Lecture II. 9-29-09

World War I 1914-1918
World War II 1939-1945

I.
At the beginning of the 20th Century, Western music was already beginning to evolve to a point at which new means of expression would be required. Composers were exploring musical material in a variety of different ways, and some of these started to focus upon the sonic and timbral properties that the pitch-centered notation system had marginalized.

**Harmony** – The science of the structure, relations, and practical combination of chords. The modern theory of harmony is based on the chords of the major scale. (a hierarchical system where the tonic chord is accepted as the tonal centre of the key) Philippe Rameau (1683-1784)

**Timbre** - 1: perceived sound quality 2: characteristic other than pitch or loudness that allows us to distinguish between sounds

**Twelve Tone System** – A method of composition formulated by Arnold Schonberg about 1921 after a period of experimentation in writing music without tonality and without using traditional ways of building chords.

**Play:** (LCD7504)  
*Funf Orchesterstucke* (Five Orchestral Pieces) Op. 16, composed in 1909 by Arnold Schoenberg. This movement, entitled ‘Farben’ (Colours), had neither melodic contour nor harmonic direction, but rather featured a fairly static sound-mass built from a single chord which changed timbre, or colouration. The skill of the orchestration emphasized the acoustic and tonal properties of the instrumental combinations and the work is quite startling in its anticipation of ‘spectral’ music. However, this was not a direction that Schoenberg pursued in his subsequent work, preferring to continue to overturn orthodoxies of the tonal system instead. (Collins, d'Escrivan 15)

**Play:** (LCD1690 Trk.14)  
*Le Sacred du Printemps* (The Right of Spring) composed in 1913 by Igor Stravinsky.  
“so large in scale, so complex in its combinations and superimpositions of rhythms, chords and melodies, so rich in the originality of its musical invention, that the riot at its premiere seems a reasonable public reaction;” (Chadabe 22)
Historically, serialism was an outgrowth of the so-called “twelve-tone system,” formulated by Arnold Schoenberg during the early 1920s as a method for basing an entire composition on a single “row” of twelve notes. The German symphonic tradition, with its fundamental aesthetic of motivic development (Wagner); and for Schoenberg, who saw himself as taking the next step in that tradition, manipulating the row was the contemporary equivalent of developing motives. But Schoenberg had structured only notes according to the row, and further, used his row intuitively to create traditional textures of melody and accompaniment. It was Anton Webern, Schoenberg’s student and far more radical than Schoenberg, who provided the model for the European serialists. In his Symphony, op.21 (1927-28), for example, Webern used the row to derive a timbral structure as well as pitch structure. And the notes were undifferentiated as melody and accompaniment. In a lecture in 1932, he referred to the idea of notes all deriving equally from the row and all forms of the row as being equally important: ‘Goethe’s (Faust 1749-1832) primeval plant; the root is in fact no different from the stalk, the stalk no different from the leaf, and the leaf no different from the flower; vibrations of the same idea.’” (Chadabe 37)

II.
Discuss continuity between visual art, performance art, poetry and music:

Wassily Kandinsky
Marcel Duchamp
Manray
Futurists
Dada
Guillermo Appollinaire (poet)

“In Lundi Rue Christine (1913) juxtaposed unrelated phrases and fragments as if they were “plucked” from independent and parallel storylines:

Three lit gas jets
The proprietress has bad lungs
When you’ve finished we’ll play a hand of backgammon
An orchestra conductor who has a sore throat
When you come to Tunis I’ll give you some kef to smoke
This seems to rhyme” (Chadabe 22)
“In 1911 the firm of Albert Langen published a small volume y Victor Aubertin with the alarming title Die Kunst stirbt (Art is Dying). The author presented his theses sharply and aggressively. “Art,” he wrote, “is dying of the masses and of materialism. It dies because the land it needs is all built up, the land of naivete and of illusions.... On each national holiday a joint toast to art and science is proposed; perhaps they mean one and the to the idiot. But they are deadly enemies: where one of them exists, the other flees." Immediate and rousing as these words may sill sound today, the following statement is surprising: “We must confess that we no longer have an artistic idea... for the first time we have entered a period without direction, without an artistic style, without a young revolutionary generation.” (Kandinsk, Marc 11)

Franz Marc vision of the Blue Rider:
“We will put an Egyptian work beside a small Zeh [the last name of two talented children], a Chinese work beside a Rousseau, a folk print beside a Picasso, and the like!” (Kandinsk, Marc 15)

Arnold Shoenberg and Wassily Kandinsky began to paint improvisations and compositions during the years immediately preceding the First World War. Kandinsky was inspired by Theosophy and other spiritual ideas to create work that inspired to the condition of music. He also experienced synaesthesia, in which the senses became confused, by ‘hearing’ specific sounds when seeing certain colours or shapes (yellow as the note C played on a trumpet, for example).

Dada:
The absurdist movement, which arose in 1916/17 (initially in Zurich, Switzerland c.1916 – c.1922) out of disgust at the First World War. According to Hugo Ball, the Dada cabaret included African music, a balalaika orchestra, and Dada music by composers such as Erwin Schulloff. However, for electronic music, a far more significant innovation was ‘sound poetry’.

Play: (Sub Rosa CD2 tr.3 personal copy)
fmsbw composed in 1918 by Raoul Hausmann (Austrian Dadaist)

According to its proponents, Dada was not art, it was "anti-art." For everything that art stood for, Dada was to represent the opposite. Where art was concerned with traditional aesthetics, Dada ignored aesthetics. If art was to appeal to sensibilities, Dada was intended to offend. Through their rejection of
traditional culture and aesthetics the Dadaists hoped to destroy traditional culture and aesthetics.

Futurists:

Play: (CD1 trk.3)
Riveglio Di Una Città composed in 1913 by Luigi Russolo

Play: (Sub Rosa CD2, Trk. 2 personal copy)
And Would You composed in 1920 by Vladimir Mayakovsky (Russian Futurist)

Read: The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto written in 1913 by Luigi Russolo
“Our multiplied sensibility, having been conquered by futurist eyes, will finally have some futurist ears. Thus, the motors and machines of our industrial cities can one day be given pitches, so that every workshop will become an intoxicating orchestra of noises[…].”

Futurists understood that our musical sensibilities evolve and change. They were dissatisfied with the socio-political culture that nurtured the continual conservation of “the great masters.” Futurists believed that the then current “concert hall” establishment achieved by limiting the sonic palate to select composers and instruments repressed the practice of listening. They wished for a world where all sounds were accessible to the composer and enjoyed by the listener.

Harmonic Series – A set of numbers, each of which is a whole number multiple of a specified root value.

Harmonics – The components of a complex tone which have frequencies that lie on a harmonic series.

The Spirit of Dada and Futurism permeated through to mainstream concert music. In 1917, Erik Satie included the ‘Futurist’ sounds of sirens, starting pistols, typewriter and a foghorn in his ballet Parade (although he did so only at the request of the poet Jean Cocteu), and in 1924 Georges Antheil created his Ballet Mecanique, which included electric bells, airplane propellers and a siren in its orchestra of multiple percussion, pianos and player-pianos. (Collins, d’Escrivan 18)

Play: (LS91)
Ballet Mecanique composed by George Antheil in 1924 and revised in 1954.

The Ballet Mecanique was noted by, among others, Ezra Pound, who wrote “Antheil has made a beginning; that is in writing music
that couldn’t have been written before. His musical world of steel bars, not of old stone and ivy. With the performance of the Ballet Mecanique one can conceive the possibility of organizing the sounds of a factory, let us say, of boiler plate or any other clangorous nosiness, the actual sound of the labor, the various tones of the grindings…” (Chadabe 24)

III.
John Cage:

Read: The Future of Music: Credo written in 1937 by John Cage

Cage expands the Futurists ideas of an “art of noises” by introducing form as a major component. He also describes the means to achieving new sounds by expanding our musical vocabulary through establishing centers of experimental music.

**Amplitude** - 1: on a graphic representation, the vertical component of a function 2: in electronics, the average strength of a signal measured as voltage, current, or power

**Duration** - The time during which something continues.

**Form** - as music as in the other arts, this means intelligible shape.

**Play:** (LCD6300)
*Sonnatas and Interludes* (1948) by John Cage

IV.
Jacques Attali:

Read: Noise and Politics written in 1977 by Jacques Attali

Attali describes how sounds function through appropriation and control and are thus a reflection of power!

V.
Terms:
- Timbre
- Harmony
- Harmonic Series
- Harmonics
- Frequency
- Amplitude
- Duration
- Form
