

20th Century Artistic Movements

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Artistic Movements Covered this Unit

- Early 20th century modernism
- Impressionism (early 20th century)
- Expressionism (early 20th century)
- Avant-garde (mid-20th century)
- Minimalism (1960s and on)

Pieces Covered this Unit

- Debussy, 'Voiles'
- Bartok, 'The Night's Music' from *Out of Doors*
- Schoenberg, 'Moondrunk' from *Pierrot Lunaire*
- John Cage, 'Child of Tree'
- Steve Reich, *2x5*

Terms Covered this Unit

- Modernism
- Impressionism
- Monochromatic
- Pentatonic scale
- Whole tone scale
- Expressionism
- Avant-garde
- Post-modernism
- Minimalism
- Phasing
- Folk music
- Ethnomusicology
- Atonality
- Sprechstimme

Impressionism

- French artistic movement that grew out of the 1870s
- **Claude Monet**: Father of French Impressionist art, along with his contemporaries
- The term was seen as a pejorative
 - The paintings weren't 'finished' – instead, they were just an 'impression' of what they were supposed to be
- Artists focused primarily on:
 - Color: often **monochromatic**
 - Many shades of the **same color**
 - Light: interested in how light affects the same landscape over a period of time
 - Blurred lines: many paintings do not include clearly delineated lines
 - Thick globules of oil on canvas, creating a semi-3D texture



Claude Monet, *Impression Sunrise* (1872)



Monet, *Houses of Parliament* (1904)



Monet, *Houses of Parliament* (1903)

Two of Monet's *Houses of Parliament* paintings (oil on canvas), of which he completed 15 between 1900 and 1905

Impressionism in Music

- Claude Debussy (born and died in France)
 - Known as the ‘father of Impressionist music’
- Wrote music for orchestra, piano, voice, and chamber music
- Wrote 2 books of piano preludes
 - Each one has a **programmatic name**
- How to create Impressionism in music?
 - Blurry lines
 - Blurred melody
 - Melodies meld among each other
 - Uses different types of dissonant scales
 - Blurred rhythm
 - Difficult to feel a pulse
 - Lots of light and color
 - Melodies
 - Use different scales
 - Harmonies
 - Add more notes to chords (5, 6, 7 different notes stacked upon each other!)
 - Use different types of chords



Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

‘...Voiles’

- **Title of piece:** ‘...Voiles’
 - Translates to ‘...sails’
 - (imagine you’re in the middle of the ocean on a boat that isn’t going anywhere)
- **Composer:** Debussy
- **Artistic movement:** Impressionism
- **Form:** ternary (ABA)
 - A section uses the Whole Tone Scale
 - Only uses whole steps
 - Creates a very dissonant sound
 - The lack of any half steps make it sound like it’s not going anywhere!
 - B section uses the Pentatonic scale
 - 5-note scale
 - Only the black keys on the piano
- **Genre:** prelude



Early 20th Century Modernism

- ‘Modernism’ is a movement that describes artists trying to be innovative and new, while still holding on to some type of tradition
 - Can be radically different, but still employs traditional compositional techniques
 - Artists are abandoning ‘traditional perspectives’
 - Well-known artists:
 - Henri Matisse
 - Pablo Picasso
 - Known for radically distorting perspective and form in portraits
- Although these may be seen as ‘radical,’ the subject matter is still traditional
 - Some conventions are even conventional, just distorted



Matisse, *la danse* (1910)



Picasso, *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler*
(1910)

Béla Bartók

- Hungarian composer
- 1881-1945
- Composer, pianist, and one of the founders of **comparative musicology**
 - Cross-cultural study of music
 - Later morphed into **ethnomusicology**
 - The study of music from a socio-cultural perspective
- Interested in folk music of other cultures
 - Often inserted folk tunes into his own music
 - Took a break from composing and traveled to different villages and countries, recording peasants singing folk songs.
 - Transcribed them by hand and collected these different folk songs into different volumes
- Employed modernist techniques in his music





Bartok records peasants singing their folk songs into a phonograph in modern-day upper Hungary in the early 20th century.

Out of Doors

- A collection of 5 short piano pieces
- Composed in 1926
- Named after things one might hear if you were outside:

Name of Movement

Programmatic Description

- I. With Drums and Pipes
- II. Barcarolla
- III. Musettes
- IV. The Night's Music
- V. The Chase

people around a campfire playing music
a boat song
people playing musettes (bagpipes)
insects making sound
one animal chasing another

5 Movements in *Out of Doors*

- I. "With Pipes and Drums"
- II. "Musettes"
- III. "Barcarolla"
- IV. "The Night's Music"
- V. "The Chase"

I. "With Pipes and Drums" uses the piano in an explosive way. It uses heavy thumping in the lower register of the piano to imitate drums. The melody used is based off of a pre-existing folk tune, something he often used in his music.

II. "Barcarolla" is a modern take on a Venetian boat song. The oscillating figure heard throughout perhaps represents the waves experienced when riding on the water.

III. "Musettes" are small bagpipes. Bartok models this after the short keyboard works written centuries earlier by French composer Couperin, who tried to imitate bagpipes in these pieces.

IV. "The Night's Music" (see below)

V. "The Chase" portrays the image of a creature being violently chased in the middle of the night. It's fast, violent, and fun to listen to (and a demon to play)

Hungarian composer **Bela Bartok** (1881-1945) was a pianist, composer, teacher, and father of the field known as **Ethnomusicology**, the study of music from an ethnographic perspective. He was mainly interested in folk tunes from other Eastern European countries. Prior to World War I, Bartok traveled to Romania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, among others, notating various folk tunes.

"The Night's Music" is in ABACABA form. The A sections all contain "sound effects" instead of melody – short fragments to imitate insect sounds. The B section is a gently chorale, while the C sections contain music that imitates that of a peasant playing their flute. According to one of Bartok's piano students, Bartok **didn't** want the bug sounds to be played perfectly in time – he wanted the sound of spontaneity, as one would hear if being outside.

Composer: Bela Bartok

Name of Composition: "The Night's Music" from *Out of Doors*

Genre: Individual movement from a Piano Suite (collection of short piano pieces)

Form: A very loose Rondo Form (ABACABA)

Musical Genre/Style: Modernist

Additional Info: This is one of many examples of Bartok exploiting his "insect music" style. No melodies can be heard in the first section; instead, you hear sound effects that sound like bugs chirping and the occasional bullfrog. The middle section of the piece sounds like you can hear folk singing and dancing in the background, but the chirping never goes away.



Above: Bela Bartok.
Left: Bartok (4th from left) records peasants in Eastern Europe on an Edison Phonograph in 1907.

- **Name of Piece:** ‘The Night’s Music’ from *Out of Doors*
- **Composer:** Bartok
- **Artistic movement:** Modernism
- **Form:** a loose rondo (ABACABA)
 - A sections use dissonant sounds to represent insects making sounds (modernist technique!)
 - B sounds like a chorale
 - C like folk songs heard in the distance



Bartok, *Out of Doors*
‘The Night’s Music’

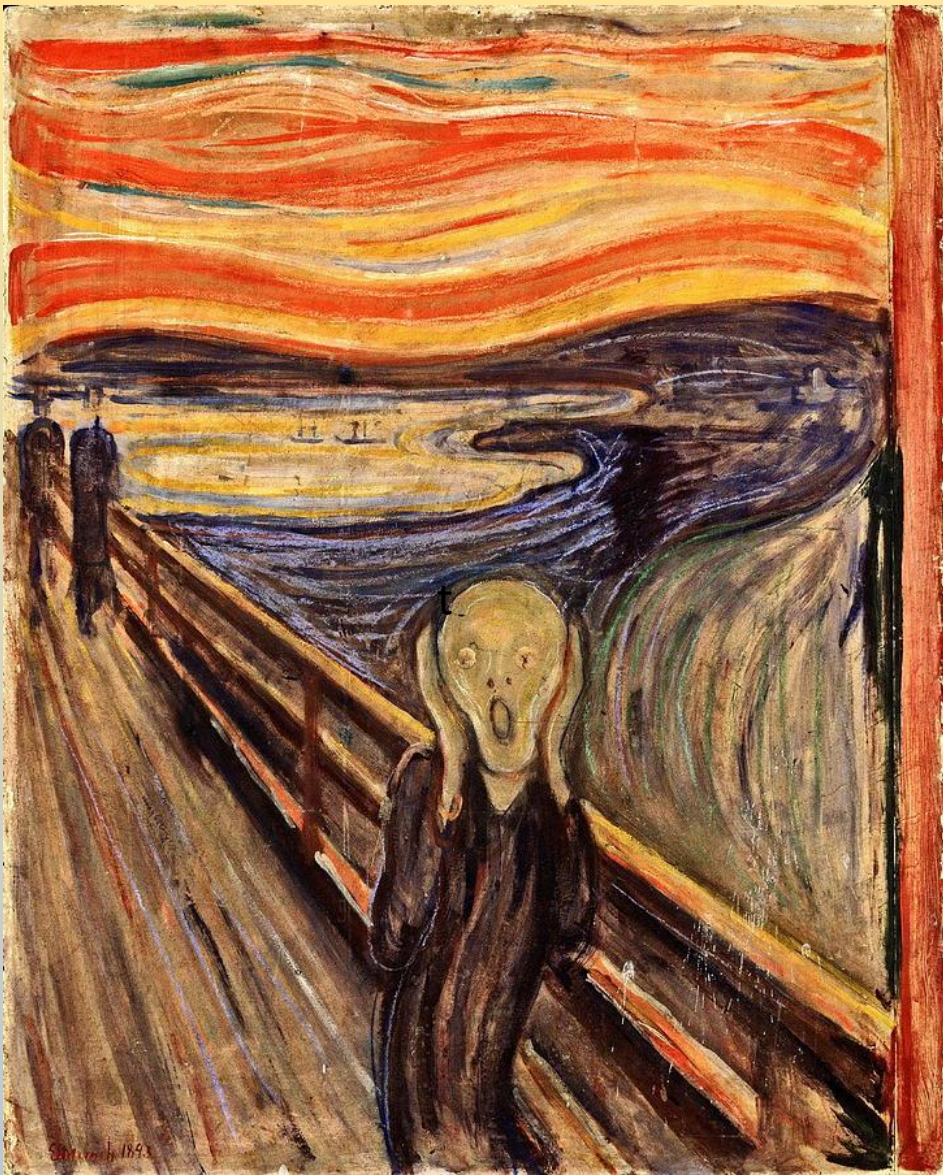
A: 7:04

B: 9:20

C: 10:45

Expressionism

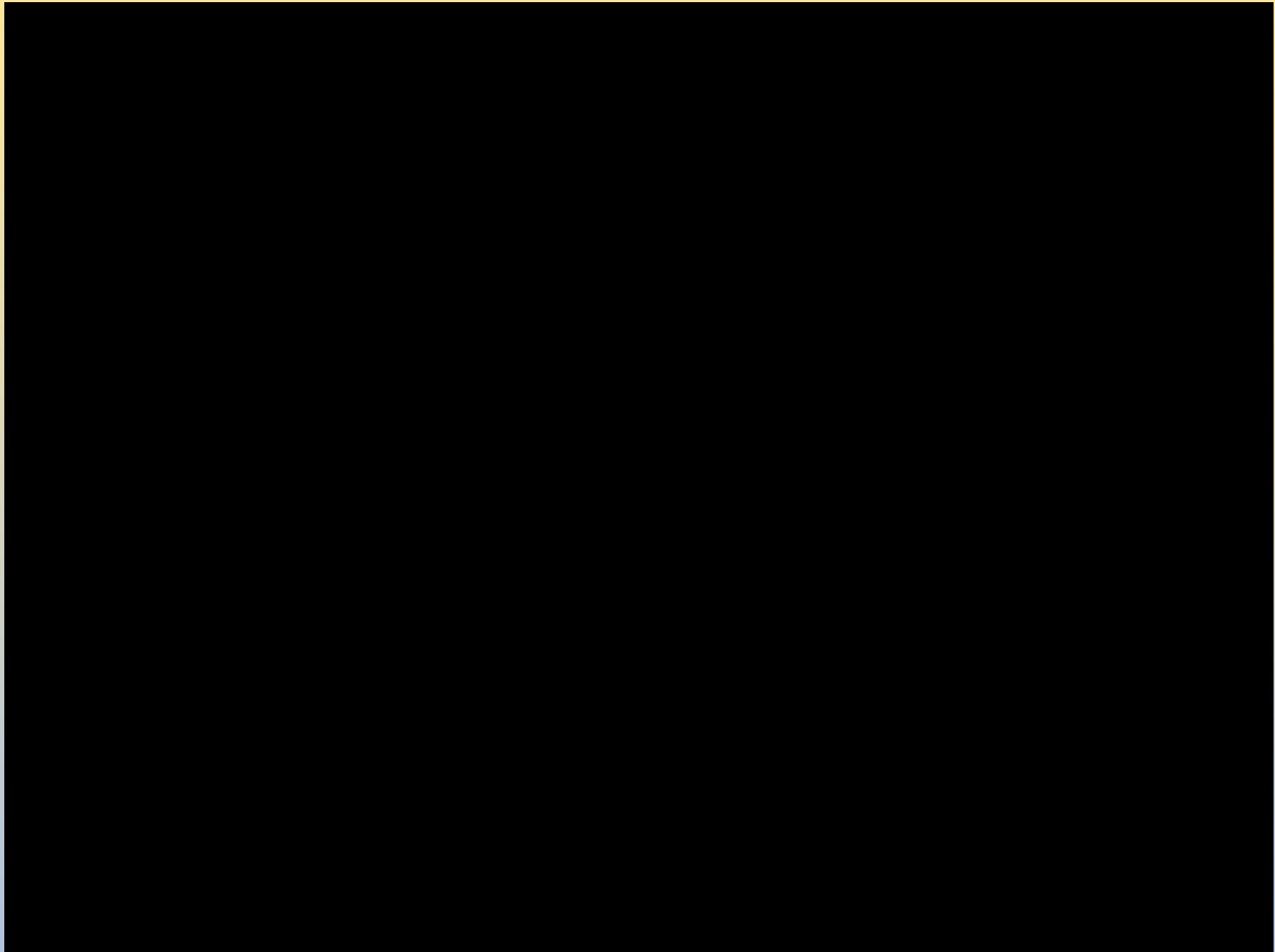
- Early 20th century artistic movement
- Rooted in Germany
- ‘Expressionism emerged simultaneously in various cities across Germany as a response to a widespread anxiety about humanity's increasingly discordant relationship with the world and accompanying lost feelings of authenticity and spirituality.’ (TheArtStory.com)
- As a result, art and music comes across as vulgar, crude, rooted in negative emotions
- Use many distortion techniques
 - Blurred lines, blurred colors
- Subject matter is typically a darker topic



Edward Munch, *The Scream* (1893)



Otto Dix, *The Nun* (1916)



The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) – early Expressionist silent horror film

Arnold Schoenberg

- Born in Germany in 1874
- Fled Germany prior to WWII to escape Nazism
- Immigrated to America where he died in 1951 in LA, California
- Known as a composer, educator (he was a professor of music theory at UCLA), and his writings on music
- Known for his **expressionist** techniques
- Known for his development of the ‘12 tone system’
 - A completely new way of organizing sound



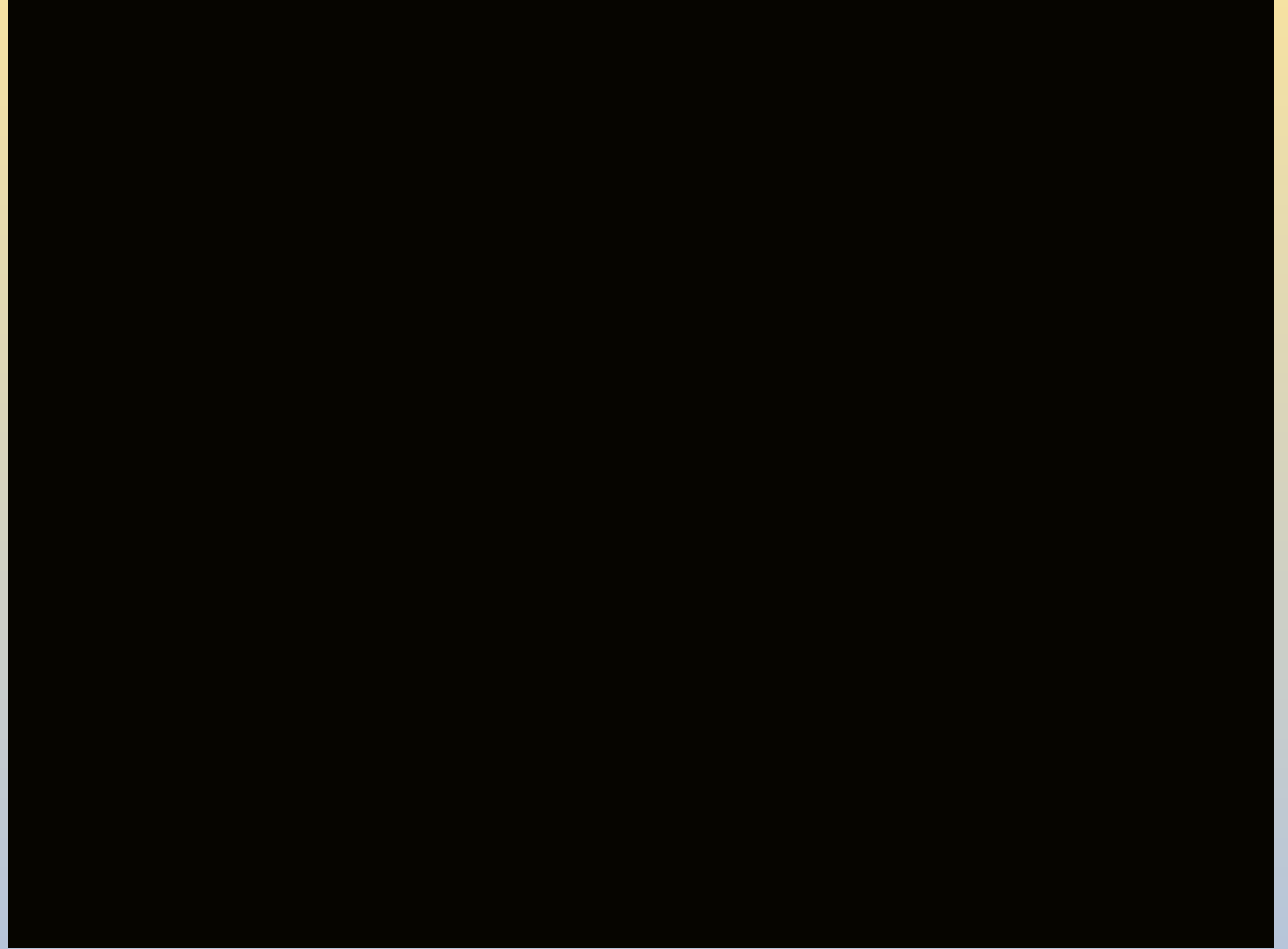
Pierrot Lunaire

- A collection of 21 **expressionist** songs
 - Selected poetry from a cycle of the same name by Albert Giraud
 - About a comic ‘moonstruck’ clown from the *commedia dell’arte*
 - Improv theatre from Renaissance Italy
 - Contains many types of ‘stock figures’:
 - Harlequin: a clown always playing tricks (where Harley Quinn from *Batman* got her name)
 - Punch: always trying to strike others
 - Pierrot: lovesick always pining for love, influenced easily by moonlight
 - Several underlying themes:
 - Materialism, decadence, vulgarity of modern society
- Harmonically, the piece is **atonal**
 - Contains no ‘tonic’ pitch, so there is no ‘home note.’
- Melodically, the singer uses **sprechstimme**
 - A combination of singing and speaking
- Instrumentally, it is for an unusual group
 - Singer, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano
 - Known as a ‘Pierrot Ensemble’



The original ensemble who premiered the piece (Schoenberg is 3rd from left).

- **Name of piece:** ‘Moondrunk’
from *Pierrot Lunaire*
- **Composer:** Schoenberg
- **Artistic movement:**
Expressionism
- **Harmony:** atonal
- **Specific techniques:**
sprechstimme
 - ‘speech-sing’



The Avant-garde

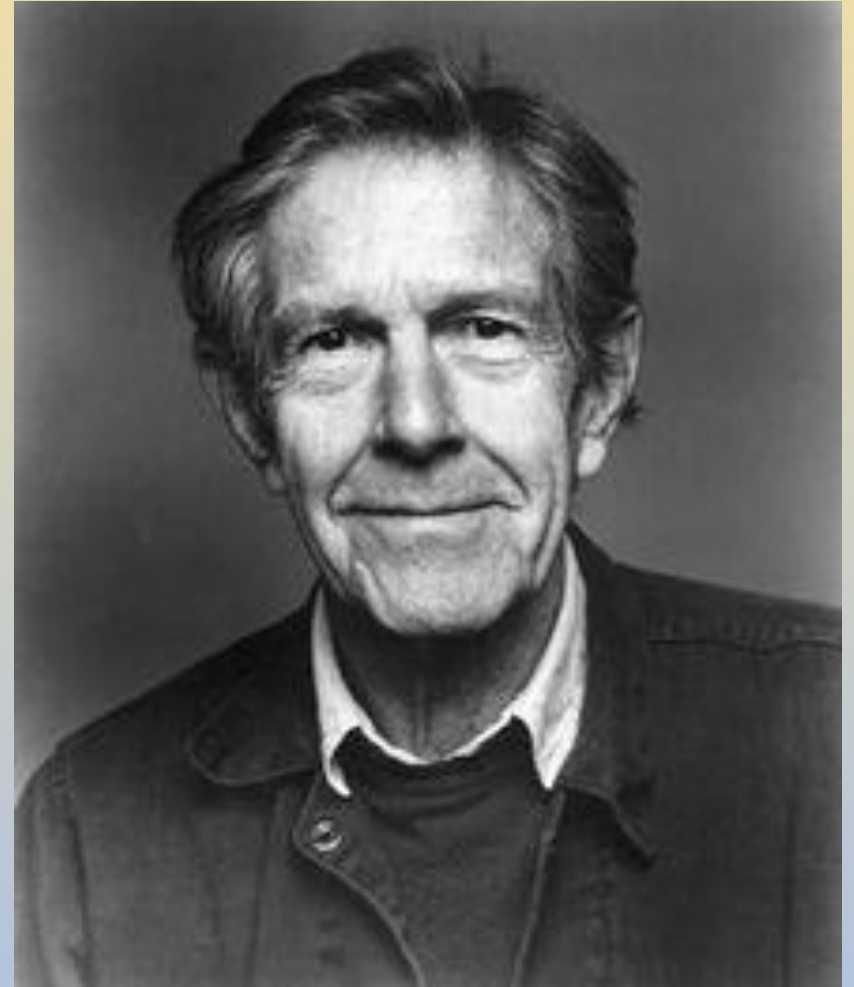
- Pushes the boundaries of what is accepted by the mainstream
- Usually known for its ‘shock’ value
- Known as ‘post-modernism’
 - Known for their departure from tradition all together
 - While the modernists push the boundaries while still holding to some tradition (think Bartok and his use of the Rondo form), the Avant-garde makes us reconsider our values, and often mocks us while we do
- Roots in the early 20th century movements like the Dada movement



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917)

John Cage

- American Avant-garde composer
- Known for his famous statement ‘everything we do is music’
 - If this is true, then there is no music
 - If everything is music, then ‘music’ is by definition, meaningless
- Part of the ‘New York School’
 - A group of artists and composers in New York around the 1950s and 60s who shared an interest in pushing the boundaries as to what we perceive of as music



John Cage (1912-1992)



John Cage performs *Water Walk* in 1960 on the tv show *I've Got a Secret*

- **Name of Piece:** Child of Tree
- **Composer:** John Cage
- **Artistic movement:** Avant-garde
- **Form:** improvisation form
 - Performer does whatever they feel would be best, like a jazz performer taking a solo
 - Still, performer has to have an understanding of the different sounds the instruments make
- **Instrumentation:** amplified plant materials
 - Amplified cactus
 - Dried leaves
 - Sticks
 - Small stones



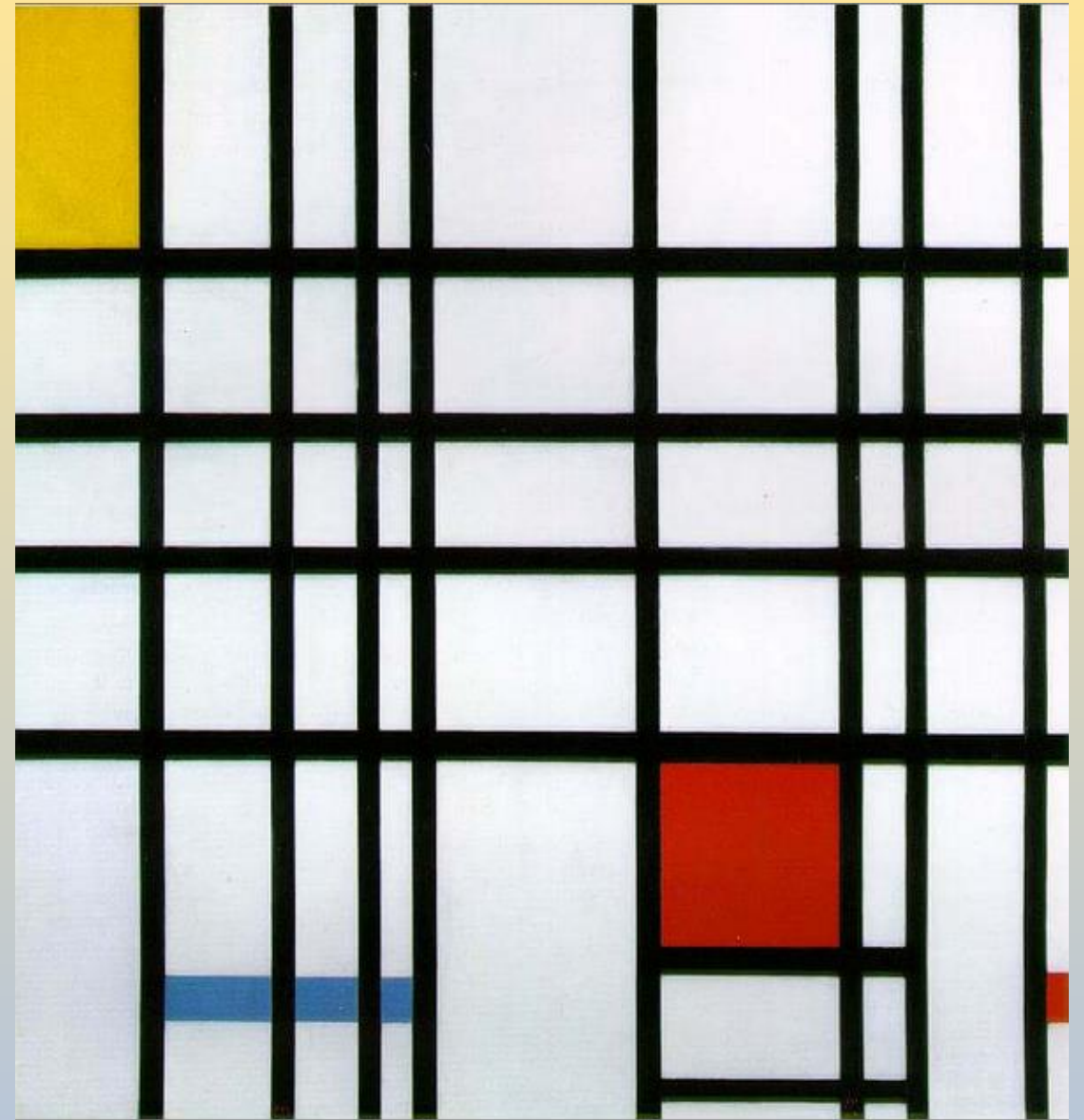
Rosie Bergonzi performs John Cage's *Child of Tree*

Minimalism

- Emerges in post-WWII Western society
- Most prominent in the 1960s and 1970s
 - New York City is the epicenter of this movement
- Prominent composers:
 - Terry Riley
 - Steve Reich
 - John Adams
 - Phillip Glass
 - Laurie Anderson
 - Meredith Monk
- Seen as a reaction against the abstract, expressionist movement that gave so much dissonance and complexity
- Has its roots in early 20th century German art school named Bauhaus
 - Known for their use of many geometric shapes in their art
- Also has roots in Dutch movement *De Stijl* ('the Style')
 - Known for their widespread use of primary colors in their works

Minimalist Characteristics within this piece

- Only colors are primary colors:
 - Red, yellow, blue
 - Used to make secondary colors
 - White
 - Presence of all colors (in light)
 - Black
 - Absence of all colors (in light)
- Only 1 shape: rectangles
 - Even the black lines are rectangles!
- Repeating pattern of shapes
- Very gradual change within the composition



Piet Mondrain, *Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue* 1942

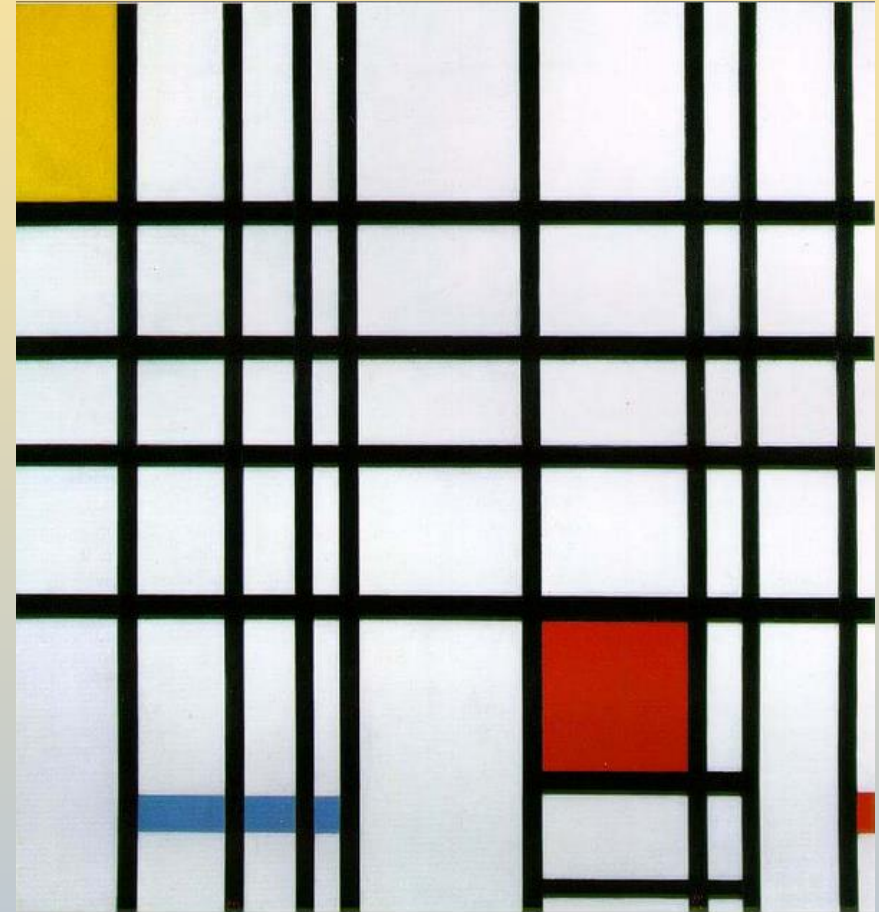


Jo Baer, *Primary Light Group: Red, Green, Blue* 1964-65

- Musical Attributes of Minimalism

- Typically very lengthy
- Often incorporates **very gradual change** (which is why it's so lengthy)
- Often very repetitive (which is why the change is so gradual)
- Often incorporates **phasing**
- Often based on a single idea

- Primary Colors are like the Primary chords in music
 - Only 3 chords (I, IV, V chords)
- Using the same shape is like using the same musical idea
- Repeating the same shape is like repeating the same musical idea



in C.

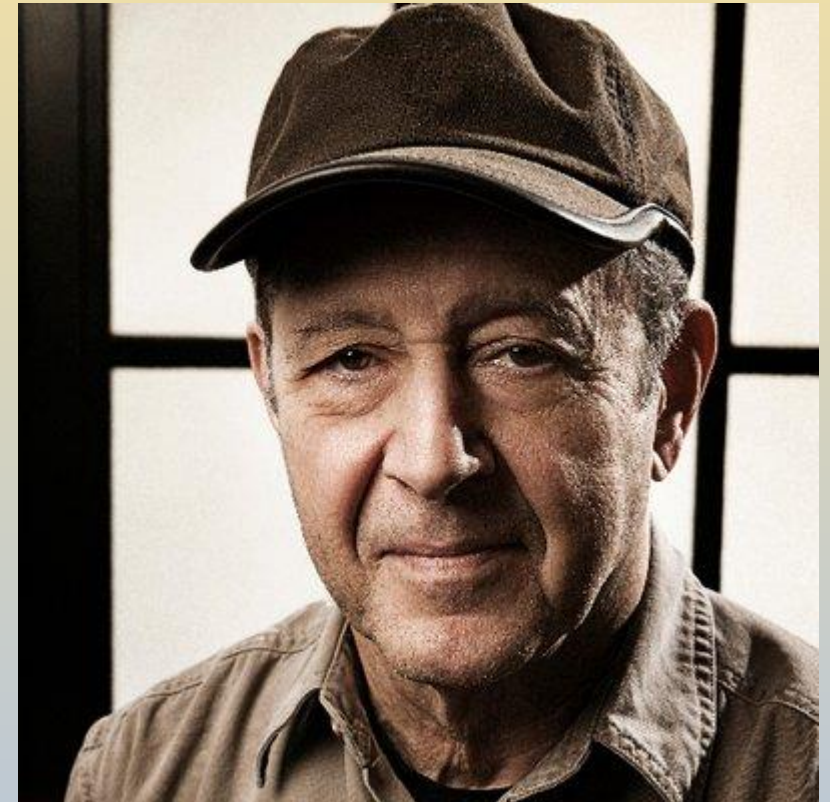
1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24
25 26 27 28
29 30 31 32 33 34
35
36 37 38 39 40 41 42
43 44 45 46 47
48 49 50 51 52 53

© 1964
Terry Riley
© 1989
Colburn Music

Terry Riley, *In C* (referred to as the first minimalist work)
(the constant pulse in the background was suggested by Steve Reich)

Steve Reich

- Born in 1936 in New York
- Began composing in the 1960s
- Known for his unique approach to minimalism:
 - Repetitive use of **motives**
 - Employing rock harmonies and instruments
 - Slow harmonic movement (changes chords slowly)
 - Use of **phasing**



“Come Out” (1966)

- Electronic minimalist and protest piece
- Based on the Harlem Six
 - 6 African American youths that were arrested following the murder of Margit Sugar after riots of 1964
 - Only 1 youth was responsible
 - Truman Nelson (civil rights activist) asked Reich to write this piece based on audio of recorded voices (over 70 hours of source material!)
 - This piece is 4 seconds of an interview with Daniel Hamm (at the riots, but not responsible for the murder):
 - "I had to, like, open the bruise up, and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them"
 - This was to show the police that he had been beaten while in jail
- The music incorporates **phasing**
 - 2 tracks saying the same thing
 - 1 played slightly faster to make them go out of sync with one another



steve reich

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 144$

Repeat each bar approximately number of times written. / Jeder Takt soll approximativ wiederholt werden entsprechend der angegebenen Anzahl. / Répétez chaque mesure à peu près le nombre de fois indiqué

TAPE TRACK 1 (VIOLIN 1)

VIOLIN (VIOLIN 2)

mf (x2-4)

(x8-12)

(x5-16)

hold tempo 1³⁾

fade in ————— mf

accel. very slightly 2)

3)

4)

hold tempo 1

hold tempo 1

(x8-16)

(x6-16)

(x8-16)

(x6-16)

hold tempo 1

accel. v. slightly

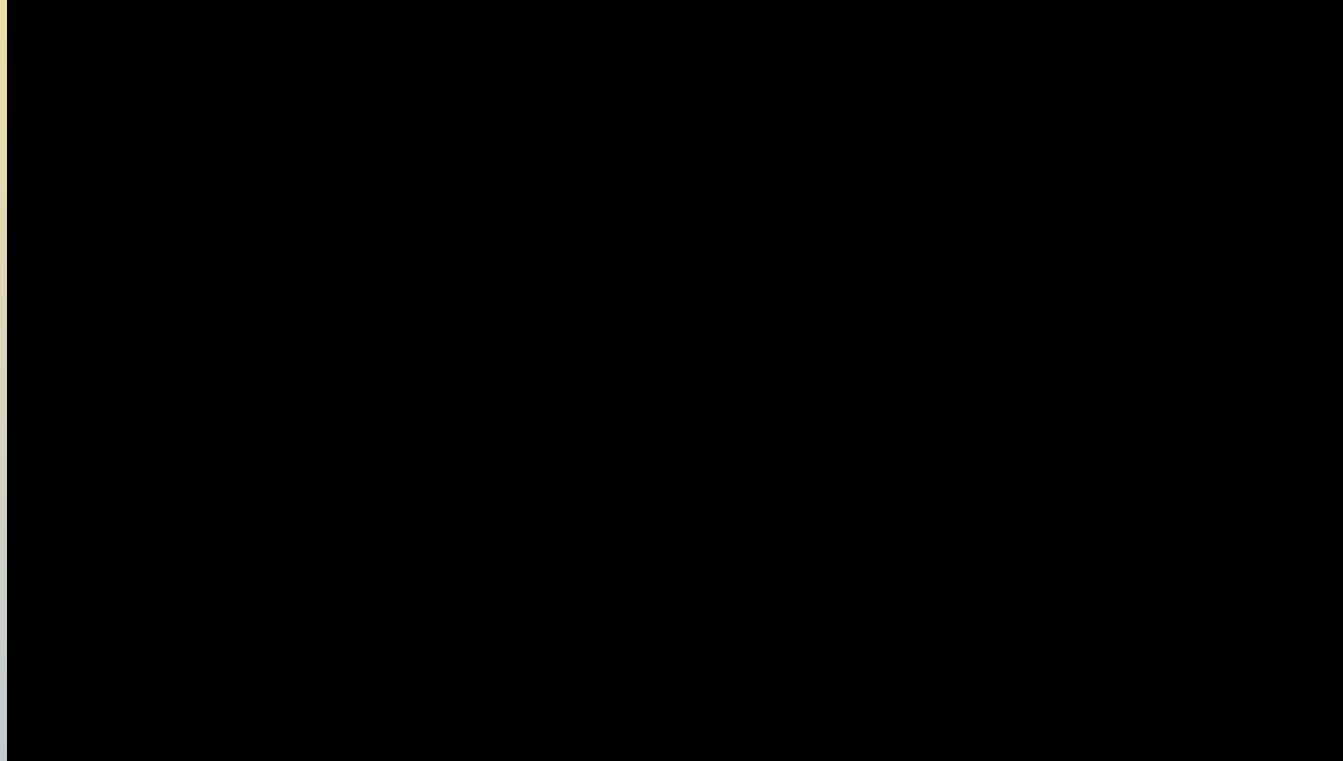
hold tempo 1

accel. v. slightly

The first 4 measures of *Violin Phase* (1967). Notice how “tape track 1” never changes, but the **live human** has to repeat each bar 8-12 times, then speed up slightly until they’re 1 note off from the tape



Steve Reich and Phasing (cont'd)



Clapping Music (1972)

- **Name of piece:** 2x5 (2009)
- **Composer:** Steve Reich
- **Artistic movement:**
minimalism
 - 1960s New York City
- **Ensemble:** 2 5-piece rock bands
 - This performance uses pre-recorded music because they don't have all 10 required members to play the music
- **Incorporates:**
 - Phasing
 - Repetition
 - Gradual change

