CHAPTER21

CHAPTER 21: MUSIC IN THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY: EUROPE, NATIONALISM, AND THE CLASSICAL TRADITION IN AMERICA

Chapter Outline

I. Prelude

1. ***Rise of national styles***
   1. An international style was created in the eighteenth century.
   2. The nineteenth century saw a movement toward nationalism.
      1. Emphasis on native literature and linguistic traditions
      2. Interest in folklore
      3. Patriotism
      4. Craving for independent identity
   3. Germany and Italy became unified countries (see In Context, p. 504).
   4. Musical nationalism was particularly strong in Russia and in the countries of eastern Europe.
2. ***Other trends***
   1. France explored new paths of making music.
   2. Italian opera became more realistic.
   3. The Austro-German classical tradition was transplanted to the United States.

II. The Austro-German Tradition

1. ***Wagnerian influence***
   1. Many composers fell under the spell of Wagner.
   2. Most sought to find their own voice while exploring his innovations in harmony and orchestration.
   3. Preferred genres
      1. Solo song with piano accompaniment
      2. Symphony and symphonic poem
      3. Opera
2. ***Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)***
   1. Wolf is best known for adapting Wagner’s methods to the German lied.
   2. Wolf composed 250 lieder, mostly during periods of intense activity between 1887 and 1897.
   3. He published five principal collections of songs, each devoted to a single poet or group, thereby stressing an equality of words and music.
   4. Like Wagner, he worked toward a fusion of poetry and music, and of voice and piano.
   5. Lebe wohl! (Farewell!), from the Mörike songbook, reflects Wagner’s influences (see Example 21.1).
      1. The arioso vocal line has speechlike rhythms.
      2. Continuity is sustained in the piano part.
      3. Chromatic harmonies are inspired by the idiom of Tristan und Isolde.

III. Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) (see Biography, p. 497 and Figure 21.2)

1. ***His Life***
   1. Mahler was the leading Austro-German composer of symphonies after Brahms and one of the great masters for voice and orchestra.
   2. Mahler influenced Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern.
2. ***Symphonies***
   1. He conveyed a sense of life experience in his symphonies.
   2. Many project or imply a program
   3. Songs played a large role
      1. Themes from his Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer) appear in his Symphony No. 1.
      2. Voices are included in four symphonies.
      3. Symphonies Nos. 2, 3, and 4 use themes from Mahler’s songs based on texts from Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy’s Magic Horn).
   4. Orchestration
      1. Huge numbers of performers, extending up to Symphony No. 8, the “Symphony of a Thousand”
      2. Great imagination in the combination of instruments, often only a few playing at a time
3. ***Song cycles with orchestra***
   1. Kindertotenlieder (Songs on the Death of Children, 1901–4) is based on poems by Friedrich Rückert (see NAWM 150).
      1. The spare use of instruments creates a chamber-music-like transparency.
      2. The post-Wagnerian harmony intensifies the emotions.
   2. Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth, 1908)
      1. Mahler created this work for tenor and alto soloists with orchestra.
      2. The poems are translated from Chinese.
      3. The texts alternate between frenzied grasping at the dreamlike whirl of life and sad resignation at having to part from all its joys and beauties.
      4. The mood balances ecstatic pleasure and deadly foreboding.

IV. Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

1. ***His life (see Biography, p. 499 and Figure 21.3)***
   1. He was a dominant figure in German musical life.
   2. A famous conductor, he led most of the world’s best orchestras.
2. ***Symphonic poems***
   1. Strauss’s works are modeled after the [**program music**](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/concise-history-western-music4/ch/21/outline.aspx) of Berlioz and Liszt.
      1. Colorful orchestration
      2. Thematic transformation
      3. Programs are often based on literature.
   2. Strauss’s depictions range from representational to philosophical.
   3. Don Juan
      1. His first complete mature work, it established his reputation.
      2. Events in the life of Don Juan are depicted, including a graphic sexual climax and his death at the end.
      3. Most of the work evokes boldness and romance.
   4. Till Eulenspiegel
      1. A representational telling of a trickster’s exploits
      2. Two themes for Till are leitmotifs.
      3. The work can be heard with an understanding of the story or as a colorful concert work.
      4. Strauss called the form a rondo, referring to the recurring themes.
   5. Also sprach Zarathustra
      1. A musical commentary on Nietzsche’s long prose poem
      2. Nietzche suggests that the Christian ethic should be replaced by the ideal of a superman, who is above good and evil.
      3. Much of Strauss’s work is philosophical, but there are some moments of direct representation.
      4. The opening, made famous in the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey, was inspired by Zarathustra’s address to the rising sun in the prologue.
3. ***Don Quixote (NAWM 149)***
   1. Depicts the adventures of the knight Don Quixote and his squire Sancho Panza (see Figure 21.4)
   2. Variation structure
      1. Much of the work sounds like chamber music.
      2. Don Quixote is represented by a solo cello, which is joined by solo violin and English horn (see Example 21.2).
      3. The bass clarinet and tenor tuba represent Sancho.
      4. Themes are altered using thematic transformation.
4. ***Operas***
   1. Strauss turned to opera after establishing himself with symphonic poems.
   2. Salome (1905)
      1. Strauss adapted the libretto from a one-act play by Oscar Wilde.
      2. In this decadent version of the biblical story, Salome performs the Dance of the Seven Veils and entices Herod to sever the head of John the Baptist.
      3. Strauss created harmonically complex and dissonant music that greatly influenced later composers.
      4. Strauss depended on the listener hearing the dissonance in relation to an eventual resolution.
   3. Elektra (1906–8) (see Figure 21.5)
      1. This is the first of seven operas to librettos by Viennese playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal.
      2. Adapted from a play by Sophocles, it dwells on insane hatred and revenge.
      3. The dissonance at times is even more extreme than in Salome.
   4. Der Rosenkavalier (The Knight of the Rose, 1909–10)
      1. The opera depicts a sunny world of elegance, eroticism, and nostalgia (see Figure 21.6).
      2. This sentimental comedy features Viennese waltzes.

V. National Trends: Russia (see In Context, p. 504)

1. ***Opera***
   1. Opera was a vehicle for a distinctive Russian identity.
   2. The Czar used opera as propaganda for his absolutist government.
2. ***Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857)***
   1. The first Russian composer to be recognized internationally
   2. A Life for the Tsar (1836)
      1. This pro-government historical drama established Glinka’s reputation.
      2. This is the first Russian opera sung throughout.
      3. The recitative and melodic writing have a distinctly Russian character.
   3. Ruslan and Lyudmila (1842)
      1. Glinka’s second opera is based on a Pushkin poem.
      2. The music features whole-tone scales, chromaticism, and dissonance.
3. ***The Mighty Handful***
   1. A group of five composers stood against the professionalism of the conservatories.
      1. Mily Balakirev (1837–1910)
      2. Aleksander Borodin (1833–1887)
      3. César Cui (1835–1918)
      4. Modest Musorgsky (1839–1881)
      5. Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)
   2. Only Balakirev had conventional training in music, but they all studied Western music on their own (see Vignette, p. 505).
   3. They incorporated aspects of Russian folk song, modal and exotic scales, and folk polyphony.
4. ***Modest Musorgsky (see Figure 21.8)***
   1. Musorgsky, who studied with Balakirev, was the most original.
   2. He worked as a clerk in the civil service.
   3. Principal stage works
      1. Boris Godunov was based on a Pushkin play.
      2. Khovanshchina (The Khovansky Affair) was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov.
   4. The realism of Russian literature is reflected in Boris Godunov.
5. ***Coronation Scene from Boris Godunov (see NAWM 145, Figure 21.8, and Example 21.3)***
   1. The vocal melody is sometimes speechlike.
      1. The text is treated syllabically, and the music follows the natural accents of speech.
      2. The melody lacks lyrical melodic lines and symmetrical phrasing.
   2. Much of the singing is a fluid arioso similar to Russian folk songs.
      1. Narrow range
      2. Repetition of short motives
      3. Tendency to rise at beginnings of phrases and to sink slowly at cadences
   3. Harmony
      1. The music is tonal, but his progressions are novel.
      2. He juxtaposes distantly related harmonies, and usually joins them by a common tone.
   4. The opera is built from large blocks of material.
   5. The scene alternates dominant seventh chords with roots a tritone apart.
   6. A contrasting section culminates in a chorus.
      1. The chorus is accompanied by the first traditional harmony in the scene.
      2. The people sing a genuine folk melody.
   7. The tune is developed and contrasted with other material.

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1. ***Instrumental works***
   1. Night on Bald Mountain (1867), a symphonic fantasy
   2. Pictures at an Exhibition for piano (1874, later orchestrated by Ravel)
      1. This set of ten pieces was inspired by an exhibition of sketches, paintings, and designs by Viktor Hartmann.
      2. Several of the images are rendered in character pieces that are joined by a theme meant to represent the walking viewer.
      3. The image of a commemorative gate to be built at Kiev was set as a grand processional hymn with Western and Russian elements (see Figure 21.9 and Example 21.4).
2. ***Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov***
   1. Rimsky-Korsakov studied with Balakirev and other private teachers.
   2. He had a career in the Russian Navy, and he became a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1871.
   3. He was an active orchestra conductor and a master of orchestration.
   4. As professor and conductor he championed the works of Glinka and other Russian nationalists.
   5. He wrote a harmony treatise and taught some important students, including Glazunov and Stravinsky.
   6. He edited two collections of folk songs and incorporated folk tunes into his own compositions.
   7. Rimsky-Korsakov is best known for his programmatic orchestral pieces.
      1. These works display his genius for orchestration and characterization.
      2. The four movements of Sheherazade (1888) represent four stories as told to the Sultan by his wife, who is represented by a solo violin.
   8. Rimsky-Korsakov completed fifteen operas.
   9. The Golden Cockerel (1906–7) alternates diatonic music for the real world with chromatic music for the supernatural world.

VI. National Trends: Other Countries

1. ***Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) in Norway***
   1. Grieg created a distinctive nationalist style with a series of songs, short piano pieces, and orchestral suites.
   2. Norwegian elements
      1. Modal melodies and harmonies
      2. Dance rhythms
   3. The nationalist style can best be seen in:
      1. Songs on Norwegian texts
      2. Peer Gynt Suite (1875)
      3. Slåtter, a collection of Norwegian peasant dances arranged for piano.
   4. The piano style has some similarities to that of Chopin, but folk elements predominate.
   5. Some of Grieg’s works were international in character, including the popular Piano Concerto in A Minor (1868, revised 1907).
2. ***Edward Elgar (1857–1934) in England***
   1. First English composer to gain international recognition in over two hundred years
   2. He did not adopt a distinctive national style and drew upon the styles of both Brahms and Wagner.
   3. The Dream of Gerontius (1900), an oratorio, is influenced by Wagner’s Parsifal.
   4. His orchestral works include the Enigma Variations (1899) and two symphonies.

VII. New Currents in France

1. ***General trends***
   1. Paris was the principal center of both concert music and opera.
   2. Concerts and musical styles were often tied to politics.
   3. The Paris Conservatory was a model for conservatories all over Europe.
   4. The government supported performances of works by French composers.
   5. Two principal strands of music dominated prior to the emergence of impressionism.
      1. A cosmopolitan tradition transmitted through César Franck
      2. A French tradition, embodied in the music of Gabriel Fauré
2. ***César Franck (1822–1890) and the cosmopolitan tradition***
   1. Born in Belgium, Franck studied at the Conservatoire and became professor of organ there in 1871.
   2. Musical characteristics
      1. Classical genres, forms, and counterpoint
      2. Thematic transformation and cyclic unity
      3. Wagnerian harmony
   3. Franck’s Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue (1884) for piano mixes Baroque forms and procedures with the thematic and harmonic methods of Liszt and Wagner.
   4. Franck is considered the founder of modern French chamber music.
   5. All three of his major chamber works are cyclic and incorporate thematic transformation.
      1. Piano Quintet in F Minor (1879)
      2. String Quartet in D Major (1889)
      3. Violin Sonata in A Major (1886)
3. ***Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) and the French traditions (see Figure 21.10)***
   1. The French tradition drew upon works from Couperin to Gounod.
      1. Music was viewed more as sonorous form than as expression.
      2. Order and restraint are fundamental.
      3. Music is more lyrical or dancelike than epic or dramatic.
   2. Biography
      1. Fauré studied under Saint-Sa‘ns and held several posts as organist.
      2. He was a founder of the Société Nationale, which sought to preserve French traditions.
      3. He became a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896 and served as director from 1905 to 1920.
      4. His large works include the Requiem (1887) and two operas.
      5. He composed primarily smaller works, including songs, short piano works, and chamber music.
   3. Fauré developed a new style in which melodic lines are fragmented and harmony is less directional.
   4. Avant que tu ne t’en ailles (Before you depart) from the song cycle La bonne chanson (The Good Song, 1892) (see Example 21.5)
      1. Fragmentary melodic phrases
      2. The harmony dilutes the need for resolution and creates a sense of repose.

VIII. New Currents in Italian Opera

1. ***Verismo***
   1. This operatic movement parallels realism in literature.
      1. It presents everyday people, generally from the lower classes.
      2. The stories often depict brutal or sordid events.
   2. Two verismo operas have entered the permanent repertory.
      1. Cavalleria rusticana (Rustic Chivalry, 1890) by Pietro Mascagni
      2. I Pagliacci (The Clowns, 1892) by Ruggero Leoncavallo
2. ***Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) (see Figure 21.11)***
   1. Puccini is the most successful Italian opera composer after Verdi.
   2. Puccini blended Verdi’s vocal style with Wagner’s approach, including leitmotifs.
   3. Major works
      1. La bohème (1896)
      2. Tosca (1900)
      3. Madama Butterfly (1904)
      4. Turandot (1926)
   4. Madama Butterfly (NAWM 143)
      1. Music moves seamlessly between dialogue and brief aria-like moments
      2. The most important melodies are in the orchestra.
      3. The Western musical style is touched with exoticism.

IX. The Classical Tradition in the United States

1. ***A large number of Germans immigrated to the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century.***
   1. German musicians had a strong commitment to their national traditions.
   2. German immigrants filled American orchestras and taught all levels of instruction.
   3. German tastes and style dominated American music in the classical tradition until World War I.
2. ***American composers in the German tradition***
   1. John Knowles Paine (1839–1906) became Harvard’s first professor of music.
   2. George Whitefield Chadwick (1854–1931) studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston and became its director.
   3. Horatio Parker (1863–1919), a student of Chadwick, taught at Yale and was the first dean of its School of Music.
   4. Edward MacDowell (1860–1908) was the first professor of music at Columbia University.
   5. All of the above composers studied in Germany, and their styles were deeply rooted in German tradition.
   6. They had varying attitudes about nationalism.
      1. Parker wrote in an international style reflected in his best-known work, the oratorio Hora novissima (1893).
      2. Chadwick employed pentatonic melodies and distinctive rhythms in his Symphony No. 2 in B-flat (1883–85) and Symphonic Sketches (1895–1904).
      3. MacDowell opposed overt nationalism, but he wrote several nationalist works, including his Second Indian Suite (1891–95).
3. ***Amy Marcy Beach (1867–1944) (see Figure 21.13)***
   1. Biography
      1. Beach was a child prodigy.
      2. Excluded from the top universities because she was a woman, she studied privately in Boston and taught herself.
      3. She married a wealthy physician and had time to compose.
      4. Beach was internationally recognized and inspired many women in later generations.
   2. She composed several large-scale works.
      1. Mass in E-flat (1890)
      2. Gaelic Symphony (1894–96)
      3. Piano Concerto (1899)
      4. Piano Quintet (1907)
   3. She also wrote about 120 songs and other piano and choral works.
   4. Style
      1. Some of her music has an ethnic flavor, like the Irish tunes in the Gaelic Symphony and the Native American melodies in the String Quartet (1929).
      2. Most of her works follow German traditions.
   5. The last movement of Beach’s Piano Quintet (NAWM 153) embraces late-nineteenth-century chromatic harmony.