handel’s *Messiah* (see page 146)—and *El Niño*, in its postmodern way, is directly modeled on this most famous of all Handel’s works (and of all oratorios). The *niño* (child) of Adams’s title is the infant Christ, and his work, like Handel’s, consists of separate numbers involving vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra presenting events from Christ’s life. Whereas Handel concentrated on the prophecies around Christ’s birth and his resurrection, Adams turns to other episodes: the divine impregnation of Mary; King Herod’s attempt to kill the baby, whom he fears as a challenge to his rule, by slaughtering all the male children of Bethlehem; and the flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus from Bethlehem to escape the massacre.

For his text Adams pieced together passages from scripture, supplemented with poems from other sources, especially poems in Spanish from Mexican female poets. This bilingual libretto carries a multicultural message that noted opera director Peter Sellars emphasized, in the first performances, by presenting the work on two separate levels. Onstage the singers sang alongside dancers, moving in modestly choreographed gestures; above the stage a film was projected of a Latino family with a newborn baby, huddled around a fire for warmth.

Adams’s message seems to be two-edged. On the one hand *El Niño* is a work of multicultural inclusiveness, while on the other—remember the role of Herod—it is a cautionary tale about the ungodly society that cannot welcome difference into its midst. A true oratorio for the new millennium.

El Niño has twenty-four numbers presented in two halves. Our three selections are the first numbers of the second half.

“Pues mi Dios ha nacido a penar” This strange, haunting lullaby takes its words from a sacred song by the Mexican intellectual, poet, and nun Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz (c. 1648–1695). Mary debates in her mind the fate of the Savior she has borne: Should her child wake, loving those for whom he was born to suffer, or sleep, anticipating his death? This song was first sung on Christmas 1689, at the cathedral of the Mexican city of Puebla. What must the congregation have made of it?

Adams, at any rate, makes of it a musical dialogue. His mezzo-soprano (Mary) shares the poetry in line-by-line alternation with the chorus. At first Mary develops an emotional, swooping, slow melody on line 1, over rich, romantic chords for low strings and harp. The chorus answers with line 2 and contrasting music. From lines 3–4 on, soloist and chorus overlap in more and more agitated fashion, as the violin adds to the conflict with a skittery, staccato melody, and the reassuring chordal support disappears.

Finally calm is restored with a reprise of the soprano’s opening melody and words and the solid chords below. But the chorus now sings along, and



LISTEN

John Adams, *El Niño*

6-8

6 1. PUES MI DIOS HA NACIDO A PENAR

1—Pues mi Dios ha nacido a penar,
déjenle velar.

2—Pues está desvelado por mi,
déjenle dormir.

3—Déjenle velar,
que no hay pena, en quien ama
como no penar.

4—Déjenle dormir,
que quien duerme, en el sueño
se ensaya a morir.

5—Silencio, que duermes.

6—Cuidado, que vela.

7—¡No le despierten, no!

8—¡Si le despierten, si!

9—¡Déjenle velar!

10—¡Déjenle dormir!

Because my Lord was born to suffer,
let him stay awake.

Because he stays awake for me,
let him sleep.

Let him stay awake,
for there is no suffering for him who loves,
as if there were no pain ever.

Let him sleep,
for one who sleeps, in his dreaming
rehearses his own death.

Silence, let him sleep!

Take care, let him stay awake!

Don't wake him, no!

Yes, wake him, yes!

Let him stay awake!

Let him sleep!

7 2. WHEN HEROD HEARD

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem
of Judaea, in the days of Herod, the king,
behold, there came wise men from the
east to Jerusalem, saying,

“Where is he that is born King of the Jews?
for we have seen his star in the east, and are
come to worship him.”

Now when Herod had heard these things,
he was troubled, and he privily called the
wise men, inquired of them diligently what
time the star appeared. And he sent them
to Bethlehem, saying,

“Go and search diligently for the young child,
and when you have found him bring me word
again, that I may come and worship him also.”

—Matthew 2

8 3. WOE UNTO THEM THAT CALL EVIL GOOD

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;
that put darkness for light and light for darkness;
that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and
prudent in their own sight!

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel
from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and
they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

I will also choose their delusions, and will bring forth
their fears upon them.

—Isaiah 5; 29; 66



John Adams

the violin continues its hop-around melody almost to the end. The overall form is a clear A B A', and the song cannot help but call to mind Handel's da capo arias (see pages 141–43).

“When Herod Heard” and “Woe unto Them That Call Evil Good” Two linked numbers follow the lullaby and develop the theme of Herod's treachery. For both numbers the orchestra provides a sharp, percussive, continuous pulse—Adams's bow to the minimalists from whom he learned much. Baritone and three high-voiced countertenors join in the narration of “When Herod Heard.” When the three wise men speak, the countertenors sing alone, while Herod's hypocritical speech (at the end) is sung by all four singers; each speech is introduced by a bassoon, playing eerily near the top of its range.

With a strengthening of the orchestral pulse, “Woe unto Them” follows directly out of “When Herod Heard.” This setting of angry words of God's vengeance from the Old Testament is the most energizing chorus in the whole of *El Niño*. Against the orchestra's pulse the chorus spits out the words in homophonic setting, rising three times to powerful climaxes. As these approach, irregular accents from the brasses remind us of Stravinsky.

In between, the baritone twice more repeats Herod's perfidious words from the previous number (“Go and search . . . for the young child, . . . that I may . . . worship him also”). The chorus grows angrier and angrier, finally shouting down Herod's challenge to God's omnipotence (“Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?”). Adjusting for the shift in tone from *Messiah* to *El Niño*, from the glory of God to his wrath at human hubris and deceit, is it too much to hear in this chorus Adams's answer to Handel's Hallelujah Chorus?

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 23 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen

CHAPTER 24

Music in America: Jazz and Beyond

As we have observed a number of times in this book, in the nineteenth century a rift opened between popular music and the music we now call classical. Nowhere has this rift been more apparent than in the United States of America, the most populist of all nations. And nowhere else have such strenuous efforts been made to close the rift. Think back to the various American composers discussed in the last few chapters, from the unlikely modernist Charles Ives, who quoted marches, ragtime, and hymns in his symphonic music, to the minimalist Steve Reich, American pioneer in a worldwide movement. It is not accidental that we have seen more than one of these composers working with popular as well as “classical” music sources—and that in this chapter we shall see more.

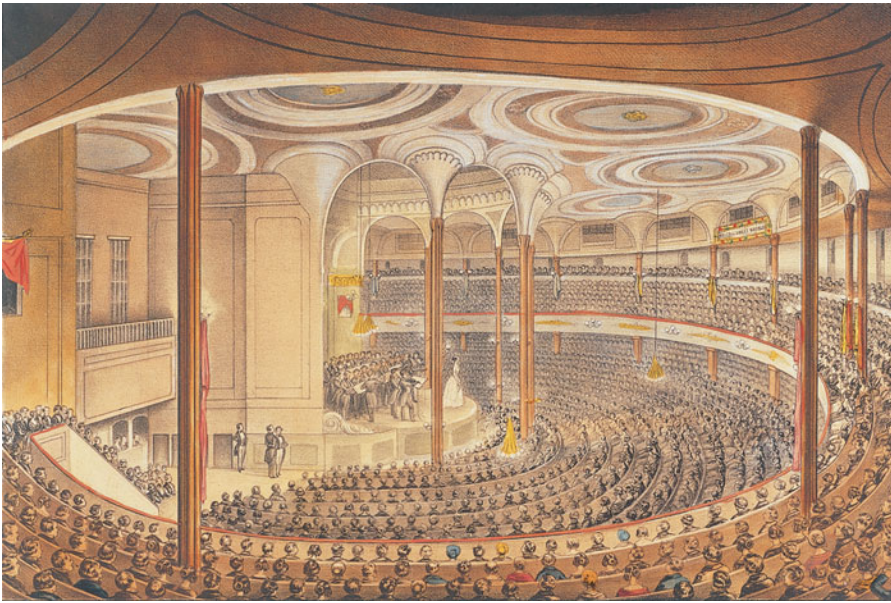
Classical and *popular* are fuzzy words, however, especially when applied to music in American history. The terms *cultivated* and *vernacular* have proved to be more illuminating. To cultivate means to nurture, as microorganisms are cultivated in a petri dish in a laboratory, or orchids in a greenhouse. Vernacular, on the other hand, refers to one’s native language. **Cultivated music**, then, is music that has been brought to this country and consciously developed, fostered at concerts, and taught in conservatories. **Vernacular music** is music we sing and hear as naturally as we speak our native tongue.

There is a bitter twist to this terminology as applied to American music. The word *vernacular* comes from the Latin word *vernaculus*, which is itself derived from *verna*: and “verna” meant a family slave. The heritage of African American music was and is central to the story of American music.

1 Early American Music: An Overview

Long before European settlers and African slaves arrived here, Native Americans had their own musical styles. (We touched on one of these in discussing sacred chant; see page 64.) As Native Americans were pushed farther and farther west, however, their music played little role in the development of European American and African American music.

The history of music among the early European settlers and their descendants is not a rich one. The Puritans disapproved of music; they thought it was frivolous, except for its supporting role in religion. In Puritan church services, rhyming versions of the psalms were sung like hymns, but when the words of the psalms



A concert at New York's Castle Garden in 1850, in a print issued by Currier & Ives. Their hand-colored lithographs are famous for vividly illustrating nineteenth-century America.

were printed in the *Bay Psalm Book* of 1640—the first book ever printed in North America—the music was not included, because just a few tunes, known to everyone, were used for all 150 psalms. In succeeding years, much of the energy of early American musicians was devoted to the composition of new psalm and hymn tunes, and to the teaching and improvement of church singing.

William Billings (1746–1800) of Boston is often mentioned as our first composer. He wrote hymns and **fuging tunes**, which are simple anthems based on hymns, with a little counterpoint. (An anthem is a choral piece in the vernacular for use in Protestant services.) When sung with spirit, fuging tunes sound enthusiastic, rough, and gutsy.

Billings's more secular-minded contemporaries enjoyed the Classical music of the era. Benjamin Franklin, who tried his hand at most everything, also tried composing. But without well-established musical institutions, there was not much support for native composers outside the church. The problem in those years is hardly that of distinguishing between cultivated and vernacular music. The problem is finding written music to listen to and talk about at all.

The Cultivated Tradition

As cities grew, first on the East Coast and then farther west, more and more concerts appeared, and with them faithful concertgoers. One such was a New York lawyer and civic leader named George Templeton Strong, who left a four-and-a-half-million-word diary discussing (among other things) all the symphonies, oratorios, and organ music he heard, in unending enthusiastic detail.* By the mid-1800s, all our major cities had their concert halls and opera organizations and amateur choral societies. The 1860s saw the foundation of our first conservatories of music, in Boston, Cincinnati, and elsewhere.

Americans eagerly bought tickets to hear traveling celebrities from Europe, and skilled native composers and performers began to appear. The first American musicians to gain worldwide reputations were the immigrant German composer Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781–1861), a quirky early Romantic, and the Louisiana piano virtuoso Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869).

*Bits of Strong's diary are cited on page 217.

- Vivaldi's concertos in parts
- Bach's songs 2nd collection
- Handel's Coronation anthems
- Heck's art of playing the harpsichord
- Hayden's [sic] cantatas

In 1783 Thomas Jefferson's music library contained these and a hundred other items.



“Cultivated” music in America: a scene from Philadelphia society of the 1890s, *The Concert Singer*, by Thomas Eakins

On the whole, however, Americans were content to look to Italy for opera and to Germany for instrumental music. It is not surprising that the cultivated tradition in American music was essentially German in orientation. Ever since the time of Mozart and Beethoven, German music had earned enormous prestige all over Europe. The mid-nineteenth-century immigration from Germany brought us many musicians who labored for the cause of music in this country.

There were significant native composers at the end of the nineteenth century: John Knowles Paine, Arthur Foote, and Henry Chadwick of the so-called Boston School, and Edward MacDowell of New York. They wrote symphonies, piano miniatures, and so on, in a competent but by-now conservative German Romantic style. Time has not been kind to their work, despite recent efforts to revive it.

The music of Amy Beach (1867–1944), in particular, has stirred interest in recent years. Active as both a composer and a pianist, she made her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the age of seventeen. “Mrs. H. H. A. Beach”



Amy Beach

(as she always signed her works) contributed to many established genres, such as the piano concerto, the piano quintet, and the symphony. Her *Gaelic Symphony* of 1896 was the first symphonic work ever composed by an American woman.

The emergence of Charles Ives in the midst of this conservative tradition seems like a miracle of music history (see page 335). Yet Ives profited more than he sometimes cared to admit from the grounding in European concert music he received from his German-trained professor at Yale, Horatio Parker.

Music in the Vernacular

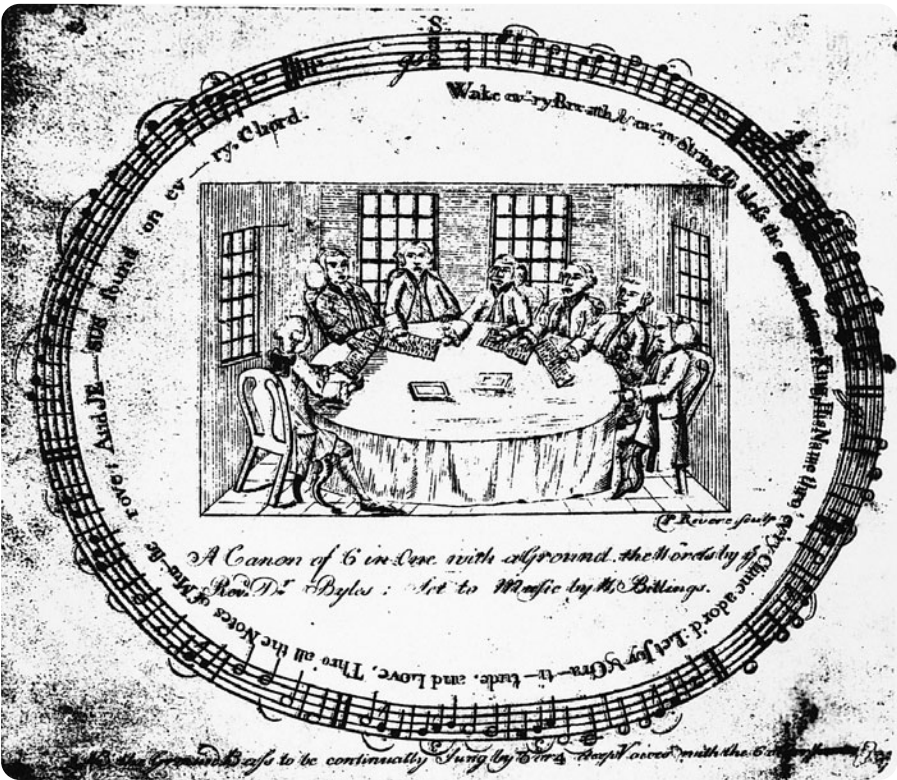
We might well count the psalms and hymns mentioned above as vernacular music, for in colonial days everybody who could carry a tune sang them at church and in the home, and later they were widely sung at revival meetings and the like. Nineteenth-century America was also rich in secular popular music. Our two most famous composers wrote timeless tunes and ever-popular marches, respectively: Stephen Collins Foster (1826–1864) and John Philip Sousa (1854–1932).

Foster led a dispiriting life. Even in those days, song writing was closely tied to the music business; Foster was dependent on Christie’s Minstrels, the leading traveling theater troupe of the time. They had exclusive rights to his songs and helped popularize them—so much so that some of them soon achieved the status of folk songs. But Foster could never seem to make ends meet. His marriage broke up. He turned to drink and died at the age of thirty-eight.

John Philip Sousa, son of Spanish and German immigrant parents, was a Marine Corps bandmaster who later formed a wildly successful touring band of his own. All Americans know his masterpiece *The Stars and Stripes Forever* (even if they don’t all know its name). Leonard Bernstein once said that his greatest regret as a musician was that he hadn’t composed that march.



Original illustration accompanying a song by Stephen Foster (1862)



Hymn singing at home in Revolutionary times, an engraving by Paul Revere; the music is by William Billings.

African American Music

Foster excelled in sentimental ballads, such as “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair” and “Beautiful Dreamer.” But his most notable songs have to do with the black slaves of his time. There are sentimental “plantation songs” such as “Swanee River” (“The Old Folks at Home”) and “Old Black Joe,” and comic minstrel songs such as “Oh, Susanna!” and “Camptown Races.” The minstrel show, performed by white actors in blackface, was very popular at midcentury; it consisted of comedy routines, “Ethiopian” songs, dances, and solos on the banjo (an instrument with African roots). Today this kind of entertainment strikes us as an ugly parody of black speech and character. Yet it can also be seen as an acknowledgment of the vitality of the slaves’ music. From at least the time of Foster, African American music has had a profound effect on the music of America at large, and from there on the music of the world.

What was the slaves’ music like? This is hard to say, for there were no devoted folk-song collectors to write it down. Nevertheless, by studying somewhat later black American music and comparing it with today’s African music, scholars have been able to show how much the slaves preserved of their native musical traditions.

For example, a musical procedure known as call and response is common in West Africa. Phrases sung by a leader—a soloist—are answered or echoed again and again by a chorus. This procedure is preserved in black American church music, when the congregation answers the preacher’s “call,” as well as in spirituals, work songs, and “field hollers,” by which the slaves tried to lighten their labors. It is also an important feature in blues and in jazz, as we shall see.

Spiritual is a term for a religious folk song that came into being outside an established church (white or black). Moving “Negro spirituals,” such as “Nobody

“The singing was accompanied by a certain ecstasy of motion, clapping of hands, tossing of heads, which would continue without cessation for about half an hour. One would lead off in a kind of recitative style, others joining in the chorus.”

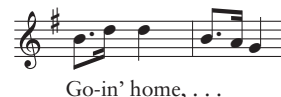
A former slave recalls call-and-response singing, 1881

Negro spirituals were first popularized after the Civil War by groups like the Fisk Singers. In 1871, this group of former slaves toured to raise funds for Fisk, one of the earliest African American colleges.



Knows the Trouble I've Seen," "Go Down, Moses," and others, were the first black American music to gain the admiration of the white world. After Emancipation, black colleges formed touring choirs. To be sure, spirituals in their concert versions were considerably removed from folk music.

The music of African Americans got a powerful boost from the first major European composer to spend time in America, Antonín Dvořák. This highly respected Bohemian musician was brought here to head up New York's National Conservatory of Music (ancestor of the Juilliard School) in the 1890s. Dvořák announced his special admiration for spirituals, advised his American colleagues to make use of them in their concert music, and showed the way himself. He captured the tone of spirituals so skillfully in his ever-popular Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*, that one of his own tunes was later adapted to made-up "folk song" words, "Goin' Home." We will see other, more elaborate examples of the conscious effort to narrow the gap between America's vernacular and cultivated styles, but maybe none more striking.



2 Jazz: The First Fifty Years

Jazz is a performance style that grew up among black musicians around 1910 and has since gone through a series of extraordinary developments. Its first key feature is *improvisation*. When jazz musicians play a song, they do not stick to a written score or duplicate the way they have heard it before. Instead they freely elaborate *around* a song. They add ornaments and newly contrived interludes, called breaks. In effect, they are always making up variations on the tunes they are using—variations sometimes of such complexity that the original song almost disappears.

The second key feature of jazz is a special rhythmic style involving highly developed *syncopation*. Syncopation occurs when some of the accents in music are moved away from the main beats, the beats that are normally accented (see page 9). For example, in 2/2 meter, instead of the normal ONE *two* ONE *two*, the accent can be displaced from beat 1 to beat 2—one TWO one TWO. This is called a “back beat” in jazz parlance.

In addition, jazz developed syncopation of a more subtle kind, sometimes called **beat syncopation**. Derived from African drumming (see page 393), this technique can also be traced in earlier black American music. In beat syncopation, accents are moved *just a fraction of a beat* ahead of the metrical points. When this happens in just the right way, the music is said to “swing.”

Notice that jazz is not so much a kind of music—the music it is based on usually consists of popular songs, blues, or abstract chord-series called “changes”—but a special, highly charged way of performing that music.

The Blues

The **blues** is a special category of black folk song whose subject is loneliness, trouble, and depression of every shade. Indeed, the blues is more than song, more than music: It is an essential expression of the African American experience. Though gloom and dejection are at the heart of the blues, not

“I’d like to think that when I sing a song, I can let you know all about the heartbreak, struggle, lies, and kicks in the ass I’ve gotten over the years for being black and everything else, without actually saying a word about it.”

Blues, gospel, and soul singer
Ray Charles, 1970

Ragtime: Scott Joplin (1868–1917)



Ragtime, a precursor of jazz, was a style of piano playing developed by black musicians playing in bars, dives, and brothels. In the early 1900s, when phonographs were still new, ragtime became enormously popular throughout America by means of sheet music and piano rolls for mechanical (“player”) pianos. The music resembled march music, but while the left hand played strictly on the beat, the right hand syncopated the rhythm in a crisp, cheerful way. “To rag” meant to play in a syncopated style; “ragging” evolved into jazz syncopation.

Scott Joplin was the leading rag composer. The son of an ex-slave, he grew up in Texarkana and worked as a pianist and band musician in many midwestern towns. “Maple Leaf Rag,” named after the Maple Leaf Club in Sedalia, Missouri, where Joplin played, was published in 1899. It quickly sold a million copies. You can hear this famous rag on your Companion DVD; see also Listening Exercise 1 on page 10.

“Maple Leaf” was followed by “The Entertainer” and many other rags. They stand out for an elegance that might not have been expected in this simple and commercial genre.

Joplin even published a small treatise on ragtime, warning those who would race through his pieces: “Never play ragtime fast at any time.” And to those who saw ragtime as a style too lowbrow for their tastes, he wrote: “Syncopations are no indication of light or trashy music, and to shy [i.e., throw] bricks at ‘hateful ragtime’ no longer passes for musical culture.”

Joplin’s evident desire to break into cultivated musical circles was not realized. After he moved to New York in 1907 he gradually faded from the limelight. He wrote two operas, the second of which, *Treemonisha*, received a single unstaged performance in 1915. His death in 1917 was noted by few, but at last, in 1972, *Treemonisha* was fully staged and recorded.

infrequently blues lyrics also convey humor, banter, and especially hope and resilience.

Emerging around 1900, the blues was a major influence on early jazz—and has remained a major force in American music ever since.

Like most folk songs, blues are strophic songs, with many stanzas sung to the same melody, as the singer develops his or her thought, often on the spur of the moment. A blues melody consists typically of three four-measure phrases—hence the expression *twelve-bar blues*—while the matching stanza is in a poetic *a a b* form (line 1 repeated before line 2, which is a miniature punch line). Here are stanzas 1 and 4 of “If You Ever Been Down” Blues:

- STANZA 1 *a* If you ever been down, you know just how I feel,
 a If you ever been down, you know just how I feel,
 b Like a tramp on the railroad ain’t got a decent meal.
- STANZA 4 *a* Yes, one thing, papa, I’ve decided to do,
 a Oh pretty daddy, I’ve decided to do,
 b I’m going to find another papa, then I can’t use you.

Composed blues—for example, W. C. Handy’s famous “St. Louis Blues”—can be more complicated than this one, but the *a a b* poetic scheme is basic for the blues.

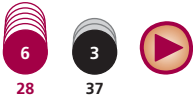
Blues melodies (and the bass lines and harmonies under blues melodies) provided jazz musicians with powerfully emotional patterns for improvisation. But more than that, blues also provided jazz with a sonorous model. Jazz instrumental playing has an astonishing vocal quality, as though in imitation of the blues. The trumpet, saxophone, and trombone sound infinitely more flexible and “human” played in jazz style than when played in military band or symphonic style. Jazz instruments seem to have absorbed the vibrant accents of black singing. (This is a feature that jazz passed on to rock music, where the electric guitar is the instrument that powerfully imitates the voice.)

“Perhaps the essential sound of jazz is Louis Armstrong improvising the breaks in the blues sung by [famous blues singer] Bessie Smith. . . . In the break we have the origin of the instrument imitating the voice, the very soil in which jazz grows.”

Composer Leonard Bernstein, 1955

SIPPY WALLACE (1898–1986)

“If You Ever Been Down” Blues (1927) (Composed by G. W. Thomas)



Here is an example of unvarnished blues singing, by one of the legendary woman blues singers who dominated the earliest recordings. Sippie Wallace is not as renowned as Ma Rainey or the great Bessie Smith, but she poured her heart out with the best of them in response to the eternal themes of the blues:

STANZA 2

I'm a real good woman but my man don't treat me right
I'm a real good woman but my man don't treat me right.
He takes all my money and stays out all night.

STANZA 3

I'm down today but I won't be down always,
I'm down today but I won't be down always.
'Cause the sun's going to shine in my back door some day.

Wallace accompanies herself on the piano. The recording adds two jazz musicians, but she would have sung just about the same way if she had been performing alone. We've chosen this recording because, modest as it may seem, one of the musicians is the outstanding genius of early jazz, Louis Armstrong.

After a brief instrumental introduction, Wallace sings two blues stanzas from the piano bench. The instruments play short breaks in between her lines—the trumpet (Armstrong) in stanza 1, the clarinet (the little-known Artie Starks) in stanza 2. Sympathetic respondents to her “call,” they deepen the melancholy of her song and nuance it:

Simple break
TRUMPET

If you ev-er been down you know _ just how I feel, If you ev-er...

Then Armstrong plays a solo section—an entire twelve-bar blues stanza. He does not play the blues melody note by note, but improvises around the melody and its bass. Armstrong has a wonderful way of speeding up the dragging blues rhythm, and his rich, almost vocal tone quality echoes and complements the singer's bleak sound. The clarinet joins him; short as it may be, this is a real example of improvised jazz polyphony.

Wallace, too, joins in quietly during this instrumental chorus; she too, no doubt, was singing on impulse. She then sings two more stanzas, with instrumental breaks as before.

It's necessary to listen to this recording in a different spirit from that in which we approach the other recordings of Western music accompanying this book. The scratchy sound on these old discs cannot be helped by digital remastering, and the music itself is not “composed,” of course. It lies somewhere in between true folk music and jazz, a fascinating juxtaposition of the direct, powerful simplicity of Sippie Wallace and the artistry of Armstrong. With a little imagination, one can virtually hear history happening in this recording: Jazz is evolving from the blues.

Sippie Wallace—her name is said to derive from a childhood lisp—was equally known for gospel singing and the blues. African American **gospel music**—ecstatic choral singing in evangelical church services, with high-flying sopranos over the background rhythms of the congregation—grew up at the same time as the blues and ragtime. Wallace was also a pianist and songwriter, who usually sang her own compositions, and published a good many of them. Her performing career began at little churches in Houston and ended with a concert at Lincoln Center, the sprawling New York music facility that houses the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera.

LISTEN

THOMAS
“If You Ever Been Down” Blues

0:10 Stanza 1
0:45 Stanza 2
1:19 Trumpet
1:51 Stanza 3
2:24 Stanza 4



Sippie Wallace

New Orleans Jazz

Early jazz was local entertainment for black audiences, an informal, low-budget, and even a somewhat casual art. Small bands, usually of six to eight players, typically featured three melody instruments to do the “swinging”—trumpet, clarinet, and trombone. The rhythm section could include piano, banjo, string bass, or even tuba, along with drums and other percussion.

Early jazz players developed the art of collective improvisation, or “jamming.” They learned to improvise simultaneously, each developing the special resources of his instrument—bright melodic spurts for the trumpet, fast running passages from low register to high for the clarinet, forceful slides for the trombone. They also acquired a sort of sixth sense for fitting in with the other improvisers. The non-imitative polyphony produced in this way is the hallmark of early jazz.

The first important center of jazz was New Orleans, home of the greatest early jazzman, Louis Armstrong, who played cornet and trumpet. Armstrong and his colleagues developed wonderfully imaginative and individual performance styles; aficionados can recognize any player after hearing just a few measures of a jazz record. With players of this quality, it is not surprising that solo sections soon became a regular feature in early jazz, along with collective improvisation.

Recording technology was already crucial in the spread of jazz. As popular records in those days were all just three minutes long, the jazz that has survived from that era is all slimmed down into three-minute segments. Originally issued on labels that appealed to black audiences—coldly categorized as “race records” by the music business—Armstrong’s discs of the late 1920s and 1930s not only attracted white listeners but also excited the admiration of a new breed of jazz musicologists and critics.



Jazz in the early 1920s: Louis Armstrong (center) in his first important band, Joe (“King”) Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band. The pianist, Lil Hardin—also a bandleader and songwriter—later married Armstrong and is credited with directing his early career.

Louis Armstrong (1901–1971)

Louis Armstrong was born into abject poverty in New Orleans. He learned to play the cornet in the Colored Waifs' Home, where he had been placed as a juvenile delinquent. Armstrong played in seedy clubs and on riverboats, which were floating dance halls that traveled from town to town on the Mississippi every summer. Riverboats became a cradle of early jazz, importing it up the river from New Orleans to Kansas City and other centers.

Soon Armstrong was playing in pioneering jazz bands led by King Oliver (see page 385) and Fletcher Henderson. He rapidly emerged as a more exciting artist than any of his colleagues. His sophisticated, flowing rhythms, his imaginative breaks and variations, and the power and beauty of his trumpet tone—all these were unique at the time. A famous series of records he made in the 1920s, playing with small New Orleans-style bands, drew jazz to the serious attention of musicians all over the world.

In the 1930s the popularity of jazz led to a great deal of commercialization, and to the cheapening and stereotyping that always seem to result from this process. Armstrong went right along, while often contributing moments of breathtaking beauty to records that were “listenable virtually only when Louis is playing,” according to one jazz critic of the time. Armstrong became a nationally loved star, familiar from his appearances in



nearly twenty movies. The State Department sponsored him on so many international tours that people called him “Ambassador Satch” (“Satchmo,” his nickname, was derived from “satchel-mouth”).

However, the more successful Armstrong became in the world of popular music, the more he drifted away from true jazz, to the distress of jazz enthusiasts. His last hit record was *Hello, Dolly!*, the title song of a 1964 Broadway musical; in this number he sang (with his famous raspy delivery) more than he played the trumpet.

Encore: Listen to “West End Blues,” “Heebie Jeebies,” “Hotter than That,” “St. Louis Blues” (with Bessie Smith).

Big-Band Jazz: Swing

Around 1930, jazz gained significantly in popularity, thanks in part to Armstrong’s recordings. With popularity came changes, not all of them to the good. Jazz now had to reach bigger audiences in ballrooms and roadhouses. This meant **big bands**, with ten to twenty-five players—and such large numbers required carefully written out arrangements of the songs played. Improvisation, which was really the rationale behind jazz, was necessarily limited under these conditions.

However, big-band jazz—called **swing**—compensated for some of its lost spontaneity by variety of tone color and instrumental effects. A novel style of band orchestration was developed, based on the contrast between brass (trumpets and trombones) and “reed” (mainly saxophone) groups. Soloists cut in and out of the full-band sounds. Jazz “arrangers,” who arranged current songs for the bands, treated this style with the greatest technical ingenuity and verve; they deserve the name of composers. Sometimes they contrived to allow for some improvisation within their arrangements.

With popularity, too, came white musicians and managers, who moved in on what had previously been a relatively small black operation. Not only were black jazz musicians marginalized in the mass market, but their art was watered down to suit the growing audience. The big swing bands that were commercial successes were white, and their leaders—Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw—were household names in the 1930s and 1940s. But the best of the big bands were black: those led by Count Basie (1904–1984), Jimmie Lunceford (1902–1947), Chick Webb (1909–1939), and Duke Ellington.



Swing in the late 1930s: one of the most famous of the “big bands” (Glenn Miller)—brass to the left, reeds to the right

DUKE ELLINGTON
“Conga Brava” (1940)

29

38

The tune used in “Conga Brava” was written by Ellington together with his Puerto Rican sideman Juan Tizol. (A conga is a dance of Afro-Cuban origin, named after the *conga* drum.) In it, the characteristic beat of Latin American music is appropriated by jazz, though only the beginning of this unusual tune—the *a a* section of the *a a b* form—has a Latin beat. Played by trombonist Tizol, the first *a* is presented with a minimal and mysterious accompaniment; but after this ends with a fancy clarinet break (Barney Bigard), the second *a* includes brilliant interjections from the muted brass (an Ellington specialty).

Section *b* is played by the brass choir, with a speedy low clarinet cutting in. The rhythm section switches from a Latin beat to a typical jazz back-beat duple meter. The music begins to swing hard, as the trumpets remove their mutes.

Next, Ben Webster on tenor sax gets his turn with the tune. He sounds genuinely spontaneous; he probably never again improvised around this melody in just this way. After he has gone through *a* and *a*, the muted brass come in again with a lively variation of *b*.

Webster has strayed far from the tune, so it is good to hear the third appearance of the tune in its original form (more or less), now on the reed choir (saxophones). This time the interpolations are by sideman Rex Stewart on trumpet. And this time, after a single *a*, there comes an extraordinary brass-choir version of *b*, with wildly syncopated rhythms. The coordination of the

29

38

LISTEN

ELLINGTON
“Conga Brava”

0:04 *a a* Trombone
0:45 *b* Brass and Clarinet
0:59 *a a* Sax
1:39 *b* Muted brass
1:47 *a* Reed choir (with trumpet)
2:07 *b'* Brass choir
2:32 *a* Trombone

“My band is my instrument.”
Duke Ellington

brass instruments is breathtaking, and the sheer verve of their variation makes this the high point of the composition.

At the piano, Duke gives a quiet signal for this brass episode before it starts; he also plays a single, hardly audible note in the middle of the episode, as though to remind us who is in charge. The piece ends as it started, with the tune played by Tizol, but it fades halfway through.

How strange to be back to the rather still and mournful conga melody, with its Latin beat! All that exhilarating jazz activity that blew up so suddenly and has now been cut off—was it some kind of dream? Only a master of musical form like Ellington could make you think of such questions after a mere three minutes of music.



Jazzmen as listeners: Duke Ellington and (behind him to the right) Benny Goodman listen to Ella Fitzgerald, one of the great vocalists of the jazz era. You can hear Fitzgerald sing “Who Cares?” on the Companion DVD.



13

Duke Ellington (1899–1974)

Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., son of a butler who occasionally worked at the White House. The young Ellington considered a career as an artist, but he started playing the piano in jazz bands—ragtime was a major influence—and soon organized his own. He learned arranging too, and became an almost unique phenomenon: a major bandleader who was also its composer and its arranger.

He was called “Duke” because of a certain aristocratic bearing—and he was fastidious about his music, too. Ellington held fast to his own high standards of innovation and stylishness. And although his band never “went commercial,” it did as well as any black band could in the 1930s and 1940s. “Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra” were renowned as the backup to sumptuous revues put on at the Cotton Club, an upscale Harlem night spot that catered to white audiences. Their recordings from around 1930 to 1940 constitute Ellington’s major legacy.

After World War II, Ellington went his own imperturbable way, keeping his big band at a time when such organizations were regarded as jazz dinosaurs. He had experimented with long, symphonic-style jazz compositions as a young man, and now wrote more of these, as well as movie scores, a ballet, and an opera. The Ellington band, which had toured Europe twice in the 1930s, now toured all over the world, including the Soviet Union.

Ellington was finally recognized for what he was, just about America’s most eminent composer, and he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and other

tributes. His last creative phase found him writing lengthy religious pieces, called *Sacred Concerts*, for the Ellington band with a Swedish soprano, Alice Babs, who was not really a jazz singer at all.

Ellington’s *Sacred Concerts* would have been impossible without Babs—but the same is true of his earlier, better-known music and the musicians of his early bands. These individual soloists, or *sidemen*, as they are called, were vital to Ellington’s art in a way singers or instrumentalists very rarely are in classical music. He molded his music so closely to their sometimes eccentric styles of playing that we can hardly conceive of his music without them. (So we give them credits in our write-up of “Conga Brava,” page 387.)

Chief Works: Very many songs—one estimate is 2,000—and jazz arrangements ■ Large-scale jazz compositions, including *Creole Fantasy* and *Black, Brown, and Beige* ■ Musical comedies, ballets, an incomplete opera (*Boola*), and other stage music ■ Five film scores; *Sacred Concerts*

Encore: Listen to “Mood Indigo,” “Caravan,” “Take the ‘A’ Train,” “Ko-ko,” “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing),” “Sophisticated Lady.”



Popular Song

At the beginning of our discussion of jazz we stressed that it is not a genre of music, but a performance style that went through many developments. As we trace these developments—from New Orleans jazz to swing, to bebop, and the rest—we should pause for a moment to consider the material for jazz in its various styles. Blues are iconic, but blues underpin only a small minority of jazz performances. Mostly jazz musicians work their magic on popular songs, and American popular song of the twentieth century is a major vernacular repertory, in a way as important as jazz itself. It flourished in the first half of the century at the hands of a cadre of composers who are household names: Irving Berlin (1888–1989), Jerome Kern (1885–1945), Cole Porter (1891–1964), George Gershwin (1898–1937), and many others.

Early jazz is associated with New Orleans because the players came from there. Popular song is associated with Tin Pan Alley, a district in New York (which relocated a couple of times) where music publishers had their shops and offices. The songs they bought for a pittance they sold as sheet music in as many as a million copies, sometimes, meanwhile collecting royalties on radio and stage performances. It's been said that popular songs are the songs you forgot you knew but remember when you hear the chorus, songs sung in kindergarten as well as in the retirement home: “Blue Skies,” “White Christmas,” and “God Bless America” (Berlin); “Smoke Gets In Your Eyes” and “The Way You Look Tonight” (Kern); “Lady Be Good,” “Somebody Loves Me,” and “The Man I Love” (Gershwin)—we could go on and on.

Tin Pan Alley songs were usually simple in construction, easy to hum: a chorus, typically in a form such as **a a b a** or **a b a b**, and a couple of verses—which tend to be forgotten; it's just the chorus that, once you recall it, you can't get out of your head. Not only were jazz and popular song simultaneous developments, one can see that they fed on each other. Jazz musicians needed material for their improvisations and arrangements. Popular songs needed the artistry and expansion of jazz to become impressive listening experiences.

Songs that were favored by jazzmen were called “standards.” To *become* a standard, however, such songs needed to catch on with the public through versions by the best-loved singers of the day. Vocalists like Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra sang the sentimental, jazzy tunes to dance-hall audiences, to the ever-growing radio audience, in the movies, and—most important by the end of the 1940s—on records.

3 Later Jazz

After World War II the popularity of the big bands collapsed suddenly. They were too expensive to run; furthermore, styles in entertainment had changed, and the smooth, high-powered band sound struck people as cold and slick. The mass market turned to rock'n'roll, itself the outcome of a vital new genre of African American music, rhythm and blues (see page 400). Even during the war, this collapse had been forecast by a revolutionary new movement within jazz called *bebop*.

Bebop

During the early 1940s, young black jazz musicians found it harder to get work than white players in big bands. When they did get jobs, the setup discouraged free improvisation, the life and soul of jazz; the big bands seemed to

“Irving just loves hits. He has no sophistication about it—he just loves hits.”

Said of Irving Berlin, author of “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” “Always,” “Easter Parade,” and “White Christmas,” among other hits

Oh sweet and lovely
Lady be good,
Oh lady be good
To me.
I am so awf’ly
misunderstood,
Oh lady be good
To me.

*George and Ira Gershwin
song lyric*



In a recording studio, Charlie Parker listens to a playback as the other musicians wait for his reaction. Will he approve this take of the standard they are recording, or will they have to do another?

have co-opted and distorted a style grown out of black experience. These musicians got together in small groups after work for jam sessions at clubs in Harlem, in New York City. There they developed a new style that would later be called **bebop**. Contrasting sharply with the big bands, the typical bebop combo (combination) was just trumpet and saxophone, with a rhythm section including piano.

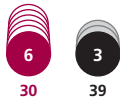
Bebop was a determined return to improvisation, then—but improvisation at a new level of technical virtuosity. “That horn ain’t supposed to sound that fast,” an elder musician is said to have complained to bebop saxophonist Charlie Parker. In addition to unprecedented velocity, Parker and leading bebop trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993) cultivated hard, percussive sounds and sharp, snap rhythms (one derivation of the term *bebop*).

Equally radical was the treatment of harmony in bebop. New Orleans jazz used simple, in fact naive, harmonies. The swing arrangers used much more sophisticated ones. Bebop musicians took these complex harmonies and improvised around them in a more and more “far-out” fashion. In some stretches of their playing, even the tonality of the music was obscured. Bebop melodies grew truly fantastic; the chord changes became harder and harder to follow.

“Playing [be]bop is like playing Scrabble with all the vowels missing.”

Duke Ellington, 1954

**CHARLIE PARKER (1920–1955)
and MILES DAVIS (1926–1991)**
“Out of Nowhere” (1948)




The life of Charlie (“Bird”) Parker, bebop’s greatest genius, reads like a modern-day version of a persistent Romantic myth—the myth of the artist who is driven by the demon of his creativity, finding fulfillment only in his art. Parker was on drugs from the age of fifteen, and in later years could not control his immoderate drinking and eating. A legend in his own lifetime, Parker died at the age of thirty-four after a suicide attempt and a period of hospitalization in a California mental institution.

“Out of Nowhere” is one of the many popular standards of the 1930s that were used as the basis for jazz, swing, and bebop. Our version of the number was recorded live in a New York nightclub, so it can give us an idea of what an improvised bebop number actually sounded like. Notice the informal opening—no arranged introduction as in Ellington’s “Conga Brava.” Parker plays the attractive song fairly “straight” to begin with, but he inserts a sudden skittering passage just before the A’ section (the song is in A A’ form). This is a preview of things to come.

The trumpet solo by Miles Davis has the characteristic tense, bright bebop sound, some very rapid passage work, and one or two piercing high notes. Then Parker’s improvisation shows his impressive powers of melodic development. He builds a whole series of phrases of different lengths, increasingly elaborate, that seem to leave the song behind in the dust—except that now and then he recalls ever so clearly a melodic turn from it (especially in A’). This is a Parker trademark: Again and again his solos strike this balance between fantastic elaboration and return to a more modest starting point.

The irregular, almost discontinuous-sounding rests between Parker’s phrases have their own special fascination. You may recognize an Irish jig, named “The Kerry Dancers,” which seems to have popped into Parker’s head right in the middle of the solo, as the outgrowth of a short melody figure he had come to. He plays the jig at a dizzying rate for just a moment, before inventing something else; amazingly, it fits right in.

At the end of his solo the nightclub audience applauds, and the pianist plays his own improvised solo on the tune’s A section. The number ends with the A’ section of “Out of Nowhere” played once again quite simply, except for new trumpet breaks and a new, comical ending.

 **LISTEN**

PARKER
“Out of Nowhere”

0:00	Tune A
0:24	A’
0:48	Trumpet A
1:12	A’
1:36	Sax A
2:00	A’
2:24	Piano A
2:49	Tune A’
3:11	Coda

Jazz after Bebop

Melody, harmony, and tonality—these were the very elements in music that had been “emancipated” by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and other avant-gardists in the early 1900s. With the bebop movement, the avant-garde finally came to jazz.

Many new jazz styles followed after the bebop emancipation, from the 1950s to the present day. Jazz fans distinguish between cool jazz, free jazz, modal jazz, Afro-Cuban jazz, fusion jazz, and even avant-garde jazz. Among the leaders in this diverse, exciting music were pianist Thelonious Monk (1917–1982), trumpeter Miles Davis (1926–1991), keyboardist Sun Ra (1928–1994), and saxophonists John Coltrane (1926–1967) and Ornette Coleman (b. 1930). They were the first to improvise really freely—that is, without a song or blues as a basis.

“The synthesizer has changed everything, whether purist musicians like it or not. It’s here to stay and you can either be in it or out of it. I choose to be in it because the world has always been about change.”
From Miles Davis’s autobiography, 1989

MILES DAVIS (1926–1991)

Bitches Brew (1969)



Trumpeter Miles Davis, one of the most innovative figures in the whole history of jazz, started out playing with Charlie Parker and other bebop musicians, as we heard in “Out of Nowhere.” Soon, however, he realized that his own aptitude (or at least one of his aptitudes) was for a more relaxed and tuneful kind of melody. Davis’s style went through many stages—from bebop to cool jazz to modal jazz and beyond—as he worked in various groups with a veritable who’s-who of modern jazz artists.

Bitches Brew, one of his biggest hits, was also one of his most original. A conscious (and controversial) attempt to blend jazz with rock—*fusion jazz*, as it came to be called—the album used a rhythm section with electric guitar, bass, and two electric keyboards in addition to regular jazz drums, acoustic bass, and augmented percussion. Instead of the traditional chord changes of jazz, this group produced repetitive, rocklike rhythms of the greatest variety and, often, delicacy. This backdrop provides an unlikely but also unforgettable setting for Davis’s haunting improvisations.

Our selection covers a solo from the title track of *Bitches Brew*. Before Davis begins, the electric piano and guitar pick out rhythmic patterns against a quiet jazz drum background; mostly the electric guitar has isolated single notes and the electric piano has syncopated, dissonant chords. From the beginning a rocklike ostinato sounds quietly on the electric bass guitar.

The trumpet solo starts with short patterns of relatively long notes, a Davis signature. The mood is meditative, almost melancholy: an evocation of the blues. The backdrop tapestry of sounds grows thicker. Soon Davis is employing more elaborate patterns—a string of repeated notes, scalelike passages up and down—but the effect is, in its own way, as repetitive as the backdrop. Then he explodes into a series of little snaps, a recollection of bebop. As the whole group drives harder and harder, we realize that Davis has now arrived at a wild, free ostinato in the high register. The solo sinks down again after a climactic high trumpet squeal, another Davis hallmark.

 **LISTEN**

DAVIS
Bitches Brew (part)

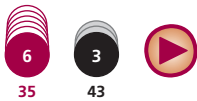
0:00 Backdrop
0:42 Dies down
1:05 Trumpet solo
2:41 Trumpet ostinato
3:20 Climax

Miles Davis

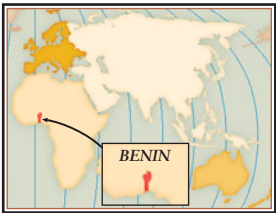


Global Perspectives 6

African Drumming



The syncopated rhythms of ragtime, blues, and jazz derived from traditional African music, particularly drumming. Listen now to a recording of a drum ensemble from Benin, a small West African nation situated between Ghana and Nigeria. The drummers play music used in the worship of ancestral spirits among the Yoruba people—one of a wide variety of religious and nonreligious uses of drumming in the region.



Syncopation and Polyrhythms

The rhythms of this music cannot be said to swing precisely in the manner of jazz, but they show a complexity and vitality related to jazz rhythms and not native to the European classical music tradition.

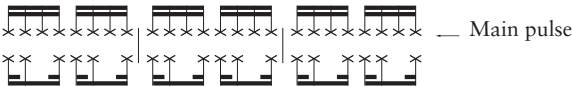
These rhythms are related to what we have termed beat syncopation in jazz (see page 382). A single drum lays down a basic, fast, four-plus-four pulse; each group of four feels like a beat, and two groups of four take about a second. (This quick pulse is heard all the way through the recording, except for three brief moments: This drummer speeds up momentarily at 1:09, 1:46, and 2:33, with stunning, energizing effect, fitting six strokes into the space usually taken up by four.)

Against the main drum's consistent pulse, the other drums play a variety of different rhythms. Some-

times they underscore the main drum's even pulse, or even duplicate it. Often, however, they play off it with more complicated and varied rhythms, including extensive syncopation within the groups of four (or beats), and occasionally they boldly contradict it.

Such overlapping of varied patterns with the main pulse is essential in West African drumming. Since several rhythmic formulas can be heard at once, it is sometimes called polyrhythm. Here are the details of a few clear polyrhythmic interactions:

One drummer aligns a regular syncopated formula against the main pulse, in this manner:



Listen for this four times in the recording, at 0:23–0:29, 0:50–0:53, 1:23–1:28, and 2:13–2:20.

Another drummer plays an even 3 + 3 pulse against the main 4 + 4, seeming to contradict its duple meter with a triple orientation. This occurs prominently twice, at 0:41–0:44 and again at 2:22–2:26.

One drummer in particular departs freely from the main pulse all the way through this recording. He is the soloist, so to speak, improvising against the more regular and predictable playing of his ensemble-mates. His drum is recognizable by its wooden, clickety-clack timbre and by the fact that it plays two distinct pitches (the higher pitch is more wooden-sounding than the lower).

A drumming club in another West African country, Ghana



With jazz-rock or fusion, Davis and others reached out for vernacular roots in American music. Still, jazz after bebop is usually complex and often difficult to follow. Formerly America's dominant form of truly popular music, today this music can really only be described as "popular" with loyal fans who crowd to jazz festivals from Newport, Rhode Island, to Monterey, California. These fans view with mixed emotions efforts by Washington's Smithsonian Institution and New York's Lincoln Center to cultivate jazz in a classical-concert format, led especially by the latest great jazz trumpet virtuoso, Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961), who is also a great entrepreneur and a great publicist. The life and soul of jazz is its spontaneity. Will spontaneity survive institutionalization and "classic" status?

4 Jazz in the Concert Hall

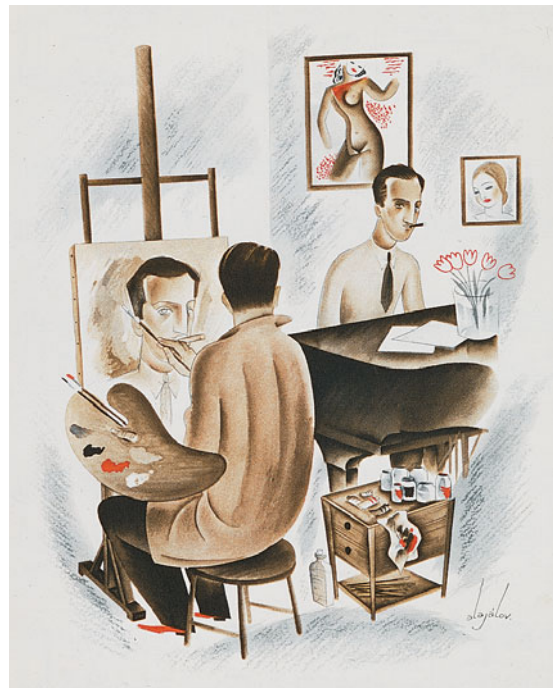
How was jazz first received in this country's "cultivated" musical circles? Many longtime symphony and opera subscribers certainly hated it. They considered its saxophones and muted trumpets vulgar, its rhythms dangerously sexual and likely to corrupt their children. This reaction was strongly tinged with racism.

On the other hand, jazz was from the first an inspiration as well as a delight for less hidebound musicians, music students, and young composers. The 1920s was a confident era, and composers coming of age at that time promised a bright new day for American music. A vital, fresh musical idiom had emerged—the decade from 1920 to 1930 called itself the Jazz Age—and the idea of working jazz into concert music was both natural and exciting.

The composer who most successfully carried off the merger of jazz with concert-hall music was George Gershwin, one of the main composers of popular song (see page 389). Born in New York, Gershwin received a sketchy musical education. He quit school at sixteen to work as a song plugger, or music publisher's agent, playing the newest sheet music hits on the piano for potential customers and promoting them to singers and bandleaders. Soon he was writing his own songs, in close cooperation with his lyricist brother, Ira. George was also an accomplished and original jazz pianist.

But unlike his fellow songwriters, Gershwin was determined to enter the world of cultivated music—on his own terms. He electrified musical America with his *Rhapsody in Blue* of 1924. Billed as "An Experiment in Modern Music," this fourteen-minute work for piano and orchestra was first performed by Paul Whiteman's Orchestra, a sleek forerunner of the 1930s big bands. This music is not true jazz, but instead Gershwin's translation of jazz into his own individual idiom, half-way between jazz and concerto.

Gershwin had thrown a bridge across the canyon between vernacular and cultivated music. Of course, the existence of bridges doesn't mean that the rift has gone away.



Constantin Alajálov, who left unforgettable pictures of the Jazz Age, sketched himself painting George Gershwin in 1932.

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)
Prelude No. 1 (1926)




Gershwin’s Prelude No. 1 for piano is the first in a set of three he published in 1927. In its dimensions it looks back to Romantic piano miniatures; its title recalls collections of such works by Chopin and Debussy that Gershwin knew well. Indeed, Gershwin originally intended a set of twenty-four preludes, just the number Chopin had published. He had the idea of calling this set *The Melting Pot*, a reference to the various cultivated and vernacular styles he would bring together in it.

Prelude No. 1 recalls Romantic miniatures also in its simple A B A’ form. A and A’ each consist of little more than a statement of the main melody of the piece. B is a longer section. It changes key frequently, employing many sequences, and is dominated by a melody that begins with repeated notes, a favorite gesture of Gershwin in his piano music.

What gives this music its distinctive appeal, however—and what makes it sound nothing like Chopin—are the elements it borrows from jazz and blues. Some of the melodic turns in the main theme make use of notes from the so-called *blues scale*—a scale characteristic of blues singing but not of the European classical tradition. Such “blue notes” come back again and again in the melodies of the piece.

Even more distinctive is the jazzy syncopation that marks the left-hand part. In the accompaniment at the beginning, before the main melody joins it, the start of each measure—the downbeat—is clearly marked by a thudding low note. The *second* beat, however, is not struck, but instead undercut by a syncopated chord that anticipates it by a fraction. Syncopated patterns like this one continue throughout the piece, playing off against the melodies to give the piece its rhythmic verve. It may not be jazz, but it *is* jazzy.

 **LISTEN**

GERSHWIN
Prelude No. 1

0:00 A

0:07 Left-hand syncopations begin

0:23 B

0:54 Beginning of A: buildup

1:04 A’

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918–1990)
West Side Story (1957)



Leonard Bernstein was one of the most brilliant and versatile musicians ever to come out of America, the consummate crossover artist before the term was invented. Composer of classical symphonies and hit musicals, internationally acclaimed conductor, pianist, author, and mastermind of wonderful shows in the early days of television, he won Grammys, Emmys, and a Tony.

West Side Story (1957) boasts three exceptional features—its moving story, its sophisticated score, and its superb dances, created by the great American choreographer Jerome Robbins. The musical, by turns funny, smart, tender, and enormously dynamic, gave us song classics such as “Maria” and “Tonight.” Our recording of *West Side Story* is from the soundtrack to the 1961 movie version of the show.



Background Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet* tells of young lovers frustrated and driven to their deaths by a meaningless feud between their families, the Montagues and the Capulets of Verona. *West Side Story* transplants this plot to a turf war between teenage gangs on the West Side of Manhattan.

The American Musical

Throughout the ages and throughout the world, the theater has always provided fertile soil for the growth of popular music. America, once the Puritan spirit had subsided somewhat, proved no exception. One of the main sources of modern American popular music can be located in the thriving New York theatrical scene in the decades around 1900. Then, as now, the New York City theater district was located at, and known as, Broadway.

Broadway was first of all home of **operetta**, a very popular European genre of light opera in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Operettas employ spoken dialogue (rather than recitative) between the musical numbers—light, attractive tunes and plenty of dances. Their plots are amusing, farfetched, and frothy. Typically they are set in some mythical eastern European country, where amorous, fun-loving aristocrats rub shoulders with merry, contented peasants.

Among the best European composers of operettas were Johann Strauss Jr., the “Waltz King” (*Die Fledermaus*—“The Bat”: 1874), and Arthur Sullivan (*The Mikado*, *HMS Pinafore*, and others—these are called “Gilbert and Sullivan” operettas as a tribute to the very witty librettist, W. S. Gilbert). The most important American composer in this tradition was Victor Herbert (1859–1924). Born in Ireland and educated in Germany, Herbert produced more than forty operettas from the 1890s on.

Musical Comedy

It was around 1910 that the American popular theater picked up its characteristic accent. It was a musical accent, and it came from jazz. Although Broadway did not employ actual jazz, it swiftly appropriated and assimilated

jazz syncopation and swing. As projected by white theater bands and carried over into popular songs, this jazz accent contributed more than anything else to the appeal of a new kind of musical show.

Theatergoers had also begun to demand stories that were American and up-to-date, and so the writers of the song lyrics learned to make up smart, catchy verses full of American locutions. To distinguish them from operettas—with their Old World ambience, aristocrats, and waltzes—these new shows were called **musical comedies**, or **musicals**.

The rise of the musical in the 1920s and 1930s was closely tied to the great outpouring of popular songs in this era. It was truly a golden age for song. Not all of them were written for musicals, of course (Ellington, for example, wrote many songs that had no link to the theater). But the theater provided songwriters with an extra fee and gave songs invaluable exposure, magnified after 1926 by “talking pictures.” Theater songs were popularized by the very successful movie musicals of the 1930s as well as by radio and 78-rpm recordings.

The two principal composers of early American musical comedy were also composers of many favorite old tunes: Jerome Kern (1885–1945) and George Gershwin. Kern’s masterpiece, *Show Boat* (1927), has returned to the stage again and again, and Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* (1935), which is more like a jazz opera than a musical, occupies a solid place in the operatic repertory.

Gershwin’s actual musicals are seldom heard because most of the plots now seem so silly—but there are exceptions, notably *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), a hilarious spoof of the presidential election process. There is a song from this show on our Companion DVD.



13



A vaudeville team of the 1890s, the Southern Four

The Musical after 1940

Show Boat and *Of Thee I Sing* both look forward to the new dramatic sophistication of the musical in the postwar era. From the 1940s on, the plots of musicals were worked out with more care. Instead of the plot being a mere pretext for songs and dances in the manner of a revue, musical numbers grew logically out of a plot that had interest in its own right.

Richard Rodgers (1902–1979) and his lyricist Oscar Hammerstein (1895–1960) dominated this period. Their works such as *Oklahoma!* (1943) and *The King and I* (1951) ran for thousands of performances on Broadway. They still define the golden age of the musical—perhaps especially because they offered a sentimental and innocent vision of the world as America in the postwar era wished to see it.

Other musicals tackled more challenging subjects—psychoanalysis, trade unionism, gang warfare—but these rarely rivaled the megahits of Rodgers and Hammerstein. One exception to this rule is *West Side Story*, with music by the classical composer and symphony conductor Leonard Bernstein. Here we see the cultivated tradition reaching out to the vernacular—but in a genre defined by the vernacular.



West Side Story: trouble at the gym

In Shakespeare, the feud is a legacy from the older generation, but in *West Side Story* the bitter enmity is the kids' own, though it has ethnic overtones. The Jets are whites, the Sharks Puerto Ricans.

Bernardo, leader of the Sharks, is livid when he learns that his sister Maria is in love with Jet Tony. As in Shakespeare, one Jet (Capulet) and one Shark (Montague) die tragically on stage, in a street fight. Tony is shot in revenge, and Maria is left distraught.

Some of the transpositions into the modern world are ingenious. Shakespeare's famous soliloquy "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" shows the lovestruck Juliet fondly repeating her lover's name; Tony cries "Maria" over and over again in his famous song of that title. (An aria in an opera or a song in a musical is, in fact, often equivalent to a soliloquy in a play.) And whereas Shakespeare's young lovers fall in love at a Capulet masked ball, which Romeo has crashed, Bernstein's are smitten at a gym dance organized by a clueless teacher who hopes to make peace between the gangs.

Cha-cha This is the music danced to by the Puerto Rican girls—the Sharks' girlfriends—at the gym where Tony and Maria first meet. The cha-cha, a Cuban dance, was new to the United States when *West Side Story* was written.

The charm of the fragile cha-cha melody owes a good deal to Bernstein's skillful accompaniment. Melody and accompaniment seem nervously aware of each other, but they keep slipping out of sync:

“The great thing about conducting is that you don't smoke and you breathe in great gobs of oxygen.”

Chain-smoker Leonard Bernstein

Melody



Accompaniment




33 *Meeting Scene* Tony and Maria catch sight of one another. The cha-cha may be continuing, but they don't hear it, so neither do we. Or at most they hear fragments of the cha-cha slowed down and made unexpectedly tender, as background for their voice-over.


And when Tony gets to sing the big romantic number, "Maria," the music is yet another transformation of the cha-cha melody, now sounding rich and enthusiastic. Thematic transformation technique, which Bernstein knew from Wagner and other Romantic composers, allowed him to show Tony's love emerging and blossoming out of that one heart-stopping moment in the gym.

34 *"Cool"* Later in the action, the Jet Ice tries to persuade his troops to stay calm after the death of their leader, Riff, in the rumble with the Sharks. The main production number of Act I, it consists of an introduction, again with voice-over; a short song by Ice; a dazzling dance; and then Ice's song again.

The song's introduction uses the motive of the cha-cha melody—the same motive that turns into "Maria"—in a highly charged, syncopated form:



pp




Boy, boy crazy boy, — Get cool, boy! — Got a rocket in your pocket Keep coolly cool, — boy!

After the introduction, Ice sings two stanzas of his song, in 1950s "hip" street language. There is a steady jazz percussion accompaniment.

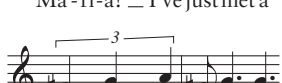
The dance that follows, subtitled "Fugue," is accompanied throughout by the soft jazz drum beat. First played by muted trumpet, the fugue subject consists of four slow notes, with an ominous snap at the end of the last of them. Soon another theme—the fugue countersubject (see page 132)—comes in, played by flute and vibraphone, featured instruments of 1950s "cool jazz." The two themes combine in counterpoint, along with fragments of the introduction, getting louder and more intricate as the dance proceeds. Bernstein must have thought that fugue, about the most controlled of musical forms, would depict perfectly the Jets' effort to stay cool.

But things appear to get out of hand toward the end of the dance. The music stomps angrily and breaks into electrifying improvised drum solos. The Jets yell various words taken from the song, and the song's melody returns, orchestrated in the exuberant, brash style of a big swing band. While the brass blare away on the tune, breaks (see page 382) are played by the reeds at the end of each line.

To conclude, the Jets sing parts of "Cool" quietly, prior to its atmospheric conclusion. The vibraphone recollects the fugue countersubject.



Ma-ri-a! — I've just met a



girl named Ma-ri-a! —

Boy, boy, crazy boy,
Get cool, boy!
Got a rocket in your pocket,
Keep coolly cool, boy!
Don't get hot 'cause, man,
you got
Some high times ahead.
Take it slow, and, Daddy-o,
You can live it up and die in
bed!

LISTEN

BERNSTEIN
"Cool"

0:14 Ice: "Cool"
1:12 Fugue begins
2:40 Fugue breaks down
3:10 Band version of "Cool"
3:39 Jets: "Cool"
4:09 Countersubject

MUTED BRASS



pp — *sfz*

The Later Musical

Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930), who wrote the lyrics for *West Side Story*, was himself an aspiring composer. He has gone on to write words and music for a string of successful musicals with an intellectual bent: *A Little Night Music* (1972), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), and *Into the Woods* (1987). *Sweeney Todd* in particular pushed at the border between musical and opera, as Gershwin had done forty years earlier in *Porgy and Bess*.

Meanwhile the musical in the 1960s began to acknowledge the rock revolution. Prominent rock musicals were *Hair* (1967—the latest revival was in 2009), *Grease* (1972), and *Rent* (1997). Rock musicals have had to share space on Broadway with more conventional fare, often from abroad, such as *Les Misérables* (*Les Mis*, 1980), *Cats* (1981), and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). Some of these are still running.

Written for the stage, musicals have often been filmed with great success, from *Show Boat* to *Rent*, not to forget *West Side Story*. Disney had the idea of creating musicals directly for film—for animated full-length films, including *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and *The Lion King* (1994). Again we see musical theater reinventing itself—from opera to operetta, from operetta to musical, from musical to filmed musical. Such reinventions will surely continue in the future.

Beyond Broadway and Hollywood, throughout all this time, musical comedy has thrived in the annual student revivals of Broadway hits at thousands of colleges, high schools, junior highs, and summer camps around the country. Take part in one of these, and it will expand your whole idea of music.

5 Rock

World War II made for massive changes not only in global politics and population but also in all aspects of culture throughout the world. To speak only of music, we have traced the radical developments of modernist music in its second phase, and noted the dissolution of the big jazz bands in America as well as the increasing complexity of our musical theater. And while popular song continued to flourish after World War II, it was a new kind of popular song, with less emphasis on melody and more on rhythm—or, more exactly, with a heavy emphasis on music's meter. By the middle of the 1950s the new style took a name that captured this compelling rhythm: *rock'n'roll*. Later, in the 1960s, the name of choice was shortened to **rock**. Teenagers went wild. Their parents, reacting much as parents had thirty years earlier in the face of jazz, bemoaned the demise of civil culture and decent society.

Nevertheless, rock endured and evolved—in fact, it positively burgeoned. Its explosive development from 1955 to 1970 and its reinvention in the following decades have put rock on a historical par with jazz. If jazz can claim to be America's most distinctive contribution to world art from the first half of the twentieth century, rock can make similar claims for the second half. Today the development of global pop, discussed in Global Perspectives 7 (page 407), depends on various styles of American-derived rock more than on any other musical idiom.

Early Rock'n'Roll

The origins and subsequent history of rock conform to a pattern in American vernacular music we have seen as early as the minstrel show and then in 1930s swing: the mixing of African American and white American styles. Sometimes in rock history this mix was a relatively balanced meeting of differing styles; at other times it looks more like the appropriation of African American idioms for commercial gain by white musicians.



The final painting by Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975), *The Sources of Country Music*. Pictured are hymnody, Appalachian fiddle and dulcimer, black banjo and song, cowboy guitar—as well as less direct inspirations: church, train, Mississippi riverboat, and moonshine. Benton painted it for the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville.

The very earliest rock'n'roll shows this pattern, emerging after World War II from the blending of *hillbilly* or *country* music with **rhythm and blues**. Country music was a white rural style derived from southern and southwestern folk song and emphasizing acoustic guitar, fiddle, and voice. Rhythm and blues was a black urban updating of earlier blues, marked by more pronounced, driving rhythms and electric guitar accompaniment.

Together they created the first rock'n'roll style, *rockabilly*, and the first superstar of rock'n'roll, Elvis Presley. His amazing string of hits in the late 1950s (“Heartbreak Hotel,” “Love Me Tender,” and many others) combined a lyrical style derived from white popular singers with the strong beat and passionate, throaty vocal delivery of rockabilly. Many of these hits (for example, “Hound Dog”) were Elvis’s versions of songs originally recorded by black artists.

Across the late 1950s a string of musicians, both white (Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly) and black (Fats Domino, Little Richard, Chuck Berry), followed Elvis up the charts—and soon it was “Rock around the Clock,” as Bill Haley had declared in his 1955 hit. Radio stations and record companies alike realized there was a lasting market for the new sound.

The 1960s: Rock Comes of Age

The blending of black and white styles that resulted in early rock'n'roll lasted into the 1960s and has reappeared in various forms down to this day. At the same time, the early and mid 1960s witnessed the emergence of new styles, many of them clearly black or white in their origin and target audience. There was an explosion of new sounds, distinct from one another and gaining the allegiance of different groups of fans.

Motown, Soul, and Funk

As the civil rights movement of the 1950s evolved into the Black Power movement of the late 1960s, a succession of black styles asserted their independence from white rock. These grew out of several sources: the remnants of black rhythm and blues in the late 1950s, most notably represented by singer-pianist Ray Charles; urban doo-wop groups that spawned such hit-makers as the Drifters ("Under the Boardwalk"); and "girl groups" such as the Shirelles ("Will You Love Me Tomorrow?").

The first in this line was the *Motown* style, created by the part-time songwriter and record producer Berry Gordy Jr. of Detroit—"Motorcity" or "Motown." Gordy was the most important black entrepreneur in early rock history. The groups he sponsored, among them the Supremes ("Where Did



With his sultry voice and sexual stage presence, Elvis Presley had a gripping effect on audiences of the 1950s.

Our Love Go?”) and the Temptations (“My Girl”), evolved polished, lyrical styles and performances featuring dance steps and sequins.

A more visceral style that emerged around the same time was *soul*. Soul derived especially from southern gospel singing combined with the rhythm and blues of Ray Charles. Its leading lights were the powerful Aretha Franklin (“Respect”) and James Brown, self-styled as “the hardest working man in show business”—and certainly one of the hardest singing (“I Got You (I Feel Good)”).

By the end of the 1960s, soul was evolving into *funk*, a style in which the large bands with wind instruments typical of soul gave way to a sparer, hip sound (fuzztone bass guitar ostinatos, syncopated guitar scratching). One of the early groups pointing in this direction was the Bay Area-based Sly and the Family Stone (“Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)”). A decade later funk, as performed by George Clinton and his band Funkadelic, was the style early DJs sampled to accompany the first rappers.



“Stop in the name of love!”—The Supremes in concert, 1965: Florence Ballard, lead singer Diana Ross, and Mary Wilson.

The British Invasion

On February 7, 1964, the Beatles landed in New York for their first American tour. The resulting Beatlemania changed the face of rock’n’roll and has never really ended.

Dozens of other British rock bands followed in the wake of the Beatles’ arrival, some good, some not. The best of them, cast from the first as a kind of evil-twin mirroring of the Beatles, was the Rolling Stones. What British groups had in common at the start was their emulation of American rhythm and blues and the styles of black American rockers like Chuck Berry and Little Richard.

The difference between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones was not merely the good/bad contrast of their carefully groomed market images. It was musical as well. The Stones specialized in a hard-rocking style led by Mick Jagger’s manic vocal presence. The Beatles, in contrast, seemed to blossom in all musical directions, reflecting the differing musical interests of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison—differences that would tear the group apart by 1970. From covers of Chuck Berry (“Roll Over, Beethoven”) and sneakily insightful pop/rock numbers (“She Loves You,” “Help!”), they moved on to lyrical ballads (“Yesterday,” “Blackbird”), hymnlike anthems (“Hey Jude,” “Let It Be”), visionary and psychedelic rock (“A Day in the Life,” “Strawberry Fields Forever”), straight-ahead, blues-derived rock (“Revolution”), and irresistible pop songs harkening back to the 1930s (“When I’m Sixty-Four,” “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer”—surely the sweetest tune imaginable about a serial killer).



January 1969: The Beatles in their final concert, an impromptu affair soon broken up by the police, on the roof of the Apple Records building in London. From left: Ringo, Paul, John, and George.

American Counteroffensives

The irony of the British groups' interest in American rhythm and blues is that their massive popularity chased dozens of American groups, especially black ones, off the charts and out of business. About the only American music that swam well during the highest tide of the British invasion was the surfing sound out of southern California, led by the Beach Boys ("I Get Around," "Good Vibrations").

Meanwhile another movement looking back to the hillbilly side of rock's ancestry was gaining steam. *Folk rock* was led by Bob Dylan, whose evocative, often socially conscious lyrics ("Blowin' in the Wind," "The Times They Are A-Changin'") rivaled his music in importance. Dylan's resuscitation of white country and folk styles, building on "folkies" such as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, had long-lasting consequences.

The most important of these was creating a place, at the edge of the rock tradition, for the singer-songwriter using acoustic accompaniment. Dylan and the folkies inspired later musicians as different as Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello. Women musicians in particular have found the singer-songwriter niche congenial. Their line extends from Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell in the 1960s to Joanna Newsom today. (For a picture of Mitchell, see page 32.)

In the late 1960s a broad, mainly white, stratum of American youth, espousing free love, free drugs, and ever-louder opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam, embraced new styles. From San Francisco, a center of this counter-



Joan Baez and
Bob Dylan, 1975

culture, came *acid rock*, named after LSD, or “acid.” In the hands of groups like the Grateful Dead, the style joined long, jazzlike improvisations on electric guitar to hallucinatory images in the words; the Dead was the first great “jam band.”

Other guitar virtuosos embraced the new, improvisational style and linked it back to rhythm and blues guitar playing. The most famous of them were Jimi Hendrix, a rare black musician in the midst of psychedelic acid rock (“Purple Haze”), and the Latin-influenced Carlos Santana (“Black Magic Woman”). This powerful new style of guitar playing would infect groups on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the Who (creators of the rock opera *Tommy*), Cream (led by blues-influenced guitarist Eric Clapton; “Sunshine of Your Love”), and Led Zeppelin (“Whole Lotta Love”). The guitar work of such groups formed the roots of *heavy metal*.

After the 1960s

By 1970, many of the trends that evolved over the following decades were in place. Self-conscious *art rock* (for example, Pink Floyd’s album *Dark Side of the Moon*), singer-songwriter rock, heavy metal, and funk can all be seen as outgrowths of music at the end of the 1960s.

The decade of the 1970s was perhaps most influential, however, in its consolidation of the global *business* of rock. Tendencies under way in the 1960s came to exert ever greater control over the music people heard: high-tech mass-marketing; play-listed, repetitive radio stations; and aggressive promotion of “superstars” (the word itself came into common usage at this time,



The Jimi Hendrix Experience, on the cover of their first album, dressed in their Carnaby Street best

alongside “supertanker” and “superpower”). In 1981 a powerful new outlet emerged to promote a small and carefully selected sample of rock music: MTV began broadcasting music videos nonstop on cable.

Trends 1980–2000: Punk, Rap, and Post-Rock

Despite—or perhaps because of—this commercialization, rock survived. Indeed the last decades of the twentieth century brought something of a rejuvenation. Three trends can be pointed to:

7 The youthful disaffection that set in by the end of the 1960s, as the idealistic counterculture began to sense its impotence, hardened in the next decade. Its most influential expression was the nihilistic alienation of *punk rock*. In New York City and Britain, groups like the Patti Smith Group (“Gloria”), the Ramones (“Blitzkrieg Bop”), and the Sex Pistols (“Anarchy in the UK”) reacted against the commercial flashiness of much rock with what we might call an anti-aesthetic: All expression was possible, including no expression. All musical expertise was acceptable, including none. (Some of the punks were fully aware that in this move they were following the lead of arch-modernists like John Cage; see page 366.)

The punk approach gave strong impetus to a kind of populist movement in rock, encouraging the formation of countless “garage bands” and the 1990s’ *indie rock*, distributed on small, independent labels. Some punk singers also pioneered an alienated, flat vocal delivery that contrasts both with the impassioned singing of earlier rock and with the streetwise cool of rap. In these features punk looked forward to the unpolished, moving, but somehow distant

style of *grunge rock*, led by Kurt Cobain (until his death in 1994) and his band Nirvana.

7 First emerging about the same time as punk, *hip-hop* or *rap* has compiled a substantial history as a primary black rhetorical and musical mode. Early on, its influence was transmitted, with stunning postmodern quickness, around the globe. Already by 2000 rap had become a strong current in world pop-music traditions, its influence heard in the vocal delivery of countless rock and pop groups.

The early 1990s marked rap's moment of highest notoriety in the American mass media. One strain of rap—the violent, misogynist variety known as *gangsta rap*—figured centrally in the public debate, which was marked not only by justifiable distaste at the vision of these rappers but also by unmistakable racist undertones. However, the debate tended to miss two important points: First, while rap originated as a pointed expression of black urban concerns, it was marketed successfully to affluent whites, especially suburban teens. Second, the clamor against gangsta rap ignored the wider expressive terrains that rap as a whole had traveled. Already in 1980 rap was broad enough to embrace the hip-hop dance numbers of the Sugarhill Gang (“Rapper’s Delight”) and the trenchant social commentary of Grandmaster Flash (“The Message”). By the 1990s, rap could range from the black empowerment messages of Public Enemy (“Don’t Believe the Hype”) to Queen Latifah’s assertions of women’s dignity and strength (“Latifah’s Had It Up 2 Here”).

7 Around 1990 a new, experimental rock movement began to take shape; soon it was dubbed *post-rock*. Early post-rock groups (for example, Slint: “Good Morning Captain”) emerged from the indie rock movement. They typically employed rock instrumentation and technology in a style that features hypnotically repeated gestures (especially bass ostinatos), juxtaposition of contrasting plateaus of sound, slow transitions and buildups, free improvisation, and emphasis of instruments rather than voice. (When a voice is present, it often doesn’t so much *sing* as recite fragments of poetry in front of the instrumental backdrop.) This thumbnail sketch alone is enough to reveal post-rock’s relation to two other musical movements we have encountered: minimalism (page 367) and fusion jazz (page 392).

And just as classic jazz appeared by the 1970s, so today we have classic rock; and the same question might again arise: Can creative freshness survive the prepackaged recycling of rock styles and gestures?

But perhaps, in the end, this is the wrong way to think of rock in the twenty-first century. Perhaps we need to broaden our view now, understanding rock altogether as a spectacularly energetic strain in the popular song tradition that took off with Tin Pan Alley, was fed by blues and jazz, and will be carried forward by the next winner of *American Idol* (or another reality-show talent search that replaces it). Whatever songs you download onto your iPhone, it is clear that fussy distinctions of rock from rap, rap from pop, and pop from country can be a limiting way of hearing this broad, rich tradition as it lives on in the new century.

► Study the Flashcards and Quizzes for Chapter 24 at bedfordstmartins.com/listen



Kurt Cobain

“All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the instruments.

It is not the violins and cornets, it is not the oboe nor the beating drum, nor the score of the baritone singer singing his sweet romance, nor that of the men’s chorus, nor that of the women’s chorus.

It is nearer and farther than they.”

For Walt Whitman, music was always both mystical and precise.

Global Perspectives 7

Global Music

We have seen in Global Perspectives 2 (page 81) that European efforts to colonize foreign lands never resulted in the simple substitution of European cultures for native ones, but rather in new, complex mixed cultures. Such is the way of all meetings of distinct cultures and distinct musics.

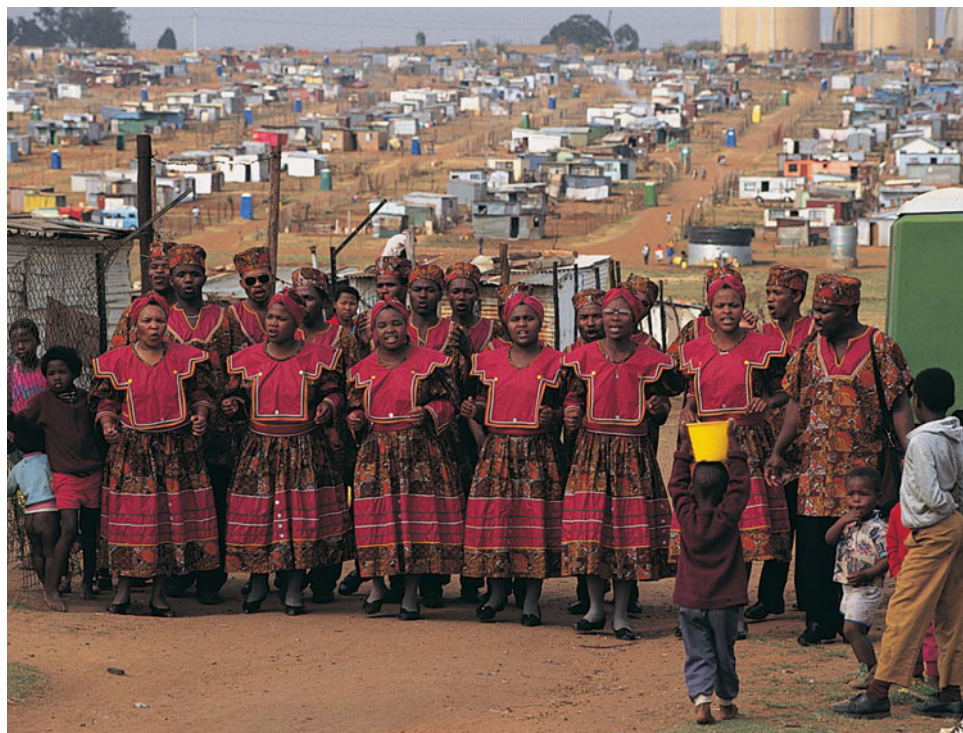
But a funny thing happened to mixed musical cultures on their way through the twentieth century: recorded sound. Around the globe, the impact on music of technologies that store and play back sound has been revolutionary. Combined with radio and TV broadcasts, and with the modern ease of travel and commerce, it has given musicians and listeners from all parts of the world access to a much wider variety of music than ever before.

Complexities of Globalism

Two opposing tendencies have arisen from this situation. The first works toward the worldwide *homogenization* of musics. Huge stretches of the sonic landscape

are now inhabited by styles that are similar in certain basic features: electrified instruments, especially guitars; strong percussive presence; extensive syncopation; and relatively brief song-form presentation.

These features spread out from the American and especially African American pop-music revolution that occurred in the decades after World War II. Since the 1960s the dispersion of styles such as rhythm and blues, rock, soul, and rap has been powerful. Musical currents have, to be sure, flowed in both directions. *Reggae*, to take one example, was formed in the 1960s from a merger of native Jamaican styles with American rhythm and blues and soul, but by the late 1970s it had crossed back over to exert a great influence on American rock itself. The global dispersion has been enabled by a recording industry that has grown increasingly rich, increasingly multinational, and increasingly influential in determining musical tastes. It is enough to make one observer of these developments speak—with some worry—of a “universal pop aesthetic.”



A community choir sings in front of stark Soweto Township, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1995.

There is another tendency, however, opposing this move toward sameness, a move to *localize* music making. People never simply take on foreign things without in some way making them their own. Even as musicians around the world have felt the influence of American pop styles, they have combined these styles in their local musics to forge new, distinct styles. Reggae is one example of this process.

South African Choral Song: *Isicathamiya*

A South African musical tradition with a difficult name, *isicathamiya* (ees-ee-zah-ah-mée-ah), provides an example reaching back many decades of this mix of local and global ingredients. It has become familiar to listeners worldwide through the recordings of the singing group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. *Isicathamiya* is an all-male, *a cappella* song style that arose among an impoverished class of black, mostly Zulu-speaking migrant laborers. A chief diversion in the laborers' camps



were Saturday-night contests among singing groups, and for the musical styles the performers looked back to earlier, complex international roots.

Standing behind *isicathamiya* are traditions of choral polyphony native to the Zulus and other groups of the region. In the nineteenth century, these traditions merged readily with the four-part harmony of Christian hymn-singing brought to the area by European and American missionaries. Then another ingredient was added to the mix: American vaudeville or minstrel shows, with their syncopated, ragtime songs (see page 383 and the picture on page 396). An enormously influential African American minstrel—not a white minstrel in blackface—named Orpheus McAdoo toured South Africa extensively in the 1890s, to the great acclaim of black audiences.

By the 1930s, these musical influences were put together by the first recording stars of the local Zulu singing scene, Solomon Linda and the Evening Birds. Their greatest hit, “Mbube” or “Lion,” known to most of us today as “The Lion Sleeps Tonight,” was originally recorded about 1939. Then it was re-recorded by pop singers and became a top-40 hit in the 1960s. Most recently it was featured in Disney’s film and musical *The Lion King*.



Isicathamiya praktisa: a rehearsal at the Beatrice St. YMCA, Durban, South Africa, 1996

“Anoku Gonda”

Solomon Linda’s song “Anoku Gonda” (You Must Understand This), from the same period as “Mbube,” combines two distinct styles that are still heard today in isicathamiya. The first is a richly harmonized, homophonic style that recites the text freely and shows no clear or consistent sense of meter—*choral declamation*, we can call it. We hear two phrases of choral declamation, stated and repeated in the pattern **a a b b a a**. Notable here, and frequent in isicathamiya, is the slide in all voices from high to lower pitches.

Then, after about a minute, the music takes on a clear meter. This is the second style common in isicathamiya. It is still organized in repeating phrases, but now the texture departs from the simple homophony of the recitational opening section. It uses call-and-response techniques (see page 381), pitting Linda against the rest of the group at first; later the basses in the chorus sing against the group as a whole. The call-and-response phrases alternate with a falling cadential phrase sung by the whole chorus.



LISTEN



“Anoku Gonda”

0:00	Unmetered choral declamation
0:00	a
0:13	a
0:25	b
0:30	b
0:35	a
0:47	a
0:57	Metrical call and response: Solomon Linda against the full chorus
1:27	Metrical call and response: Basses against the full chorus

6 Conclusion

A few thoughts in conclusion: not so much a conclusion to this chapter, but rather to our total effort in this book as a whole.

In the introduction to Unit I, on page 3, we observed that our basic goal would be to listen better, in order to better understand and appreciate music. Some musical terminology has been introduced that should help clarify listening, and we have led a guided tour through the history of Western music, from Hildegard of Bingen in her convent to Kaija Saariaho in her recording studio, by way of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Stravinsky. There have been a number of detours beyond Europe, and a fairly long side trip to popular music—but on all routes, the important thing we’ve done is *listen*: listen with care to numerous individual pieces of music.

Surveys show that many students hang on to the CD sets that come with *Listen*, even while they dispose of the book itself. Anyone who keeps the CDs or downloads certain tracks, we reason, expects or half expects to play them again sometime, and so long as that happens we are more than happy to see the book—which was only there to introduce, explain, and contextualize the music—fall away. Teachers are great hoppers. We hope, though we’ll never know, that sometime in the future readers will find themselves listening again to some of the music they were introduced to by *Listen*.

“ [Music] takes us out of the actual and whispers to us dim secrets that startle our wonder as to who we are, and for what, whence and whereto.”

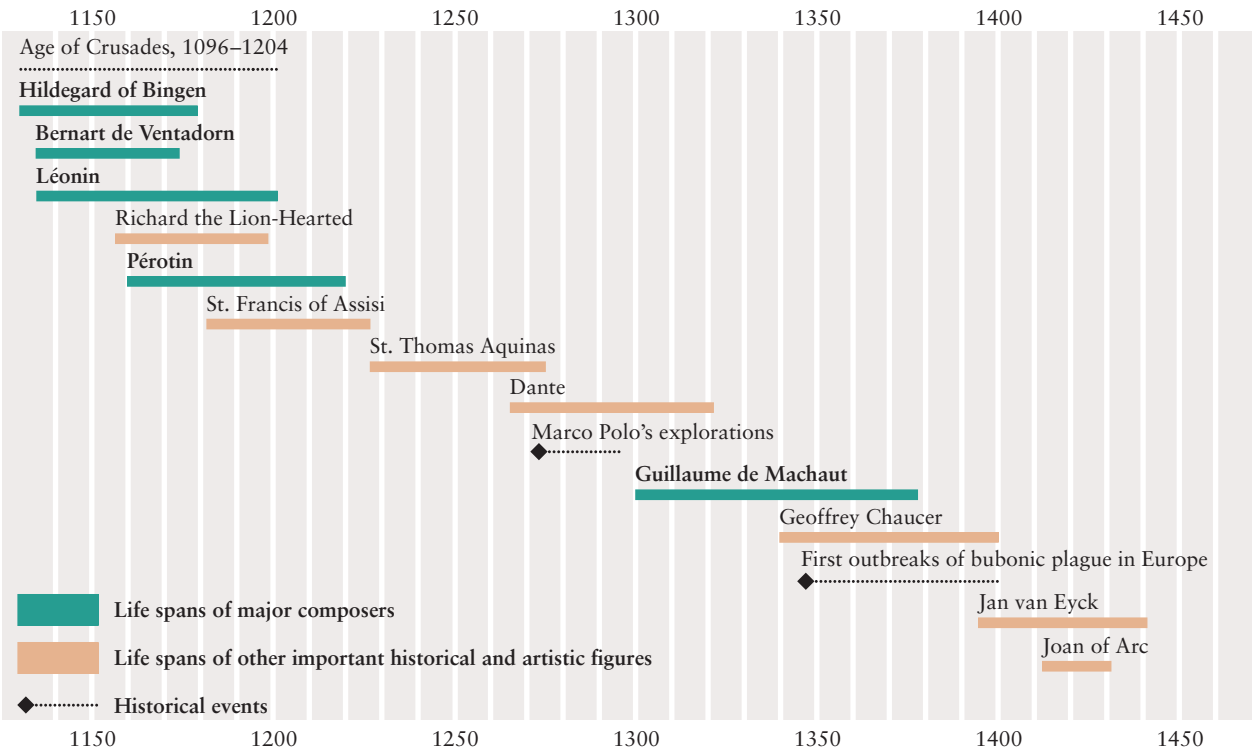
Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1838

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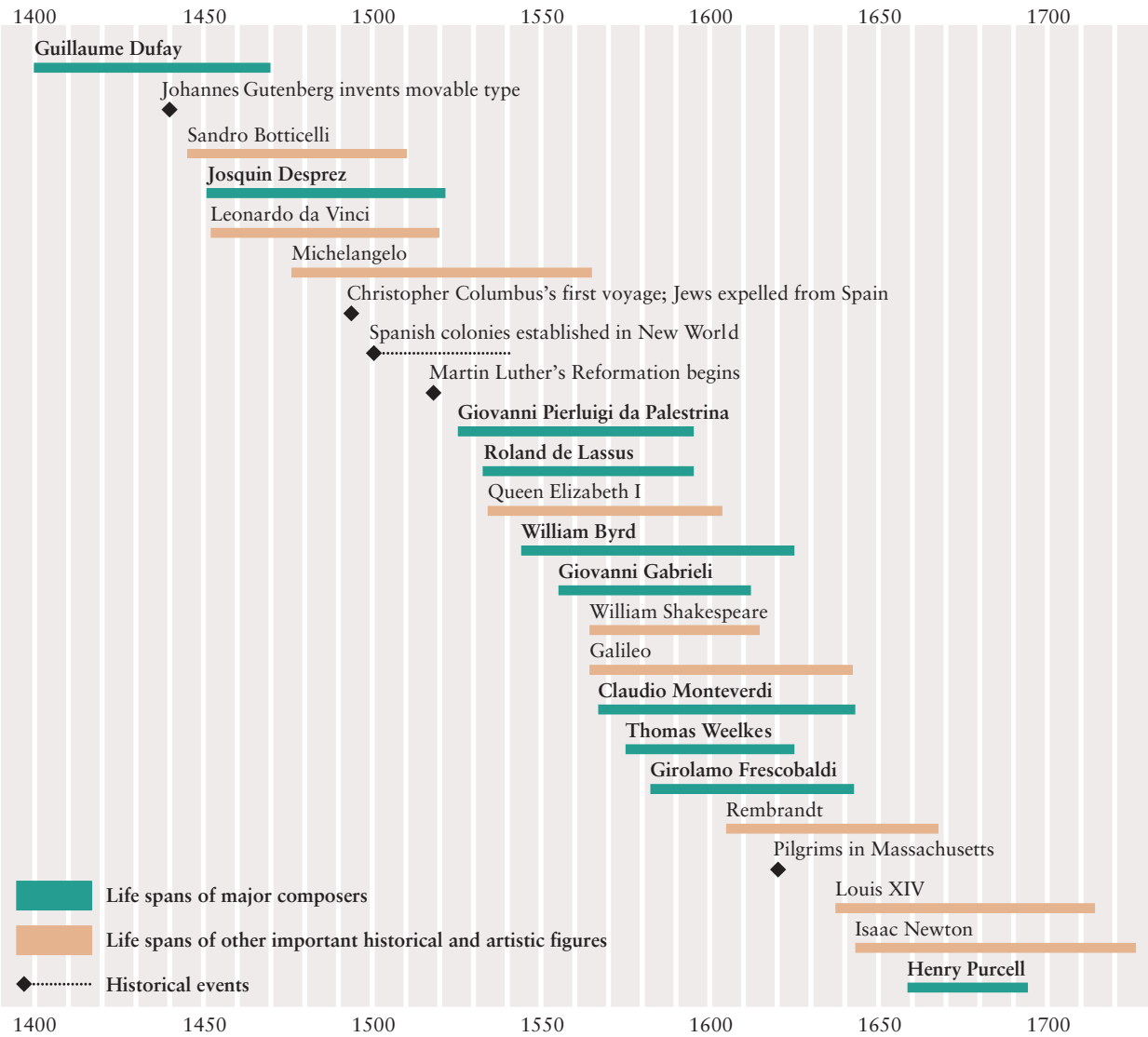
APPENDIX A

Time Lines

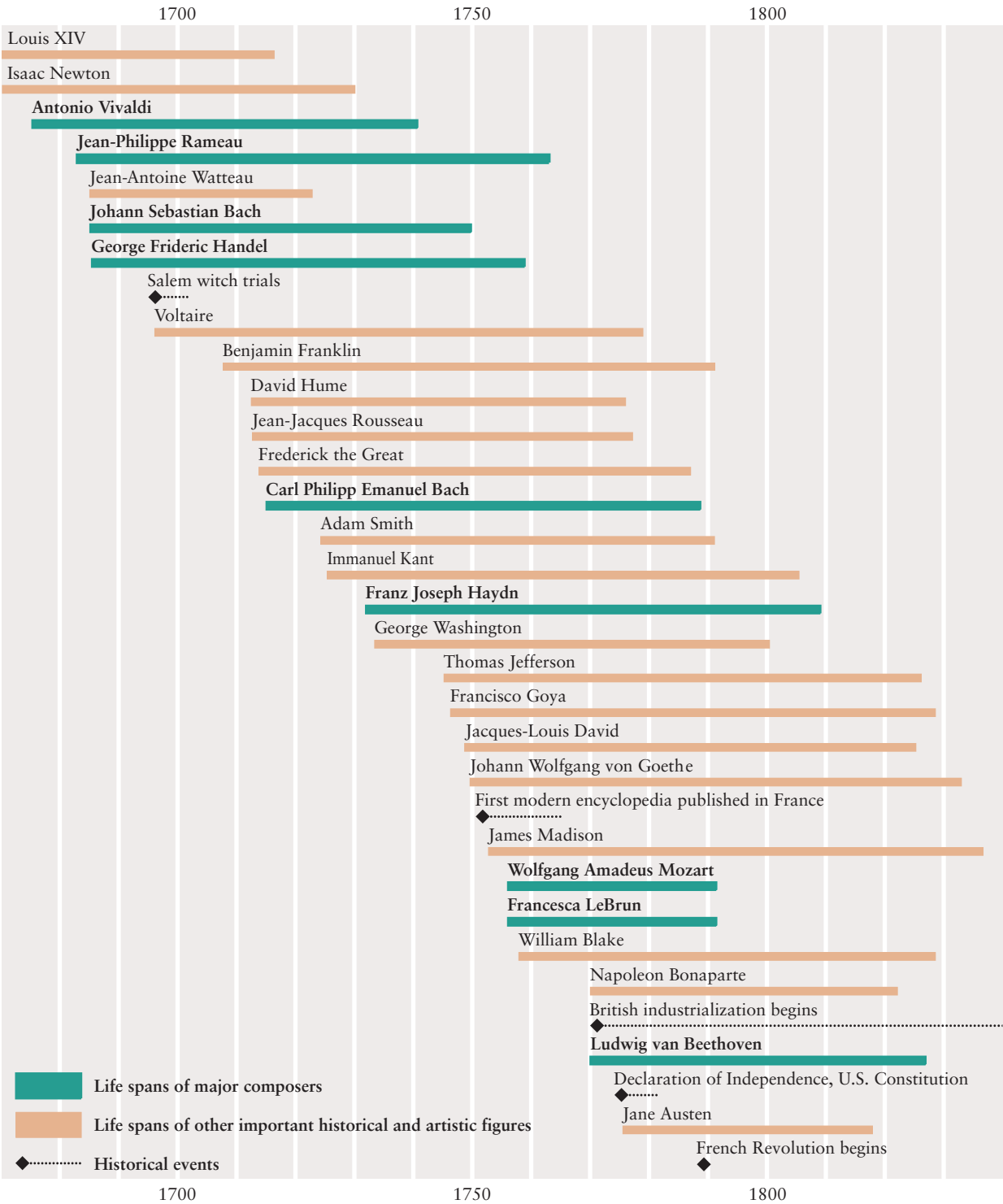
The Middle Ages



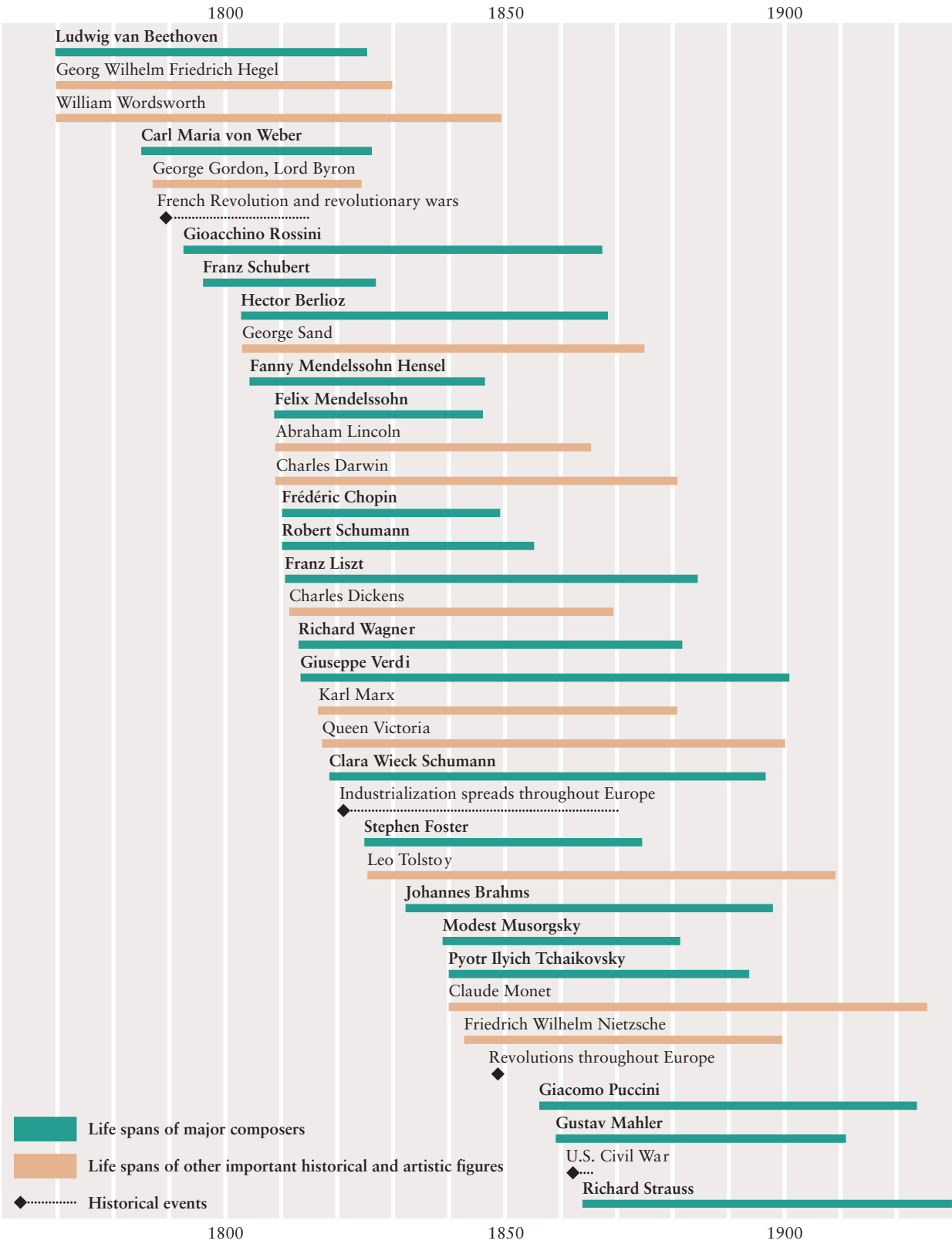
The Renaissance and Early Baroque



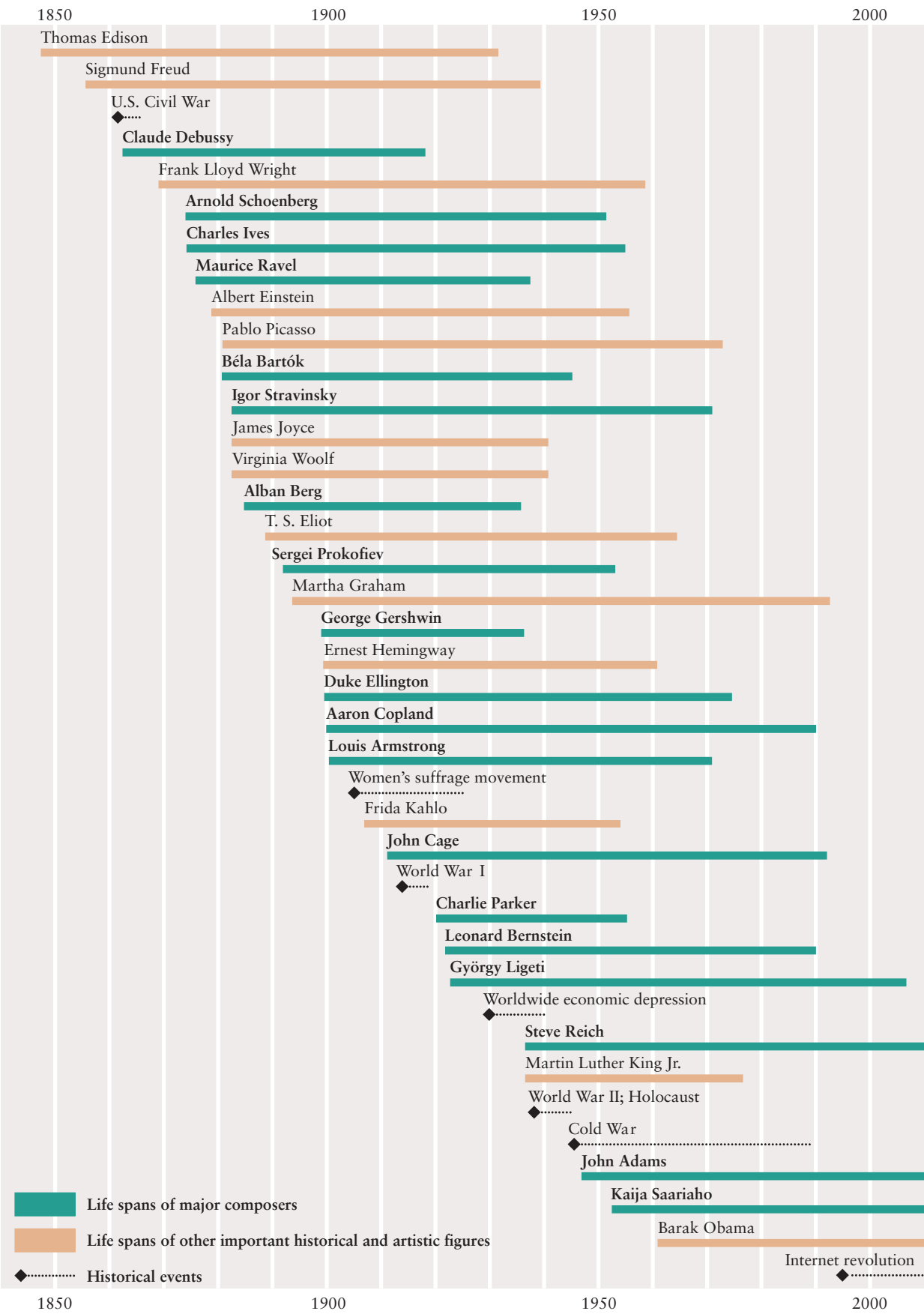
The Eighteenth Century



The Nineteenth Century



The Twentieth Century and Beyond



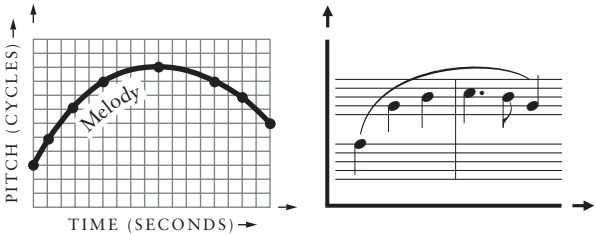
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APPENDIX B

Musical Notation

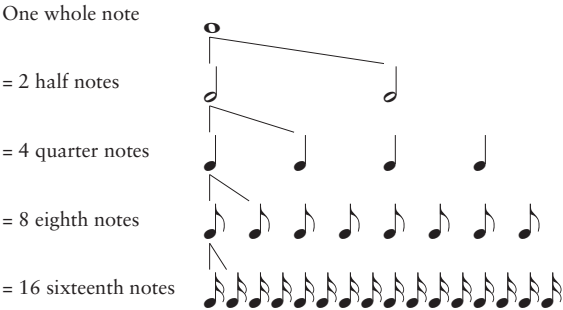
Many cultures around the world employ different notations for writing their music down. It is never necessary, obviously, to read these notations in order to understand the music or to love it; indeed, many cultures have no notation at all. However, written music examples can help clarify many points about musical style—even ones not written down by their creators—and it will help if you can learn to follow the music examples in this book in an approximate way. The following brief survey of Western musical notation can be used for study or review or reference.

As we have seen in our discussion of musical elements, *time* and *pitch* are really the only ones that can be specified (and therefore notated) with any precision. Think of pitch and time as coordinates of a graph on which music is going to be plotted. The resulting pitch/time grid is quite close to actual musical notation, as shown in the diagrams below.



Notes and Rests

The longest note in common use is the *whole note* (♩). A half note (♪) lasts for half the time of a whole note, a quarter note (♫) lasts for a quarter of the time, an eighth note (♬) for an eighth, a sixteenth (♭) for a sixteenth, and so on. (We are dealing here with proportional lengths; how long any note lasts in absolute time depends on the tempo: see page 24).

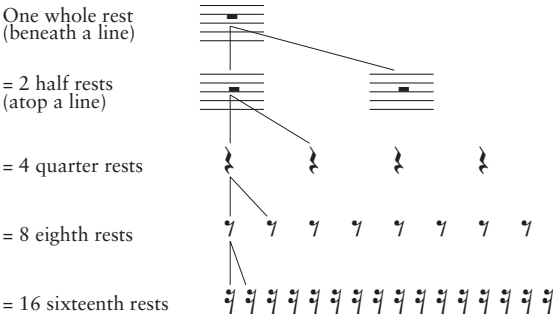


When the short notes come in groups, they can also be notated as shown at the top of the next column.

The *flags*—they look more like pennants—at the sides of the note *stems* have been connected into horizontal *beams* for easier reading:



Rests Composers use not only sounds but also short silences called *rests*.



Compare the whole- and half-note rests, which are slugs beneath or atop one of the lines of the staff.

The shorter rests have their own sort of flags. As with notes, more flags can be added to rests, with each flag cutting the time value in half. Thus, three flags on a rest (♭) make it a thirty-second rest.

Rhythmic Notation

Beyond the notation of basic notes and rests, a number of other conventions are necessary to indicate the combining of notes and rests into actual rhythms.

Dotted Notes and Dotted Rhythms A dot placed after a note or rest lengthens its duration by 50 percent. Thus a dotted half note lasts as long as a half note plus a quarter note: ♪. = ♪ + ♫ And a dotted quarter-note rest equals a quarter plus an eighth: ♭. = ♭ + ♬ Even simple tunes, such as “Yankee Doodle,” make use of the dot convention.

A *dotted rhythm* is one consisting of dotted (long) notes alternating with short ones:



Ties Two notes of the same pitch can be connected by means of a curved line called a *tie*. This means they are played continuously, as though they were one note of the

combined duration. Any number of notes of the same pitch can be tied together.



Beware: The same sort of curved line is also used to connect notes that are *not* of the same pitch. In this case it means that they are to be played smoothly, one following the next without the slightest break (*legato* or “bound” playing). These curved lines are called *slurs*.



To indicate that notes are to be played in an especially detached fashion (*staccato*), dots are placed above or below them.

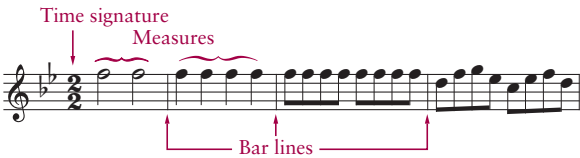


Triplets Three notes bracketed together and marked with a 3 ($\overset{3}{\frown}$) are called a *triplet*. The three notes take exactly the same time that would normally be taken by two. A quarter-note triplet has the same duration as two ordinary quarter notes: $\overset{3}{\frown} \text{quarter notes} = \text{quarter notes}$

The convention is occasionally extended to groups of five notes, seven notes, etc. For an example, see page 249.

Meter: Measures and Bar Lines A *measure* (or *bar*) is the basic time unit chosen for a piece of music, corresponding to the meter of the piece (see page 8). Measures are marked in musical notation by vertical *bar lines*. Each measure covers the same time span.

In the following example, the time span covered by each measure is one whole note, equivalent to two half notes (measure 1), or four quarter notes (measure 2), or eight eighth notes (measures 3, 4).



Time Signatures In the example above, the meter is indicated by means of a *time signature*. Time signatures are printed on the staves at the beginning of pieces of music (they are not repeated on later staves).

In spite of appearances, time signatures are not fractions. The top digit shows *how many beats* are in each

measure, and the bottom digit shows *what kind of note* represents a beat. If the bottom digit is 2, the beat is represented by a half note; if 4, by a quarter note, and so on.

In our example, the 2 at the top indicates there are two beats in each measure (duple meter), and the 2 at the bottom indicates that the beats are half-note beats. This time signature can also be indicated by the sign ♩ .

Pitch Notation

The letter names A B C D E F G are assigned to the original seven pitches of the diatonic scale. Then the letters are used over and over again for pitches in the duplicating octaves. Octaves are distinguished by numbers (c^1 , c^2) or prime marks (A' , A''); so-called middle C (c^1) is the comfortable note that virtually any man, woman, or child can sing and that can be played by the great majority of instruments. On a keyboard, middle C sits in the middle, right under the maker’s name—Casio, Yamaha, Steinway.

The Staff: Ledger Lines For the notation of pitch, notes are placed on a set of five parallel lines called a *staff*. The notes can be put on the lines of the staff, in the spaces between them, or right at the top or bottom of the staff:



Above and below the regular five lines of the staff, short extra lines can be added to accommodate a few higher and lower notes. These are called *ledger lines*.

Clefs Nothing has been said so far about which pitch each position on the staff represents. To clue us in to precise pitches, signs called *clefs* (French for “key” or “clue”) are placed at the beginning of each staff. Clefs calibrate the staff; that is, they connect one of the five lines of the staff to a specific pitch.

Thus in the treble clef, or G clef (G), the spiral in the middle of this antique capital G curls around line 2, counting up from the bottom of the staff. Line 2, then, is the line for the pitch G—the first G above middle C. In the bass clef, or F clef (F), the two dots straddle the fourth line up. The pitch F goes on this line—the first F below middle C. Complicated! But not too hard to learn.

Adjacent lines and spaces on the staff have adjacent letter names, so we can place all the other pitches on the staff in relation to the fixed points marked by the clefs:



There are other clefs, but these two are the most common. Used in conjunction, they accommodate the

maximum span of pitches without overlapping. The treble and bass clef staves fit together as shown in Figure 1 below.

The notation of six A's, covering five octaves, requires two staves and seven ledger lines (see Figure 2).

Sharps and Flats; Naturals The pitches produced by the black keys on the piano are not given letter names of their own. (This is a consequence of the way they arose in history; see page 27.) Nor do they get their own individual lines or spaces on the staves. The pitch in between A and B is called A sharp (or A \sharp , using the conventional sign for a sharp), meaning “higher than A.” It can also be called B flat (B \flat), meaning “lower than B.” In musical notation, the signs \sharp and \flat are placed on the staff just *before* the note that is to be sharpened or flattened.

Which of these two terms is used depends partly on convenience, partly on convention, and partly on theoretical considerations that do not concern us here. In the example below, the third note, A \sharp , sounds just like the B \flat later in the measure, but for technical reasons the composer (Béla Bartók) notated it differently.

The original pitches of the diatonic scale, played on the white keys of the piano, are called “natural.” If it is necessary to cancel a sharp or a flat within a measure and to indicate that the natural note should be played instead, the natural sign is placed before a note (\natural) or after a letter (A \natural) to show this. The following example shows A sharp and G sharp being canceled by natural signs:



Key Signatures In musical notation, it is a convention that a sharp or flat placed before a note will also affect any later appearance of that same note *in the same*

measure—but not in the next measure.

There is also a way of specifying that certain sharps or flats are to be applied throughout an entire piece, in every measure, and in every octave. Such sharps and flats appear on the staves at the very beginning of the piece, even prior to the time signature, and at the beginning of each staff thereafter. They constitute the *key signature*:



is equivalent to:



Scores

Music for a melody instrument such as a violin or a trumpet is written on one staff; keyboard instruments require two—one staff for the right hand, another for the left hand. Music for two or more voices or instruments, choirs, bands, and orchestras is written in *scores*. In scores, each instrument and voice that has its own independent music gets its own staff. Simultaneously sounding notes and measure lines are aligned vertically. In general, high-sounding instruments go on top, the low ones on the bottom.

Shown on page 420 is a page from Mozart’s “Jupiter” Symphony, with arrows pointing to the various details of notation that have been explained above.



Figure 1

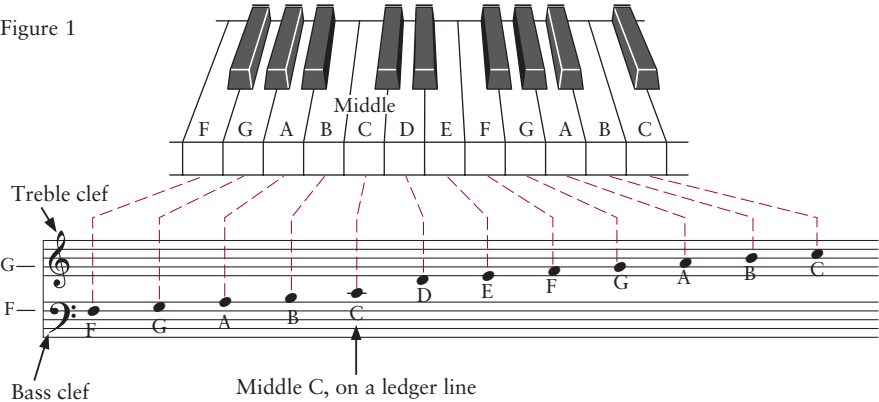
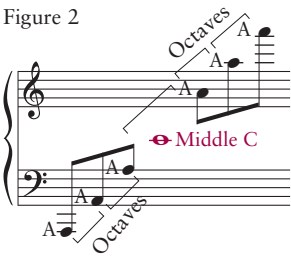


Figure 2



Instrument names (in Italian):
flute, oboes, bassoons, horns,
trumpets, timpani, violins 1 & 2,
viola, violoncello, bass viol

Tempo indication
(molto allegro = very fast)

Time signature
($\text{C} = \frac{2}{2}$)

Measure number

Square bracket
for (woodwind)
choir

Curved bracket
for two staves
played by the
same instruments
(violins)

Whole
rest

Whole
notes

Quarter
notes

Eighth
notes
(beamed)

Half
notes

Bass
(F) clef

Treble
(G) clef

Viola
(C) clef

Dot
($\text{p} = \text{p} + \text{p}$)

Tie

Dynamic
mark
(f = loud)

Staccato
dot

Slur (legato)

Sixteenth
notes
(beamed)

Triplet (three
sixteenth notes
played in the
time of two, i.e.,
one eighth note)

Sharp
Natural

Whole rest

Quarter rest

Half rest

Eighth rest

Glossary of Musical Terms

The italicized words refer to other definitions in the glossary, which you can look up if necessary. The page numbers refer to fuller explanations in the text.

A cappella (ah kah-pél-la): Choral music for voices alone, without instruments (70)

Accelerando (a-chel-er-áhn-do): Getting faster

Accent: The stressing of a note—for example, by playing it somewhat louder than the surrounding notes (7)

Accidentals: In musical notation, signs indicating that a note is to be played *sharp*, *flat*, or *natural*

Accompanied recitative: See *recitative* (141)

Adagio: Slow tempo (11)

Alba: *Troubadour* song about a knight leaving his lady at dawn (54)

Allegro; allegretto: Fast; moderately fast (11)

Alto, contralto: The low female voice

Andante: A fairly slow tempo, but not too slow (11)

Andantino: A little faster than *andante* (11)

Antiphon: A genre of plainchant usually in a simple melodic style with very few melismas (51)

Aria: A vocal number for solo singer and orchestra, generally in an opera, cantata, or oratorio (88, 141)

Arioso: A singing style between *recitative* and *aria* (90)

Arpeggio: A chord “broken” so that its pitches are played in quick succession rather than simultaneously (133)

Ars antiqua, ars nova: Contemporary terms for the “old technique” of 13th-century *organum* and the new *polyphonic* music of the 14th century (60)

A tempo: At the original tempo

Atonality: The absence of any feeling of *tonality* (316)

Avant-garde: In the most advanced style (306)

Azan: An Islamic call to worship, issued five times daily by a muezzin (63)

Bar: See *measure* (8)

Baritone: A type of adult male voice similar to the *bass*, but a little higher

Bar line: In musical notation, a vertical line through the staves to mark the measure (418)

Bass (not spelled “base”): (1) The low adult male voice; (2) the lowest vocal or instrumental line in a piece of music

Basso continuo: See *continuo* (86)

Basso ostinato: An *ostinato* in the bass (87, 124)

Beam: In musical notation, the heavy stroke connecting eighth notes (two beams connect sixteenth notes, etc.) (417)

Beat: The regular pulse underlying most music; the lowest unit of *meter* (7)

Beat syncopation: In jazz, the fractional shifting of accents away from the beats (382)

Bebop: A jazz style of the 1940s (390)

Bel canto: A style of singing that brings out the sensuous beauty of the voice (261)

Bel canto opera: Term for early Romantic opera, which featured *bel canto* singing (262)

Big bands: The big jazz bands (10 to 20 players) of the 1930s and 1940s (386)

Binary form: A musical form having two different sections; **AB** form (136)

Biwa: A Japanese four-stringed lute; heard in *gagaku* (203)

Blues: A type of African American *vernacular music*, used in jazz, rhythm and blues, rock, and other styles of popular music (382)

Break: In jazz, a brief solo improvisation between song phrases (382)

Bridge: In *sonata form*, the section of music that comes between the first theme and the second group and makes the *modulation*; also called “transition” (168)

Bunraku (bóon-ráh-koo): Japanese tradition of puppet theater (301)

Cadence: The notes or chords (or the whole short passage) ending a section of music with a feeling of conclusiveness. The term *cadence* can be applied to phrases, sections of works, or complete works or movements (30).

Cadence theme: In *sonata form*, the final conclusive theme in the *exposition* (168)

Cadenza: An improvised passage for the soloist in a concerto, or sometimes in other works. Concerto cadenzas usually come near the ends of movements (128).

Call and response: In African and early African American music, a style in which a phrase by a leading singer or soloist is answered

by a larger group or chorus, and the process is repeated again and again (381)

Cantata: A composition in several movements for solo voice(s), instruments, and perhaps also chorus. Depending on the text, cantatas are categorized as secular or *church cantatas* (149).

Canzona: A lively, fugue-like composition, one of several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century genres of instrumental music (96)

Chaconne (cha-kón): Similar to *passacaglia* (124)

Chamber music: Music played by small groups, such as a string quartet or a piano trio (194)

Chance music: A type of contemporary music in which certain elements, such as the order of the notes or their pitches, are not specified by the composer but are left to chance (361)

Chanson (shahn-sohn): French for song; a genre of French secular vocal music (60)

Chant: A way of reciting words to music, generally in *monophony* and generally for liturgical purposes, as in *Gregorian chant* (49, 62)

Character piece: A short Romantic piano piece that portrays a particular mood (248)

Choir: (1) A group of singers singing together, with more than one person singing each voice part; (2) a section of the orchestra comprising instruments of a certain type, such as the string, woodwind, or brass choir

Choral declamation: Chordal recitation by a chorus with free, speech-like rhythms (409)



Chorale (co-ráhl): German for hymn; also used for a four-part *harmonization* of a Lutheran hymn, such as Bach composed in his Cantata No. 4 and other works (150)

Chord: A grouping of pitches played and heard simultaneously (32)

Chromaticism: A musical style employing all or many of the twelve notes of the *chromatic scale* much of the time (232)

Chromatic scale: The set of twelve pitches represented by all the white and black notes on the piano, within one *octave* (27)

Church cantata: A *cantata* with religious words (149)

Clef: In musical notation, a sign at the beginning of the *staff* indicating the pitches of the lines and spaces. The main clefs are the treble (or G) clef  and the bass (or F) clef  (418).

Climax: The high point of a melody or of a section of music (30)

Closing theme: Same as *cadence theme* (168)

Coda: The concluding section of a piece or a movement, after the main elements of the form have been presented. Codas are common in *sonata form* (169).

Coloratura: An ornate style of singing, with many notes for each syllable of the text (140)

Compound meter: A meter in which the main beats are subdivided into three, e.g., 6/8 — one two three four five six (8)

Con brio: Brilliantly, with spirit

Concerto, solo concerto: A large composition for orchestra and solo instrument (120, 188)

Concerto grosso: The main early Baroque type of concerto, for a group of solo instruments and a small orchestra (120)

Concert overture: An early 19th-century genre resembling an opera overture—but without any following opera (253)

Con moto: Moving, with motion

Consonance: Intervals or chords that sound relatively stable and free of tension, as opposed to *dissonance* (32)

Continuo (basso continuo): (1) A set of chords continuously underlying the melody in a piece of Baroque music; (2) the instrument(s) playing the continuo, usually cello plus harpsichord or organ (86, 116)

Contralto, alto: The low female voice

Counterpoint, contrapuntal: (1) *Polyphony*; strictly speaking, the technique of writing *polyphonic* music; (2) the term *a counterpoint* is used for a melodic line that forms polyphony when played along with other lines; (3) *in counterpoint* means “forming polyphony” (34)

Countersubject: In a *fugue*, a subsidiary melodic line that appears regularly in *counterpoint* with the *subject* (132)

Crescendo (kreh-shén-do): Getting louder (161)

Cultivated music: In America, genres and styles of music that were brought from Europe and subsequently nurtured here through formal training and education (377)

Da capo: Literally, “from the beginning”; a direction to the performer to repeat music from the beginning of the piece up to a later point (141)

Da capo aria: An aria in ABA form, i.e., one in which the A section is sung *da capo* at the end (141)

Dance suite: See *suite* (95, 136)

Declamation: The way words are set to music, in terms of rhythm, accent, etc. (73)

Decrescendo (dáy-kreh-shén-do): Getting softer (161)

Development: (1) The process of expanding themes and short motives into larger sections of music; (2) the second section of a *sonata-form* movement, which features the development process (169)

Diatonic scale: The set of seven pitches represented by the white notes of the piano, within one *octave* (26)

Dies irae: “Day of wrath”: a section of the *Requiem Mass* (257)

Diminuendo: Getting softer (45, 161)

Dissonance: Intervals or chords that sound relatively tense and unstable, in opposition to *consonance* (32)

Divertimento: An 18th-century genre of light instrumental music, designed for entertainment (157)

Dotted note: In musical notation, a note followed by a dot has its normal duration increased by a half (417).

Dotted rhythm: A rhythm of long, dotted notes alternating with short ones (417)

Double-exposition form: A type of *sonata form* developed for use in concertos (189)

Downbeat: A strong or accented *beat*

Duet, duo: A composition for two singers or instrumentalists (197)

Duple meter: A meter consisting of one accented beat alternating with one unaccented beat: one two one two (8)

Duration: The length of time that a sound is heard (7, 10)

Dynamics: The volume of sound, the loudness or softness of a musical passage (13)

Eighth note: A note one-eighth the length of a whole note (417)

Electronic music: Music in which some or all of the sounds are produced by electronic generators or other apparatus (358)

Ensemble: A musical number in an opera, cantata, or oratorio that is sung by two or more people (195)

Episode: In a *fugue*, a passage that does not contain any complete appearances of the *fugue subject* (132)

Erhu (áhr-hoo): A Chinese low-pitched fiddle; heard in Beijing opera (303)

Espressivo: Expressively

Estampie (ess-tom-pée): An instrumental dance of the Middle Ages (55)

Étude (áy-tewd): A piece of music designed to aid technical study of a particular instrument (248)

Exposition: (1) The first section of a *fugue* (132); (2) the first section of a *sonata-form* movement (168)

Expressionism: An early 20th-century movement in art, music, and literature in Germany and Austria (313)

Fermata: A hold of indefinite length on a note; the sign for such a hold in musical notation (216)

Festive orchestra: A brilliant-sounding Baroque orchestra with drums, trumpets, and/or French horns, used for gala occasions (105, 114)

Figured bass: A system of notating the *continuo* chords in Baroque music, by means of figures; sometimes also used to mean *continuo* (116)

Finale (fih-náh-lay): The last movement of a work, or the *ensemble* that concludes an act of an *opera buffa* or other opera

First theme: In *sonata form*, a *motive* or tune (or a series of them) in the *tonic* key that opens the *exposition* section (168)

Flag: In musical notation, a “pennant” attached to a note indicating that the length is halved (two flags indicate that it is quartered, etc.) (417)

Flat: In musical notation, a sign (♭) indicating that the note to which it is attached is to be played a *semitone* lower. A double flat (♭♭) is sometimes used to indicate that a note is played two semitones lower (27).

Form: The “shape” of a piece of music (39)

Forte (fór-teh); **fortissimo:** Loud; very loud (*f*; *ff*) (14)

Fragmentation: The technique of reducing a theme to fragmentary *motives* (172, 216)

Frequency: Scientific term for the rate of sound vibration, measured in cycles per second (12)

Fugue (fewg): A composition written systematically in *imitative polyphony*, usually with a single main theme, the *fugue subject* (95, 131)

Fuging tune: A simple anthem based on a hymn, with a little *counterpoint* (378)

Functional harmony, functional tonality: From the Baroque period on, the system whereby all chords have a specific interrelation and function in relation to the *tonic* (87)

Gagaku (gáh-gáh-koo): A group of Japanese orchestral styles, named by the Chinese characters meaning “elegant music,” which were performed in traditional court ceremonies and rituals; includes *togaku* (tó-gáh-koo) and *komagaku* (ko-má-gáh-koo) (201)

Gakuso: A Japanese zither with thirteen strings; heard in *gagaku* (203)

Galliard: A Renaissance court dance in *triple meter* (79)

Gamelan: A traditional Indonesian orchestra consisting of gongs, *metallophones*, and other instruments (204)

Gapped chorale: A setting of a *chorale* melody in which the tune is presented in phrases with “gaps” between them, during which other music continues in other voices or instruments (151)

Genre (jáhn-ruh): A general category of music determined partly by the number and kind of instruments or voices involved, and partly by its form, style, or purpose. “Opera,” “symphonic poem,” and “sonata” are examples of genres (42).

Gesamtkunstwerk (geh-záhmt-kuhnst-vairk): “Total work of art” — Wagner’s term for his music dramas (270)

Gigue (zheeg), **jig:** A Baroque dance in a lively *compound meter* (136)

Glissando: Sliding from one note to another on an instrument such as a trombone or violin (323)

Gospel music: Genre of African American choral church music, associated with the *blues* (384)

Grave (grahv): Slow

Gregorian chant: The type of *chant* used in the early Roman Catholic Church (49)

Ground bass: An *ostinato* in the bass (87, 124)

Half note: A note half the length of a whole note (417)

Half step: The *interval* between any two successive notes of the *chromatic scale*; also called a *semitone* (28)

Harmonize: To provide each note of a melody with a *chord* (32)

Harmony: The simultaneous sounding of different pitches, or *chords* (32)

Heterophony: *Monophonic* texture in which subtly different versions of a single melody are presented simultaneously (202)

Hichiriki (hée-chee-ree-kée): A Japanese double-reed wind instrument; heard in *gagaku* (202)

Homophony, homophonic: A musical texture that involves only one melody of real interest, combined with chords or other subsidiary sounds (33)

Hymn: A simple religious song in several stanzas, for congregational singing in church (66)

Idée fixe (ee-day feex): A fixed idea, an obsession; the term used by Berlioz for a recurring theme used in the movements of one of his program symphonies (255)

Imitation, imitative polyphony, imitative counterpoint: A *polyphonic* musical texture in which the various melodic lines use approximately the same themes; as opposed to *non-imitative polyphony* (34). See also *point of imitation*.

Impressionism: A French artistic movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (311)

Interval: The difference or distance between two pitches, measured by the number of *diatonic scale* notes between them (25)

Introduction: An introductory passage: the “slow introduction” before the *exposition* in a symphony, etc.; in an opera, the first number after the overture

Inversion: Reading or playing a melody or a *twelve-tone series* upside down, i.e., playing all its upward intervals downward and vice versa (133, 332)

Isicathamiya (ees-ee-caht-ah-mée-ah): An *a cappella* song style that is part of the South African choral song tradition (408)

Isorhythm: In 14th-century music, the technique of repeating the identical rhythm for each section of a composition, while the pitches are altered (60)

Jazz: A major African American performance style that has influenced all 20th-century popular music (382)

Jing (cheeng): A male role in *jingju*, or Beijing opera, enacting a warrior, a bandit, or a god (302)

Jinghu (chéng-hoo): A Chinese high-pitched, two-string fiddle; heard in Beijing opera (303)

Jingju (chéng-chu): The most famous variety of Chinese musical drama; meaning “theater of the capital,” it is known in English as Beijing (or Peking) opera (302)

Jongleur (jawn-glér): A medieval secular musician (48)

Kabuki (kah-bóo-kee): A Japanese tradition of musical drama involving singing actors, chorus, and orchestra (301)

Kakko: A Japanese two-headed barrel drum; heard in *gagaku* (203)

Key: One of the twelve positions for the *major*- and *minor*-mode scales made possible by using all the notes of the *chromatic scale* (36)

Key signature: Sharps or flats placed at the beginning of the staves to indicate the *key*, and applied throughout an entire piece, in every measure and in every octave (419)

K numbers: The numbers assigned to works by Mozart in the Köchel catalogue; used instead of *opus* numbers to catalogue Mozart's works (170)

Largo; larghetto: Very slow; somewhat less slow than *largo* (11)

Ledger lines: In music notation, short lines above or below the staff to allow for pitches that go higher or lower (418)

Legato (leh-gáh-toe): Playing in a smooth, connected manner; as opposed to *staccato* (418)

Leitmotiv (líte-moh-teef): “Guiding, or leading, motive” in Wagner's operas (270)

Lento: Very slow (11)

Libretto: The complete book of words for an opera, oratorio, cantata, etc. (141)

Lied (leed; pl. *Lieder*): German for “song”; also a special genre of Romantic songs with piano (238)

Line: Used as a term to mean a *melody*, or melodic line (29)

Liturgy: The system of prayers and worship of a particular religion (49)

Madrigal: The main secular vocal genre of the Renaissance (77)

Major mode: One of the modes of the *diatonic scale*, oriented around C as the *tonic*; characterized by the interval between the first and third notes containing four *semitones*, as opposed to three in the *minor mode* (36)

Mass: The main Roman Catholic service; or the music written for it. The musical Mass consists of five large sections: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei (68).

Mazurka: A Polish dance in lively *triple meter* (234)

Measure (bar): In music, the unit of *meter*, consisting of a principal strong beat and one or more weaker ones (8)

Medieval modes: See *mode* (50)

Mele pule (mél-eh póol-eh): Hawai'ian prayer song (63)

Melisma: In vocal music, a passage of many notes sung to a single syllable (52)

Melody: The aspect of music having to do with the succession of pitches; also applied (“a melody”) to any particular succession of pitches (28)

Metallophone: An instrument like a xylophone, but with keys of metal, not wood (204)

Meter: A background of stressed and unstressed beats in a simple, regular, repeating pattern (8)

Metronome: A mechanical or electrical device that ticks out beats at any desired tempo (10)

Mezzo (mét-so): Italian for half, halfway, medium (as in *mezzo forte* or *mezzo piano*—*mf*, *mp*) (14)

Mezzo-soprano: “Halfway to soprano”: a type of female voice between *contralto* and *soprano*

Miniature: A short, evocative composition for piano or for piano and voice, composed in the Romantic period (234)

Minimalism: A late 20th-century style involving many repetitions of simple musical fragments (367)

Minnesingers: Poet-composers of the Middle Ages in Germany (54)

Minor mode: One of the modes of the *diatonic scale*, oriented around A as the *tonic*; characterized by the interval between the first and third notes containing three *semitones*, as opposed to four in the *major mode* (36)

Minstrel show: A type of variety show popular in 19th-century America, performed in blackface (381)

Minuet: (1) A popular 17th- and 18th-century dance in moderate *triple meter*; (2) a movement in a sonata, symphony, etc., based on this dance (135, 180)

Mode, modality: In music since the Renaissance, one of the two types of *tonality*: *major mode* or *minor mode*; also, in earlier times, one of several orientations of the *diatonic scale* with D, E, F, and G as tonics (36)

Moderato: Moderate tempo (11)

Modulation: Changing key within a piece (38)

Molto allegro: Faster than *allegro* (11)

Monophony, monophonic: A musical texture involving a single melodic line, as in *Gregorian chant*; as opposed to *polyphony* (33)

Motet: (Usually) a sacred vocal composition (59, 76). Early motets were based on fragments of Gregorian chant.

Motive: A short fragment of melody or rhythm used in constructing a long section of music (29)

Movement: A self-contained section of a larger piece, such as a symphony or concerto grosso (121)

Musical comedy, musical: American development of *operetta*, involving American subjects and music influenced by jazz or rock (396)

Music drama: Wagner's name for his distinctive type of opera (270)

Musicology: The scholarly study of music history and literature

Music video: Video "dramatization" of a popular song, rock number, or rap number

Musique concrète (moo-zeek kohn-krét): Music composed with natural sounds recorded electronically (359)

Mute: A device put on or in an instrument to muffle the tone

Nagauta (nâh-gah-ôo-ta): A genre of music involved in Japanese *kabuki* theater; translated as "long song," it is used especially to accompany dance (301)

Nationalism: A 19th-century movement promoting music built on national folk songs and dances, or associated with national subjects (286)

Natural: In musical notation, a sign (♮) indicating that a sharp or flat previously attached to a note is to be removed (419)

Neoclassicism: A 20th-century movement involving a return to the style and form of older music, particularly 18th-century music (325)

Nocturne: "Night piece": title for Romantic *miniature* compositions for piano, etc. (250)

Noh: A Japanese tradition of musical drama, often based on Zen Buddhist philosophy, which includes singing, highly stylized and symbolic movement, and instrumental accompaniment by percussion and flute (300)

Non-imitative polyphony: A *polyphonic* musical texture in which the melodic lines are essentially different from one another; as opposed to *imitative polyphony* (34)

Non troppo: Not too much (as in *allegro non troppo*, not too fast)

Note: (1) A sound of a certain definite pitch and duration; (2) the written sign for such a sound in musical notation; (3) a key pressed with the finger on a piano or organ

Octatonic scale: An eight-note scale (used by Stravinsky and others) consisting of half and whole steps in alternation (315)

Octave: The *interval* between a pair of "duplicating" notes, eight notes apart in the *diatonic scale* (25)

Opera: Drama presented in music, with the characters singing instead of speaking (87, 139)

Opera buffa (bôo-fa): Italian comic opera (194)

Opera seria: A term for the serious, heroic opera of the Baroque period in Italy (141)

Operetta: A 19th-century type of light (often comic) opera, employing spoken dialogue in between musical numbers (396)

Opus: "Work"; opus numbers provide a means of cataloguing a composer's compositions (122)

Oratorio: Long semidramatic piece on a religious subject for soloists, chorus, and orchestra (144)

Orchestra: A large group of instruments playing together (20); it has been configured differently at different periods of Western music (114, 161, 232); see *festive orchestra*, *gagaku*, *gamelan*

Orchestra exposition: In Classical concerto form, the first of two *expositions*, played by the orchestra without the soloist (189)

Orchestration: The technique of writing for various instruments to produce an effective total orchestral sound

Organum: The earliest genre of medieval *polyphonic* music (56)

Ornamentation: Addition of fast notes and vocal effects (such as *trills*) to a melody, making it more florid and expressive. Ornamentation is typically improvised in the music of all cultures, and in Western music is often written out (114).

Ostinato: A motive, phrase, or theme repeated over and over again (87, 98, 125, 322)

Overtone: In acoustics, a secondary vibration in a sound-producing body, which contributes to the tone color (14)

Overture: An orchestral piece at the start of an opera, oratorio, etc. (but see *concert overture*)

Paraphrase: The modification and decoration of *plainchant* melodies in early Renaissance music (65)

Part: Used as a term for (1) a section of a piece; (2) one of the *voices* in contrapuntal music; (3) the written music for a single player in an orchestra, band, etc. (as opposed to the *score*)

Passacaglia (pah-sa-câhl-ya): A set of variations on a short theme in the bass (97, 124, 327)

Passion: A long, oratorio-like composition telling the story of Jesus' last days, according to one of the New Testament gospels

Pavan (pa-vâhn): A slow, 16th-century court dance in *duple meter* (79)

Pentatonic scale: A five-note *scale* (familiar from folk music) playable on the black notes of a keyboard (315)

Phrase: A section of a melody or a tune (30)

Piano; pianissimo: Soft; very soft (*p*; *pp*) (14)

Piano trio: An instrumental group usually consisting of violin, cello, and piano; or a piece composed for this group; or the three players themselves

Pitch: The quality of "highness" or "lowness" of sound; also applied ("a pitch") to any particular pitch level, such as middle C (12)

Pizzicato (pit-tzih-câh-toe): Playing a stringed instrument that is normally bowed by plucking the strings with the finger (15)

Plainchant, plainsong: Unaccompanied, *monophonic* music, without fixed rhythm or meter, such as *Gregorian chant* (49)

Poco: Somewhat (as in *poco adagio* or *poco forte*, somewhat slow, somewhat loud)

Point of imitation: A short passage of *imitative polyphony* based on a single theme, or on two used together (71)

Polonaise: A Polish court dance in a moderate *triple meter* (251)

Polyphony, polyphonic: Musical texture in which two or more melodic lines are played or sung simultaneously; as opposed to *homophony* or *monophony* (33)

Prelude: An introductory piece, leading to another, such as a fugue or an opera (however, Chopin's Preludes were not intended to lead to anything else) (133)

Premiere: The first performance ever of a piece of music, opera, etc.

Presto; prestissimo: Very fast; very fast indeed (11)

Program music: A piece of instrumental music associated with a story or other extramusical idea (233)

Program symphony: A symphony with a program, as by Berlioz (254)

Quarter note: A note one-quarter the length of a whole note (417)

Quartet: A piece for four singers or players; often used to mean *string quartet*

Quintet: A piece for five singers or players

Qur'anic recitation: An Islamic tradition in which the revelations of the prophet Muhammad gathered in the Qur'an (or Koran) are chanted in Arabic (62)

Ragtime: A style of American popular music around 1900, usually for piano, which led to *jazz* (383)

Range: Used in music to mean "pitch range," i.e., the total span from the lowest to the highest pitch in a piece, a part, or a passage

Rap: Genre of African American popular music of the 1980s and '90s, featuring rapid recitation in rhyme (406)

Recapitulation: The third section of a *sonata-form* movement (169)

Recitative (reh-sih-ta-téev): A half-singing, half-reciting style of presenting words in opera, cantata, oratorio, etc., following speech accents and speech rhythms closely. *Secco recitative* is accompanied only by *continuo*; accompanied recitative is accompanied by orchestra (88, 141).

Reciting tone: Especially in *chant*, the single note used for musical "recitation," with brief melodic formulas for beginning and ending (51)

Reed: In certain wind instruments (oboe, clarinet), a small vibrating element made of cane or metal (17)

Requiem Mass, Requiem: The special *Mass* celebrated when someone dies

Resolve: To proceed from *dissonant* harmony to *consonance* (33)

Rest: A momentary silence in music; in musical notation, a sign indicating momentary silence (417)

Retransition: In *sonata form*, the passage leading from the end of the *development* section into the beginning of the *recapitulation* (169)

Retrograde: Reading or playing a melody or twelve-tone *series* backward (332)

Rhythm: The aspect of music having to do with the duration of the notes in time; also applied ("a rhythm") to any particular durational pattern (7, 9)

Rhythm and blues: Genre of African American music of the early 1950s, forerunner of *rock* (400)

Rhythm section: In jazz, the instrumental group used to emphasize and invigorate the meter (drums, bass, and piano)

Ritardando: Slowing down

Ritenuto: Held back in tempo

Ritornello: The orchestral material at the beginning of a concerto grosso, etc., which always returns later in the piece (121)

Ritornello form: A Baroque musical form based on recurrences of a *ritornello* (121)

Rock: The dominant popular-music style of the late 20th century (399)

Rondo: A musical form consisting of one main theme or tune alternating with other themes or sections (ABACA, ABACABA, etc.) (183)

Round: A simple type of *imitative polyphony*, with all voices entering with the same melody (59)

Row: Same as *series* (332)

Rubato: "Robbed" time; the free treatment of meter in performance (231)

Ryuteki (ree-óo-tay-kée): A Japanese side-blown flute; heard in *gagaku* (202)

Sampling: Especially in rap, the extraction, repetition, and manipulation of short excerpts from other popular songs, etc. (359)

Sarabande: A Baroque dance in slow *triple meter*, with a secondary accent on the second beat (135)

Scale: A selection of ordered pitches that provides the pitch material for music (25)

Scherzo (scáir-tzo): A form developed by Beethoven from the *minuet* to use for movements in larger compositions; later sometimes used alone, as by Chopin (215)

Score: The full musical notation for a piece involving several or many performers (419)

Secco recitative: See *recitative* (141)

Second group: In *sonata form*, the group of themes following the *bridge*, in the second key (168)

Second theme: In *sonata form*, one theme that is the most prominent among the second group of themes in the *exposition* (168)

Semitone: Same as *half step* (28)

Sequence: (1) In a melody, a series of fragments identical except for their placement at successively higher or lower pitch levels (30); (2) in the Middle Ages, a type of *plainchant* in which successive phrases of text receive nearly identical melodic treatment (53)

Serialism, serial: The technique of composing with a *series*, generally a twelve-tone series (315, 332)

Series: A fixed arrangement of pitches (or rhythms) held to throughout a serial composition (332)

Sforzando: An especially strong accent; the mark indicating this in musical notation (*sf* or >) (13)

Shamisen (sháh-mee-sen): A Japanese three-stringed lute; used as accompaniment in *kabuki* (301)

Sharp: In musical notation, a sign (#) indicating that the note it precedes is to be played a *half step* higher. A double sharp (x) is occasionally used to indicate that a note is played two semitones higher (27).

Sho: A Japanese mouth reed-organ with seventeen pipes; heard in *gagaku* (202)

Simple meter: A meter in which the main beats are not subdivided, or are subdivided into two, e.g., 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 (8)

Sixteenth note: A note one-sixteenth the length of a whole note (417)

Slur: In musical notation, a curved line over several notes, indicating that they are to be played smoothly, or *legato* (418)

Solo exposition: In Classical concerto form, the second of two *expositions*, played by the soloist and the orchestra (189)

Sonata: A chamber-music piece in several movements, typically for three main instruments plus *continuo* in the Baroque period, and for only one or two instruments since then (186)

Sonata form (sonata-allegro form): A form developed by the Classical composers and used in almost all the first movements of their symphonies, sonatas, etc. (167)

Song cycle: A group of songs connected by a general idea or story, and sometimes also by musical unifying devices (242)

Sonority: A general term for sound quality, either of a momentary chord, or of a whole piece or style (66)

Soprano: The high female (or boy's) voice

Spiritual: Religious folk song, usually among African Americans (called "Negro spiritual" in the 19th century) (381)

Sprechstimme: A vocal style developed by Schoenberg, in between singing and speaking (326)

Staccato: Played in a detached manner; as opposed to *legato* (418)

Staff (or stave): In musical notation, the group of five horizontal lines on which music is written (418)

Stanza: In songs or ballads, one of several similar poetic units, which are usually sung to the same tune; also called verse

Stop: An organ stop is a single set of pipes, covering the entire pitch range in a particular tone color (23)

Stretto: In a *fugue*, overlapping entrances of the fugue *subject* in several voices simultaneously (133)

String quartet: An instrumental group consisting of two violins, viola, and cello; or a piece composed for this group; or the four players themselves (193)

Strophic song: A song in several *stanzas*, with the same music sung for each stanza; as opposed to *through-composed song* (240)

Structure: A term often used to mean *form*

Style: The combination of qualities that make a period of art, a composer, a group of works, or an individual work distinctive (42)

Subito: Suddenly (as in *subito forte* or *subito piano*, suddenly loud, suddenly soft) (14)

Subject: The term for the principal theme of a *fugue* (131)

Subject entries: In a *fugue*, appearances of the entire fugue *subject* after the opening *exposition* (132)

Suite: A piece consisting of a series of dances (95, 136)

Swing: A type of big-band jazz of the late 1930s and 1940s (386)

Symbolism: A late 19th-century movement in the arts that emphasized suggestion rather than precise reference (311)

Symphonic poem: A piece of orchestral *program music* in one long movement (283)

Symphony: A large orchestral piece in several movements (166)

Syncopation: The accenting of certain beats of the meter that are ordinarily unaccented (9)

Synthesizer: An electronic apparatus that generates sounds for electronic music (24, 359)

Tambourin: French for a small drum; a quick Baroque dance in *double meter* featuring a drum (138)

Tempo: The speed of music, i.e., the rate at which the accented and unaccented beats of the meter follow one another (10)

Tenor: The high adult male voice

Ternary form: A three-part musical form in which the last section repeats the first; ABA form (181)

Texture: The blend of the various sounds and melodic lines occurring simultaneously in a piece of music (33)

Thematic transformation: A variation-like procedure applied to short themes in the various sections of Romantic *symphonic poems* and other works (237)

Theme: The basic subject matter of a piece of music. A theme can be a phrase, a short *motive*, a full tune, etc. (29)

Theme and variations: A form consisting of a tune (the theme) plus a number of variations on it (174)

Through-composed song: A song with new music for each stanza of the poem; as opposed to *strophic song* (240)

Tie: In musical notation, a curved line joining two notes of the same pitch into a continuous sound (417)

Timbre (tám-br): Another term for *tone color* (14)

Time signature: In musical notation, the numbers on the staff at the beginning of a piece that indicate the meter (418)

Toccata: Especially in Baroque music, a written-out composition in improvisational style, generally for organ or harpsichord (96)

Tonality, tonal: The feeling of centrality of one note (and its chord) to a passage of music; as opposed to *atonality* (35)

Tone: A sound of a certain definite pitch and duration; same as *note*

Tone color: The sonorous quality of a particular instrument, voice, or combination of instruments or voices (14)

Tone poem: Same as *symphonic poem* (283)

Tonic (noun): In *tonal* music, the central-sounding note (35)

Transition: A passage whose function is to connect one section of a piece with another; see *bridge*

Transpose: To move a whole piece, or a section of a piece, or a *twelve-tone series*, from one pitch level to another (332)

Trill: Two adjacent notes played very rapidly in alternation

Trio: (1) A piece for three instruments or singers; (2) the second or B section of a *minuet* movement, *scherzo*, etc. (137, 181)

Trio sonata: A Baroque sonata for three main instruments plus the *continuo* chord instrument

Triple meter: Meter consisting of one accented beat alternating with two unaccented beats: *one two three one two three* (8)

Triplet: A group of three notes performed in the time normally taken by two (418)

Troubadours, trouvères: Aristocratic poet-musicians of the Middle Ages (54)

Tsuridaiko (tzóo-ree-díe-koh): A large Japanese barrel drum; heard in *gagaku* (203)

Tune: A simple, easily singable melody that is coherent and complete (29)

Twelve-tone series (or **twelve-tone row**): An ordering of all twelve notes of the *chromatic scale*, used in composing *serial* music (332)

Twelve-tone system: Method of composition devised by Arnold Schoenberg in which the twelve pitches of the octave are ordered and strictly manipulated (332)

Upbeat: A weak or unaccented beat leading to a *downbeat*

Variation form: A form in which a single melodic unit is repeated with harmonic, rhythmic, dynamic, or timbral changes (95, 123)

Variations: Sectional pieces in which each section repeats certain musical elements while others change around them (95)

Vernacular music: Music that was developed in America outside the European concert music tradition (377)

Vivace, vivo: Lively (11)

Vocables: Sung syllables which have no precise meaning, e.g., “tra-la-la” (64)

Voice: (1) Soprano, alto, tenor, bass; (2) a contrapuntal line—whether sung or played by instruments—in a *polyphonic* piece such as a *fugue*

Waltz: A 19th-century dance in *triple meter*

Whole note: The longest note in normal use, and the basis of the duration of shorter notes (half notes, quarter notes, etc.) (417)

Whole step, whole tone: The interval equal to two half steps (semitones) (28)

Whole-tone scale: A scale, used sometimes by Debussy, comprising only six notes to the octave, each a whole tone apart (i.e., two semitones) (315)

Word painting: Musical illustration of the meaning of a word or a short verbal phrase (73)

Yueqin (yuéh-chin): A Chinese lute; heard in Beijing opera (303)

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 - 2 "Alfin siam liberati"
 - 3 "Là ci darem la mano"
- Berg, *Wozzeck*, from Act III
 - 4 Scene iii: A tavern
 - 5 Scene iv: A pond in a wood
- Adams, *El Niño*
 - 6 "Pues mi Dios ha nacido a penar"
 - 7 "When Herod Heard"
 - 8 "Woe unto Them That Call Evil Good"

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- 9 Wagner, Prelude to *The Valkyrie*
- 10 Joplin, "Maple Leaf Rag"
- 11 Rachmaninov, from *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*
- 12 Schubert, from Symphony No. 8 ("Unfinished"), I
- 13 Gershwin, "Who Cares?"
- 14 Beethoven, "Joy Theme" from Symphony No. 9, IV
- 15 Stravinsky, from *Symphony of Psalms*, II
- 16 Schubert, from String Quartet in A Minor, I
- 17 Beethoven, from Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor"), III
- 18 Tchaikovsky, from *The Nutcracker Suite*, "Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy"
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