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Style, Genres and Historical Context in Western Art Music

intended for use with the Rhinegold Dictionary of Sound

DISCLAIMER

This is very valuable knowledge that every student of music should know, however it is not strictly speaking on your A2 syllabus, which is focused on one very specific part of musical history - vocal music 1900-1945, which we looked at last term, and will continue to later this term.



THE MIDDLE AGES

Medieval monophony (c.500 – c. 1430)

- Church modes
 - different ways of arranging five tones and two semitones:
 - Ionian** mode T-T-S-T-T-T-S (equivalent to C-C on the white notes of the piano)
(N.B. equivalent to a tonal major scale)
 - Dorian** mode T-S-T-T-T-S-T (equivalent to D-D on the white notes of the piano)
 - Phrygian** mode S-T-T-T-S-T-T (equivalent to E-E on the white notes of the piano)
 - Lydian** mode T-T-T-S-T-T-S (equivalent to F-F on the white notes of the piano)
 - Mixolydian** mode T-T-S-T-T-S-T (equivalent to G-G on the white notes of the piano)
 - Aeolian** mode T-S-T-T-S-T-T (equivalent to A-A on the white notes of the piano)
 - Locrian** mode S-T-T-S-T-T-T (equivalent to B-B on the white notes of the piano)
 - Sometimes flattened B-flats to avoid tritone between B and F (ex. A20)
 - Lydian mode → F major



Gregorian chant (c.500 – c.1250)

- Notation system began to emerge in the ninth century
- Neumes – symbols that indicate relative pitches, but no indication of rhythm:



- Used to record the enormous amount of monophonic melodies known as cantus planus (plainsong or plainchant) sung at the Mass or Divine Office.
- Gregorian Chant is a particular style of plainsong that became the official music of the Catholic Church.
 - Range of an octave or less
 - Largely stepwise motion (conjunct)
 - Leaps never more than a fifth
 - Syllabic plainsong – one note per syllable (ex. A6)
 - Neumatic plainsong – most syllables have two or more notes (ex. A4)
 - Melismatic plainsong – syllables of important words carry many notes (ex. A5)



Music in the Church

- Plainsong was used to set a number of important parts of the Catholic liturgy
- Psalms
- Hymns
- The Ordinary of the Mass
 - Kyrie
 - Gloria
 - Credo
 - Sanctus
 - Benedictus
 - Agnus Dei

Medieval secular monophony (c.1150 – c.1430)

- Troubadours – wandering minstrels from southern France
- Chanson
 - Similar characteristics to plainsong
 - Heavy use of the leap of 3rd gave a more tuneful effect
 - Use of triplet rhythms
 - Whether they were sung unaccompanied (A22), accompanied (A12) or as a dance (A13) is unclear.



Medieval Sacred Polyphony (c.900 – c.1430)

- Grew out of plainsong
- Parallel organum
 - Plainsong melody plus 5th below it (A7a)
- Composite organum
 - Doubled both parts at the octave (A7b)
- Melismatic organum
 - First half of 12th century, Abbey of St Martial de Limoges, south-west France
 - Plainsong melody in the lower part (tenor – the part that 'holds' the plainsong) (A9)
 - Where the two parts coincide, the interval is always consonant.
- Perhaps the biggest development happened at Notre Dame, Paris in the second half of the 12th century (**Perotin, Leonin**):
 - Rhythmic notation
 - Gave rise to the clausula (A10)
 - Rhythmic modes
- Ars Nova
 - **Guillaume de Machaut** (A29)
 - Hockets



Medieval Secular Polyphony

- Not many examples of secular polyphony from the Middle Ages.
- The Round (A15)
- Faburden
 - triads, consecutive first-inversion chords
- Carols (A24)



THE RENAISSANCE (c.1430 – c.1600)

Catholic Music in the Renaissance

- **Guillaume Dufay** (France, c.1400-74)

- Famous for his masses
- Similar style to Machaut (A27)
- Smoother melodic lines (no hockets) – introduced the style of, for example, Palestrina
- Other parts becoming more independent

- **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** (Italy, c.1525-94)

- Developed as the master of renaissance polyphony

- Paraphrase Mass

- musical motives built out of plainsong melodies, rather than strict presentation of the plainsong in the tenor.

- e.g., *Missa Iste confessor* based on plainsong (A50), which is used to create melodic lines (A51), which are then used in imitative counterpoint (A52).

- lines became even more independent
- The development of Motets followed a similar pattern.
- **Tomas Luis de Victoria** (Spain, 1548-1611) (A44)



- **Carlo Gesualdo** (Italy, c.1566-1613)

- word painting
- striking chromaticism
- unexpected harmonies
- http://www.last.fm/music/Carlo+Gesualdo/_/O+vos+omnes

- **Giovanni Gabrieli** (Venice, c.1554-1612)

- St Mark's Basilica, Venice
- cori spezzati
- polychoral compositions
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSc03CyyoPg#t=3m53s>

N.B. also the effects of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation



Protestant music in the renaissance

- Chorales (B6)

- **Martin Luther** (Germany, 1483-1546)

- adapted well-known plainsong chants and secular songs to newly composed spiritual texts
- later formed the basis of much of the music of JS Bach.

- Metrical psalms (A37)

- **Thomas Tallis** (England, 1505-85)

- Consort song/anthem (A60)

- usually one or two voices accompanied by viols or other instruments
- led to:

- Verse anthems (A61)

- accompanied vocal solos alternate with choral passages
- **Orlando Gibbons** (England, 1583-1625)



Secular music of the renaissance

In France...

- Chanson (A12)
 - polyphonic settings of French poetry
 - **Clement Janequin** (c.1485-1558)

In Italy...

- Frottola (A30)
 - simple part song
 - most popular style in the early renaissance
 - texts were light in nature and not of high literary quality

The frottola + renewed interest of vernacular poetry + Franco-Flemish influence led to...

- Madrigals
 - **Jacques Arcadelt** (France/Italy, c.1505-68) (A33)
 - English Ballett (A59)
 - Jolly, triple time, Falala refrain
 - **Thomas Morley** (England, c.1557-1602)
 - Developed further by **Claudio Monteverdi** (Italy, 1567-1643)



THE BAROQUE ERA (1600 – 1750)

- Florentine Camerata
- Monteverdi's Prima vs Seconda prattica (stile antico vs stile moderno)
 - Compare A52 with A62/63
- Development of monody, recitative (A62/63) and aria (A65).
- Basso Continuo
- English airs tended to be simpler than the Italian version
 - dotted rhythms
 - angular melodic lines
 - A75
- Basso Ostinato or Ground Bass (A75)
- Stile concertato
 - Combining different instruments and voices
 - Major new idea!
 - A69
 - Hienrich Schütz (1585-1672)

Key 'baroque' features

Contrast, basso continuo, increased importance of bass line and melody over other parts.

Increased attention to harmony, cadence and rhythm.

Evocation of passion and grandeur.



Sacred music in the Baroque era

- JS Bach (1685 – 1750)
- GF Handel (1685 - 1759)
- Oratorio
 - Sacred equivalent to opera
 - Vernacular libretto set to affective music
 - Passions
- Cantata
 - Small-scale oratorio
 - Lutheran chorales
 - B8 gló-ri-am nó-mi-ni tú-o, et fac nobis-cum,
- Chorale Prelude or Organ Chorale
 - Based around chorale melodies
 - A91 → A92 + A93 → A94
 - Dietrich Buxtehude (c. 1637 - 1707)



The Baroque Dance Suite

ACSOG

- (Overture or Sinfonia)
- Allemande
 - 4/4, Moderately slow, starts with an upbeat (anacrusis), contrapuntal (B17)
 - French style: notes inégale, ornamentation
- Courante
 - Lively, triple time, scalar features, largely homophonic (A67)
- Sarabande
 - Slow, triple time, usually accented second beat (A88)
- Optional movements
 - Bourrée (fast, duple metre), Gavotte (moderate/fast duple metre), Siciliana (Italian, compound time)
- Gigue
 - Lively, compound metre. (A90)

- JS Bach
- Francois Couperin (1688 - 1733)
- Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)



Other Baroque Forms

- Trio sonata
 - Two melody instruments plus continuo
 - Or sometimes, three-part organ piece
 - Sonata da chiesa vs Sonata da camera
 - Often slow-fast-slow-fast
 - A74
 - Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713)
- Concerto Grosso
 - Piece for a solo group (concertino) plus orchestra (ripieno)
 - B19
 - Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)
- Fugue
 - Very strict type of imitative polyphony
 - Based on a fugue subject
 - B14
 - JS Bach



THE CLASSICAL ERA (1750 – 1827)

- Reaction against the elaborate complexity of the Baroque
- Return to the elegant simplicity of the Ancient Greeks.
- Melody dominated textures
- 'Buzz words': Proportion, Balance, Symmetry, Elegance, Poise
- Availability of music to the 'common man' (i.e., not just nobility)
 - concert halls and chamber music

Style Galant

- Elegant yet simple
- triadic, scalar and sequential melodies
- thin 2-part or homophonic textures
- simple tonic-dominant harmony
- B25
- Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)

Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress)

- Minor key
- Tempestuous
- Accents, Fortzandi
- B21



Classical Forms and Genres

Balance, proportion and symmetry in musical structure was of prime importance!

- String Quartet
 - Usually four movements: Allegro, slow, Minuet & Trio, Fast finale (often a rondo)
 - B27
- Sonata Form
 - Exposition, Development, Recapitulation
 - Tonal conflict!
- Theme & Variations (B32-35)
- The Classical Concerto
 - Usually three movements: fast-slow-fast
 - B36



Classical Forms and Genres (continued)

- Classical Symphony
 - Usually a fast sonata-form movement – slow movement (maybe Theme & Variations) – Minuet & Trio – Fast Finale (perhaps a rondo)

- Classical Sonata
 - No standard structure
 - Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
 - Sometimes replaced the minuet & trio with a scherzo (joke) (B55)

- Classical Opera
 - Opera buffa
 - Mozart
 - Memorable (short, triadic/scalic) melodies
 - Melody-dominated homophony
 - Alberti bass
 - Coloratura style (B50)



THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (c. 1830 – c. 1900)

The communication of intense emotion often through adventurous harmony

“Romanticism was a movement of extremes, from the musical gigantism of operatic composers such as Richard Wagner (1813-83) and symphonists such as Anton Bruckner (1824-96). On the other hand there are the poetic fragments of song-writers such as Robert Schumann (1810-56) and pianist-composers such as Frederick Chopin (1810-49).”

- Romantic Opera
 - Wagner
 - Leitmotifs
 - 'Unending melodies'
 - Almost extreme chromaticism
 - B68
- Romantic Song (Leid/Leider)
 - German poetry set for voice and piano (often the two parts are equally important)
 - Schubert & Schumann
 - *Listen to the quote (bottom of p. 366-7) and musical example B57*



– Solo piano music

- n.b. household possession of a piano was a major status symbol!
- e.g. Mendelssohn: Songs without Words
 - each movement is a programmatic representation of a single mood (B61)
- Franz Liszt
 - Virtuosity
 - Tonal ambiguity
 - B74
- Fryderyk Chopin
 - Nocturnes, Ballades, Etudes, etc.
 - Tonal colour, virtuosity
 - B64
- Ballet
 - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93)
 - C6




– Romantic Symphony

- n.b. also symphonic poems & tone poems
- Johannes Brahms (1833-97)
- Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky
- Careful and powerful control over timbre and dynamic (new power of orchestral instruments); rich, chromatic harmony
- C1, C4



THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



*And finally we're into the period you need to know about for your A2 – 1900-1945!
Vocal pieces relevant to the aural paper are marked below with *

Late Romanticism and neo-romanticism

E.g., symphonies of **Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)**

- programmatic (some involving voice(s))
- long, large orchestrations
- very complex, chromatic harmony – sometimes verges on the atonal
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYM54vhLYTU>

Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

- Often extremely dissonant and chromatic, but
 - nearly always tonal
 - Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings  (C85) See 'Song with non-piano accompaniment' sheet
 - Peter Grimes  See 'Word Setting II' sheet
- <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Peter-Grimes-Op-13-Prologue/dp/B001MV2SGK>





Impressionism (quote from p. 81)

- Exploration of colour (rather than function)
- Often no real sense of pulse
- Use of whole tone scales (C21)
- **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**
who was a great influence on:
- **Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)** (C55)

Expressionism

“the tendency of an artist to distort reality for an emotional effect”

- Atonality
- Marked contrasts in texture, timbres, dynamic, etc.
- No repetition, sequence, etc.
- Use of Serialism
- Use of 'sprechstimme' (C34)
- Second Viennese School
 - **Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)**
 - e.g. 'Erwartung' 
 - **Alban Berg (1885-1935)**
 - e.g. 'Wozzeck' 

See 'Tonality' sheet

See 'Wozzeck' sheet



Neoclassicism

- reaction against the “super-heated emotionalism of late romantic and expressionist music”
- looked back at the genres, forms (and sometimes styles) of pre-19th century music
- **Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**
 - C33 – *what do you think were Ravel's influences for this piece?*
Listen also to C77-80 (from Bela Bartok's 'Concerto for Orchestra' and try and identify the 'old' styles that are being parodied.
- **Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)**
 - e.g. Oedipus Rex 🎵
 - modest orchestrations
 - influence of modal harmony

See 'Word Setting' sheet

Populism and pastiche

- e.g. Debussy's 'Cakewalk' (C20)
- e.g. William Walton (1902-83) – Façade 🎵 (C38)

See 'Word Setting' sheet



Note: your A2 period of interest ends in 1945, hence this slide goes back to the 'not strictly relevant'!

Minimalism

- reaction against extreme complexity of the avant-garde composers
- stripped music down to its most essential elements
- simple 'cells' repeated many times
- incremental change
- **Terry Riley (b. 1935)**
 - 'In C' – 53 tiny melodic ostinati fragments (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy42bYyQNAg>)
- **Steve Reich (b.1936)**
 - particular interest in rhythmic transformations, phase shifting, etc. (C89)

Postmodernism

- reaction against the ultra modern
- return to aspects of tonalism
- **Giles Swayne (b. 1946) (C91)**
- **John Tavener (b. 1944)**
 - influence of plainsong, modes, organum, etc. (C92)
- **James MacMillan (b. 1959) (C97)**