

MUSIC

AMERICAN MUSIC OF THE 1930s: THE MUSIC OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

I. BASIC ELEMENTS OF MUSIC THEORY24%

A. SOUND AND MUSIC

1. Definitions
 - a. *Music is sound organized in time*
 - b. *Music of the Western world*
2. The Physics of Musical Sound
 - a. *Sound waves*
 - b. *Instruments as sound sources*

B. PITCH, RHYTHM, AND HARMONY

1. Pitch
 - a. *Pitch, frequency, and octaves*
 - b. *Pitch on a keyboard*
 - c. *Pitch on the grand staff*
 - d. *Overtones and partials*
 - e. *Equal temperament: generating the 12 pitches by dividing the octave*
 - f. *Scales: leading tone, tonic, dominant*
 - g. *Intervals*
 - h. *Intervals of the major scale*
 - i. *Minor scales*
 - j. *Melody defined; example, using scale degrees*
 - k. *Contour*
 - l. *Range and tessitura*
2. Rhythm
 - a. *Beat*
 - b. *Tempo*
 - c. *Meter: duple and triple*

- d. *Rhythmic notation*
- e. *Time signature*
- f. *Compound meter*
- g. *Mixed and irregular meter*
- h. *Syncopation*
- i. *Polyrhythm*

3. Harmony

- a. *Common-practice tonality*
- b. *Chords*
 - I. TRIADS
 - II. INVERSIONS
- c. *Keys*
 - I. KEYS AND KEY SIGNATURES
 - II. HIERARCHY OF KEYS: CIRCLE OF FIFTHS
- d. *Harmonic progression*
 - I. DISSONANCE AND CONSONANCE
 - II. DIATONIC TRIADS
 - III. DOMINANT TRIAD'S SPECIAL ROLE
 - IV. BASS LINES
 - V. THE DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD
 - VI. EXAMPLE: A HARMONIZED MELODY
- e. *Other diatonic chords*
- f. *Chromatic harmonies and modulation*
- g. *Beyond common practice*

C. OTHER ASPECTS OF MUSICAL SOUND

- 1. Texture, Counterpoint, Instrumentation, More Timbre
- 2. Dynamics, Articulation, Ornamentation

D. FORM IN MUSIC

- 1. Perceiving Musical Form
- 2. Elements of Form
 - a. *Motive*
 - b. *Phrase*
 - c. *Cadence*
 - d. *Theme*
- 3. Common Forms
 - a. *Repetition*

- b. *Variation*
 - I. THEME AND VARIATIONS
 - II. 12-BAR BLUES
 - III. IMPROVISATION
- c. *Contrast*
 - I. TERNARY AND RONDO FORMS
 - II. 32-BAR FORM
- d. *Development*
 - I. FUGUE
 - II. SONATA FORM

E. WHICH IS THE REAL MUSIC? SCORES, RECORDINGS, AND PERFORMANCE

II. BLUES AND JAZZ IN THE 1930s32%

A. BLUES: RURAL AND URBAN

- 1. History and Social Function
- 2. To about 1929
 - a. *Country blues vs. classic blues*
 - b. *Classic blues: W.C. Handy*
 - I. **LISTENING SELECTION:** "ST. LOUIS BLUES" BY W.C. HANDY
 - II. RECORDINGS AND EARLY FEMALE BLUES SINGERS
 - c. *Country blues*
- 3. 1930s: The Great Depression's Effects on the Blues
 - a. *Classic blues*
 - b. *'Downhome' blues in the 1930s*
 - c. *Northward shift*
 - d. *Jazz and blues*
 - e. *Lead Belly, Alan Lomax, and blues as folk music*
 - I. **LISTENING SELECTION:** LEAD BELLY SINGS "MIDNIGHT SPECIAL"
 - f. *Blacks, whites, and the importance of blues in the 1930s*

B. JAZZ: ORIGINS

- 1. Music in New Orleans Prior to 1910
 - a. *Brass bands: marches and arrangements*
 - b. *Ragtime*
- 2. Jazz Emerges in New Orleans
- 3. Dixieland Jazz and the Spread from New Orleans
- 4. Louis Armstrong and the "Hot" Sound

C. BIG BANDS AND SWING

1. Definitions
 - a. *The jazz-based dance band*
 - b. *Repertoire: popular songs in “sweet jazz” style*
 - c. *Varieties of jazz*
 - d. *Traits of “swing”*
 - e. *When did swing begin?*
 - f. *Performance conventions*
 - I. SECTIONS
 - II. SOLOS
 - III. FULL ENSEMBLE

2. Duke Ellington
 - a. *Duke Ellington, composer and bandleader*
 - b. *The “Ellington effect”*
 - c. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *George Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm”*
 - d. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Duke Ellington’s “Cotton Tail”*
3. Other Jazz Musicians
4. Swing beyond Big Bands

D. JAZZ AND THE WHITE AUDIENCE

III. POPULAR SONG IN THE 1930s 24%

A. AMERICAN POPULAR SONG: HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS

1. Colonial Song
 - a. *English origins and economics*
 - b. *Entertainment and amateurs*
2. Parlor Songs
 - a. *Parlor songs: what and who*
 - b. *Economics of parlor songs*
 - c. *Categories and examples of parlor songs*
3. Minstrelsy (Dan Emmett, Stephen Foster)
 - a. *Origins, prevalence, longevity, social role*
 - b. *Musical importance*
4. Tin Pan Alley
 - a. *New York City and the music industry: economics*
 - b. *Typical song structure: verse, chorus; changes 1890–1930*
5. From Tin Pan Alley to Broadway

B. ECONOMICS AND DISSEMINATION

1. Media: Sheet Music, Broadway Shows, Recordings, Radio, Talking Film
 2. Location, Location: New York City and Hollywood
 3. "Performer's Music"
- C. THE GREAT SONGWRITERS OF THE 1930s
1. Jerome Kern
 2. Richard Rodgers
 3. Cole Porter
 4. George Gershwin
 5. Irving Berlin
- D. SONGS PERFORMED
1. **LISTENING SELECTION:** Ella Fitzgerald sings "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön"
 - a. *Fitzgerald and other singers in the 1930s*
 - b. *Back story: composer and first performance*
 - c. *This recording*
 2. **LISTENING SELECTION:** Fred Astaire sings "Cheek to Cheek" by Irving Berlin
 - a. *Song on film in the 1930s*
 - b. *Form and harmony in "Cheek to Cheek"*
 3. **LISTENING SELECTION:** Rudy Vallee Sings "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"
- E. THE URBAN FOLK SONG MOVEMENT
1. Popular Music Outside New York
 - a. *Country music, "hillbilly" music*
 - b. *Bluegrass, ethnic musics*
 2. Advocates and Collectors
 3. As a Resource for Classical Composers Seeking an "American" Voice
 4. Social Activism, Politics, and the Folk Music Revival
 5. Woody Guthrie
 - a. *Guthrie's biography and views*
 - b. *1940 Grapes of Wrath concert in New York City*
 - c. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Woody Guthrie, "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You"*
 - d. *"Tom Joad" written after seeing the film of The Grapes of Wrath*
 - e. *Influence on Pete Seeger and others*
 6. Urban Folk Political Fallout
 - a. *Links to socialism, 1940s*

- b. McCarthy-era backlash
- c. 1960s resurgence of radical folk music

IV. CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE 1930s 20%

A. MUSICAL MODERNISM

1. Definition, Roots, and Premises
2. American Support for Modernist Music
3. Modernism and the Audience
 - a. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Ruth Crawford Seeger's String Quartet*
 - b. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Aaron Copland's Piano Variations*
4. American Experimentalism: Modernist Offshoot
 - a. *Edgard Varèse*
 - b. *Henry Cowell*
 - c. *John Cage: earliest experiments*
5. Musical Modernism Meets the Great Depression
 - a. *Mass media reaches new American audiences*
 - b. *Composers' economic needs*
 - c. *Radical politics and the Popular Front*

B. PUTTING MUSICIANS TO WORK: THE WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

1. The Federal Music Project
2. The Composers' Forum-Laboratory
3. The Federal Theatre Project
4. Government-Funded Documentaries
 - a. *Virgil Thomson: pioneer in simplicity*
 - b. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Excerpts from Virgil Thomson's score to The Plow that Broke the Plains (1936)*
 - I. OVERVIEW OF MUSIC AND PLOT
 - II. IMAGE AND SOUND
 - III. CD/DVD EXCERPTS
 - IV. AUDIENCE RESPONSE
 - V. OTHER GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTARIES

C. "REVOLUTIONARY" MUSIC: THE ROLE OF RADICAL POLITICS

1. The Composers' Collective (1933–38)
2. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Excerpts from Marc Blitzstein's The Cradle Will Rock (1937)*
 - a. *History and controversy*
 - b. *Scene 6 excerpts: "Art for Art's Sake"*

- I. BACKGROUND
- II. LYRICS
 - c. *Scene 7 excerpt from title song, "The Cradle Will Rock"*
 - d. *Interpretation*
- 3. U.S. Interest in Mexico: Political, Social, and Musical
 - a. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *Revueltas's Ocho por Radio*
- 4. Political Backlash in the McCarthy Era
- D. MASS MEDIA
 - 1. Phonograph then Radio, Early 20th Century
 - 2. Which Classical Music Did Listeners Hear?
- E. CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE
 - 1. William Grant Still and the Blending of Symphonic and Blues Traditions
 - a. *Classical education and early modernist compositions*
 - b. *Relation to the Harlem Renaissance*
 - c. **LISTENING SELECTION:** *William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony*
 - 2. Zora Neale Hurston, Paul Robeson, and Defining Black Music
- F. FROM MODERNISM TO AMERICANISM: SEEGER, STILL, AND COPLAND