

## Chapter 34: “Many Streams”: Millennium’s End, 1970–Present

- I. Introduction
  - A. “Uptown,” “Midtown,” and “Downtown” designated different musical worlds.
  - B. Collage and pastiche became increasingly common.
    1. Composers returned to tonality in various degrees and were labeled “neo-tonalists” or “neo-Romanticists.”
- II. Competing visions for music
  - A. “Uptown” composers refers to those who follow in the footsteps of European composers.
  - B. “Midtown” composers are associated with the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and the groups who perform there.
  - C. “Downtown” composers are geographically located in the Greenwich Village area and include the minimalists.
  - D. A new diversity
    1. Younger musicians at the end of the millennium were less interested in earlier musical polemics and were tolerant of and receptive to many styles.
    2. The fusion of musical approaches and styles and the blurring of boundaries continued to accelerate.
- III. Postmodernism
  - A. The last third of the twentieth century has become known as “Postmodern.”
  - B. We have become “multicultural” as a result of many battles fought in the 1960s and 1970s.
  - C. The idea of progress was questioned by some, linked to a “master narrative” that assumes cultural progress (like that of the New German School).
    1. In France this led to *poststructuralism*, associated with the revisionists Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, and Derrida.
- IV. Collage and pastiche
  - A. Postmodern architecture blends styles from different periods together. The musical equivalent was the collage (cutting and pasting) and pastiche (imitation in the style of the past).
    1. These procedures were not new nor unique to Postmodernism.
    2. Berio’s *Sinfonia* (1968) is an example of collage.
    3. George Rochberg is another example of a composer who worked with collage.
- V. Pastiche
  - A. Rochberg’s Third Quartet asks the question of why did he not simply devise his own “tonal” idiom instead of copying Beethoven’s.
    1. Rochberg explained that personal emotions are never simply that but are part of something that connects people.
  - B. Rochberg was already famous as a Modernist, so this turn to pastiche drew particular attention.
  - C. How to deal with the dominant museum culture was a looming question for twentieth-century composers.
- VI. Across time, space, and politics: George Crumb and Frederic Rzewski

- A. In the 1970s, Crumb was one of the most frequently performed of living American composers (excepting the minimalists).
    - 1. Several of his compositions are set to texts by Federico Garcia Lorca.
    - 2. Crumb achieved “transhistorical reach” through the quotation of existing music, including Bach, Mahler, and Schubert.
    - 3. He mixed timbres that would not usually be heard together or played instruments in unique ways.
    - 4. He also drew the notation of his works in ways that reinforced the idea of collage.
    - 5. Crumb used political themes, particularly in *Black Angels* for electrified string quartet.
  - B. Frederic Rzewski also made political statements in *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (1975).
- VII. The neo-Romantics
- A. American neo-Romantics
    - 1. Uptown composers moved downtown as they moved away from Modernism.
    - 2. Among these, baby boomers had less problem embracing tonality than did earlier Modernists, and those born in the 1960s tended to be the most tonal of all.
    - 3. Some proponents of neo-tonality went out of their way to explain why it was okay—sometimes going way back in music history to confirm diatonic pitches.
  - B. European neo-Romantics
    - 1. Ligeti and Penderecki also moved to a neo-Romantic style in the 1970s.
    - 2. Glenn Gould toured the Soviet Union in 1957 playing music by subversives such as Berg, Webern, and Krenek.
    - 3. Stravinsky visited the Soviet Union in 1962 for his eightieth birthday, when he was acknowledged as a “Russian classic.”
    - 4. Edison Denisov, a student of Shostakovich, promoted advanced Western techniques and shared the music of Darmstadt.
- VIII. The avant-garde continues
- A. Modernists continued to compose in that style through the end of the twentieth century.
    - 1. Even though Modern, their styles were no longer new.
    - 2. Their junior composers regarded them as outmoded.
    - 3. Two English composers (Brian Ferneyhough and Michael Finnissy) represent the younger generation’s use of Modernism in a style called the “new complexity.”
    - 4. Boulez has led younger French composers in a research institute (IRCAM) where they have the opportunity to work with the latest technology.
  - B. The digital revolution
    - 1. The possibilities opened up by the personal computer probably best represent Postmodernism.

2. MIDI technology, samplers, and sequencers all contributed to new ideas about composition.
  3. The digital revolution liberated music composition from the literate tradition.
  4. Reich used traditional notation and prerecorded sounds in *Different Trains* (1988), a piece commissioned by the Kronos Quartet.
- IX. Performance art
- A. The 1970s and 1980s saw a revival of oral practices associated with folklore, known as performance art.
    1. These performances are usually multimedia.
    2. Musicologist Susan McClary notes that women have always been performance artists because it is a traditional role for them to be the objects of masculine gaze.
    3. Among the other composers mentioned, John Zorn has been named “an archetypal example of the composer in the media age.”
- X. The death of classical music and the revival of opera
- A. At the end of the twentieth century, uptown and downtown music met at midtown.
    1. This is despite the prediction that classical music was dead.
    2. Yes, media coverage had diminished, the audience was aging, record sales declined, classical radio stations declined, and publishers were less interested in new composers.
    3. At the same time, however, interest in Western classical music picked up in Asian and South American countries.
    4. Opera companies began producing new works, including John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic*.
  - B. John Adams and Nixon in China
    1. Adams began his career as a minimalist but soon moved to other styles.
    2. His *On the Transmigration of Souls* commemorated the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and won the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2002.
    3. His first opera, *Nixon in China* (1987), was commissioned by four different houses, spread across the United States and into Europe.
    4. By the late 1990s, Adams’s music was the most performed of any American classical composer.
  - C. A new spirituality
    1. Peter Sellars, who worked with Adams on his last two operas, noted that classical music had to offer something other media did not and suggested specifically that it was spiritual content.
    2. Around the millennium, several composers wrote new works aimed at such a purpose. Multiculturalism was a factor in many of them.
    3. Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, who had studied at the IRCAM in Paris and was identified to a degree with the Parisian spectralist composers, premiered her opera *L’Amour de loin* in 2000.
    4. The text began with the making of literate music and notation, moving to music printing, which allowed for more diversity in compositional styles. The technological innovations of the twentieth century have again

assisted in exponentially increasing interactions among vastly disparate times and places.