

# **GCSE MUSIC REVISION NOTES FOR AOS 2 – NEW DIRECTIONS IN WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC 1900 – THE PRESENT DAY**

## **SERIALISM**

Method of composing using the 12 tone row, where all 12 chromatic pitches are re-arranged in a set order; this is called the row's PRIME ORDER. The row must then be used in that order, in RETROGRADE (reverse order), INVERSION (where the intervals between the notes are turned upside down or RETROGRADE INVERSION (combination of both). The resulting pieces are often ATONAL (without sense of key), without clear sense of METRE, rhythmically irregular e.g ACCENTS, melodically ANGULAR. Stark DYNAMIC contrasts are also a feature. Key composers: Schoenberg, Webern.

## **MINIMALISM**

A composing style that relies on the repetition of ostinato patterns, interlocking rhythms and phrases. The overall effect can be hypnotic and although changes do occur in the music, they happen very gradually. This style originated in America, key composers being Steve Reich, Philip Glass, John Adams.

## **EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC**

Features include: non-standard notation/graphic score; chance (aleatoric music); extended vocal and instrumental techniques; unusual and unexpected sounds. Key composers: John Cage, Pierre Boulez.

## **ELECTRONIC MUSIC**

Developed following the invention of the tape recorder and the synthesiser. The music is created by collecting, manipulating and changing sounds recorded with a microphone or using a synthesiser. Music concrete is an example (where the music is based on everyday sounds). Effects such as reverb, echo, pitch bending and modulation, together with techniques such as splicing, filtering and amplification are important. Key composers: Stockhausen, Berio, Cage.