

20th Century Classical Composers

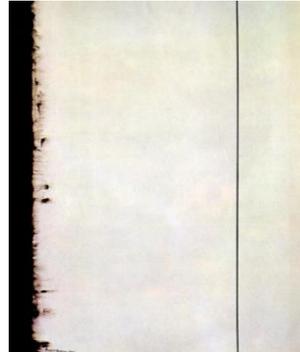
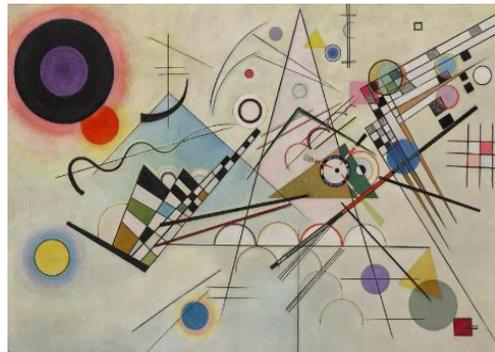
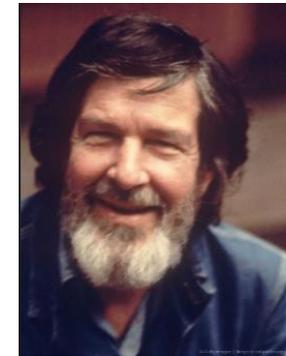
Musical Styles from the end of the 19th Century into the 20th Century



Impressionism - Expressionism

Atonal music - Serialism

Indeterminacy



Hi Year 7s – I hope you are all well and working hard

Learning Objectives: In this topic, you will learn about a range of ‘Classical’ music composers from the 20th Century, who found different ways of making music in a range of new styles.

You will also learn how changes in music during the 20th Century were in parallel with the breakdown of original forms seen in art.

There are links to listen to the different music. Some are relaxing to listen to and you could find a quiet place to relax whilst listening to them.

If the You Tube links do not work, just try typing in the title of the piece and composer.

Some pieces are strange and some of the explanations a bit difficult to grasp at first.

There are also names of artists for you to research, as well as the new composers to learn about. All of these ideas are linked and will help you with your creativity when we do return to music to school. There is an activity to complete at the back of the booklet.

Give it all a try and enjoy!

Impressionism & Claude Debussy

This is a picture of Claude Debussy (1862 to 1918)

In our music lessons, we listened to *Prélude à l'après midi d'un Faune*, which was the first piece of music to be given the label of 'Impressionism'

One of Debussy's other most famous orchestral pieces was *La Mer* composed in 1905. He also composed some very *demanding but*

beautiful piano pieces such as Clair de Lune (use below the link to listen to it)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNcsUNKlAKw>



Prélude à l'après midi d'un Faune - Listen to some or all of the piece again using this link

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/debussy/music/prelude-apres-midi-dun-faune/>

Activity 1 - Listen out for the harp playing the whole-tone scale and for the specific instruments that create softer textures and how their mood changes throughout the piece.

Relaxing opportunity – Find a quiet space. Lie down. Get comfortable and let the music help you relax!

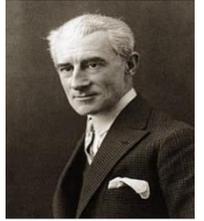
Questions: Which solo instrument plays the opening of the piece?

What is the English translation of *La Mer*?

Impressionism continued

Some other fabulous pieces of music from this era, to relax and listen to:

Bolero composed in 1928 by the French composer **Maurice RAVEL**



<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=bolero+by+Ravel+youtube#id=4&vid=3bb839eab8d21b672bf99aa0e73c178c&action=click> (Notice the very slow build up in dynamics!)

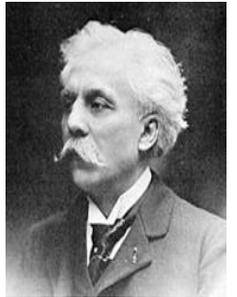
Many parents will remember that this music was used by the British Ice Dance duo, Torvill & Dean when they won gold in the 1984 winter Olympics.

Watch their winning routine and look at their interpretation of the music:

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=torvill+and+dean+1984#id=1&vid=a146398849082717b3c81fba9ddb434c&action=click>

Listen & Relax: Try this piece called ***Pavane*** by **Gabriel FAURE**

it's a lot more relaxing and is more in keeping with the style of French composers in this era



<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=pavane+by+faure#id=0&vid=17df44893837694e8133e4858a5248ae&action=view>

(during this video you can also look at a range of paintings by one of France's most important artists, Claude Monet a champion of impressionism in art).

Question – during the video which pieces of art do you recognise?

Expressionism & Arnold Schoenberg



An Abstract Painting by Wassily Kandinsky. This style of art inspired music composers such as Schoenberg to break down the barriers of traditional musical styles. We previously looked at how *'Impressionism'* in art helped to inspire music at the end of the 19th century.

Expressionism in music is a polar opposite of the beautiful sweet harmonies heard in *Impressionism*. It was a reflection of how art moved away from traditional forms of beauty.

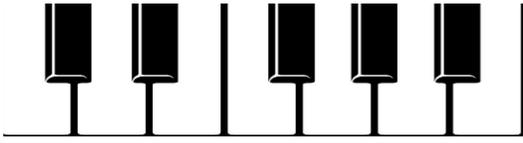


This is Arnold Schoenberg - the major figure in *Expressionist* music.

His music breaks down all traditional ideas – Schoenberg developed a new way of composing music called *'Serialism'* – each note in the chromatic scale is given a number from 1 to 12. The notes are selected at random and always used in this new order called a 'series' – no matter what instrument plays the notes, or what pitch they are written at, the new order of notes is always the same. The result is *Atonalism* (a new style of music without a tonal centre) **PTO**

continued...

There are 12 tones used in music – these make up one section of the piano keyboard as shown here

natural notes C D E F G A & B  This is made up of the 7 white and the 5 black notes (#s / bs)

Schoenberg became an expert at using the new sequences (called a *Series*) to make strange sounding compositions of the early 20th Century.

Listen to *Piano Concerto for Piano & Orchestra* by Schoenberg.

You can listen and watch as the music unfolds using the link below:

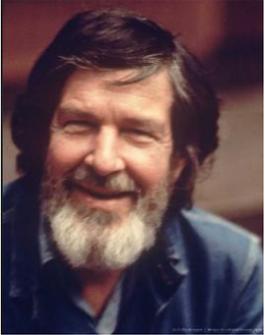
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEY9ImCZblc>

Listen to *Piano pieces Op.25* – you should be able to hear how unsettling the music sounds using the series of notes in many different ways

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQHR_Z8XVvl

Observation Question: Is the music nice or difficult to listen to?

Avant-Garde & Indeterminacy Music



This is John Cage an American Composer.

In a similar way to Schoenberg, Cage broke all of the usual rules relating way music is composed and more importantly, the way it is performed.

John Cage said: "*My intention is to let things be themselves*". Cage initially defined indeterminacy as "*the ability of a piece to be performed in substantially different ways*"

Perhaps Cage's most infamous piece is **4'33"** (which is 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence). Watch this orchestral performance of the piece: { Each member of the audience experiences the performance in a different way! }

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=John+Cage#id=16&vid=8d30ffaaeeaea91dbbf268c98a41dfbd&action=view>

Also, try ***Imaginary Landscape No.4*** composed for 12 radios. Each radio is tuned to different stations throughout the performance and turned up and down to different volumes (loudness).

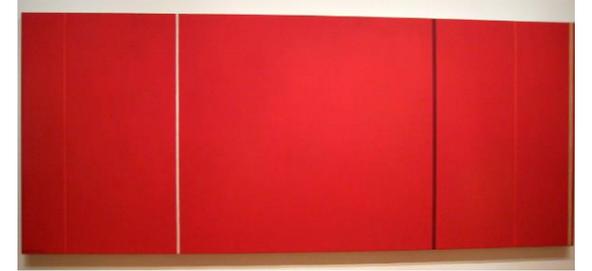
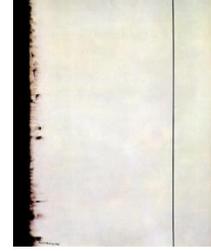
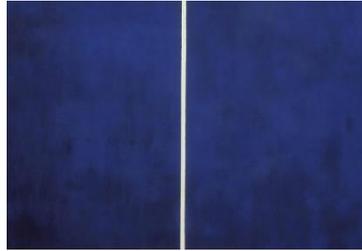
<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=John+Cage#id=20&vid=0c5281bf88615b4ff7b55c71b4892032&action=view>

What Cage was obsessed with was the experience of the performance rather than just the sound of the music and in most of his indeterminate pieces he knew that all performances of the pieces would be different. **PTO**

Inspiration from the Artworld

In the same way as Schoenberg was influenced by the abstract work of Kandinsky, John Cage and other experimental composers were influenced by the breakdown of forms seen in art during the 20th Century. Barnett Newman, an American artist was a champion of the simplified 'linear' style artwork.

Notice the 'Zip' as Newman called it in each of his artworks



It is clear that John cage was influenced by these changes in art.

He was also influenced by the abstract expressionists such as Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock, who were interested in the experience of the artist as a performer and the different experiences of the people who viewed the artwork



Work to Submit

Using the information in this booklet.

Either:

Create a 10 point fact-file about one of the 20th Century Composers & their music

Or,

Create a 10 Question Quiz (with Answers) about 20th Century Composers and their music.

You can submit your work as a word document rather than trying to send in whole power-point presentations.