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## Twentieth Century Music: An Introduction

Music has been defined as the language soul. It is considered as the most important art
form since the singer is directly expressing his or her emotions through the lyrics that he or she
sings. The twentieth century brought many changes not only in the field of technology but also in
in the music industry due to the inventions such as electricity, compact disks, computers,
synthesizers and amplifiers. As we move on to this paper, I will show you the humble beginnings
the twentieth century music. The earliest record of the twentieth century music came from the
latter part of the Romantic period in Europe. Because the people by that time were looking for
something unique, composers created various styles in order to make their music a one great
masterpiece. Also, the trend of music during this period is focused mainly on the individualism
dreams and character. There are two styles that prevailed greatly during that time, the first is
the Impressionism while the other is Expressionism. Impressionism to begin with is a painting
technique which portrays an illusion of light and the creation of paintings with bright colors. One
famous composer incorporated this theme into his music and that is Claude Debussy. He is a

## French composer noted for his playful and magical compositions. He used the principle of

Impressionism to create an aura of ‘ atmosphere’ and refinement. His music tend to have a
delicacy to project a sound similar to the moonlight, waterfalls, fireworks and air. A rather hazy
and dream like tones which tends to ‘ impress’ the hearers. This music also when heard paints a
vivid picture of the scene that is trying to project by this music. One such example are his two
works: The Engulfed Cathedral which he based on an old Breton legend of a cursed cathedral
buried deep into the ocean, and the Prelude to an Afternoon of a Faun. In contrast to this style is
the Expressionism. This is a psychological approach to music wherein singers and composers use
irregular beats and exaggerated tonal variations. Expressionist used irritating sounds and
distorted syncopation in order to produce music also for them to express what they truly feel.

## Hence the name came from the word, ‘ express.’ This music conveys anguish, sorrow and tension

suffering and horror. They believed that all people are irrational, rebellious and at the same time
coward. Mainly they get this idea since all parts of the world is in turmoil and everybody is
unstable of their feelings. So in order for them to release their tension, expressionists put their
emotions to the music they make. Arnold Schoenberg became known using this style and one
example of his great musical scores is, The Sick Moon from Pierrot Lunaire.

## However during the years 1910 and 1911, two compositions were published and regarded

which literally means ‘ an old born to become new.’ He combined themes of Impressionism and

## Expressionism and balanced it in order to produce music that is haunting yet expressive. From the

early 1950’s he formatted his works according to Bach’s cantatas and Beethoven’s classical works
along with the musicians from the Baroque and Early Romantic Period. In 1952, he changed his
emerged from the African-American communities. In New Orleans, the Jazz music was born due
in a place that is called the ‘ Congo Square’ the place wherein the Black music was expressed. The

## Jazz music uses a soft and mellow tones which had a saxophone accompaniment. Improvisation

or creating the music as it is being performed is the important element of Jazz. The known Jazz
players are Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong who first used a trumpet and James Johnson.

## Also by the year 1950’s to the mid 1990’s rock music prevailed the world. Rock n’ Roll, a phrase

popularized by the DJ Allan Freed became the tagline of Elvis Presley who reigned as the King of
Rock n’ Roll. This style is no longer used for dancing but on the music as well. This style was
highly influenced by British groups such as The Beatles who are considered as the most famous
and successful band in the world. Their music alone sold over 1. 3 million albums worldwide. Their
first single, Love Me Do, was only a minor hit in the British Music Chart. However, in the year

## 1963, the group released their second single bearing the title Please, Please Me which has a

repetitive quality. Following that year, was the number two hit, From Me to You and She Loves

## You were released making it memorable with its refrain, “ Yeah, yeah, yeah.” As the time goes by,

many different genres are created by various people depending on the age bracket they belong to.

## Older people tend to listen to the ‘ Oldies’ or the ‘ mellow music’ while the new generation wants

a much higher and upbeat rhythmic patterns of notes. The Pop and the Rock music which is
produced by the usage of electrical instruments became in demand on the teens. Other genres
including RnB and acoustic are made by combining the elements found in the old and rock, and
acapella musical varieties. Indeed, the 20th century didn’t only brought changes to the man’s
technology but also the way we prefer our music. It won’t be impossible if another musical creation
will emerge on this era wherein technology is everywhere and with the addition of social media
and the advancement of the internet the future of the music industry won’t be put into vain.
part of our humanity. All of us have a different musical genre that we listen to, other people prefer
mellow while some prefer the pop style and rock however these is not really important to consider.

## Music, no matter how each of them differs from one another, it is made to express oneself to the

public, simply because it mirrors our emotions and the tone of voice in which how the song is sung
adds up to the quality of expressing what we truly feel within.

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