

Expressionism and Atonality

Expressionism

- ▶ The prevailing style of art in Germany in the early 20th century was expressionism
 - ▶ The distortion of reality for an intense emotional effect
 - ▶ Often conveying feelings of angst, high anxiety, and worry, rather than positive emotions
 - ▶ In music, expressionism tends towards intense, harsh, dissonant, strongly emotional music, eventually leading to atonality in its avoidance of consonant resolutions



Example: Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire* no. 7 "Der Kranke Mond," no. 8 "Nacht"

Impressionism

- ▶ The prevailing style of art in France in the early 20th century was impressionism
- ▶ Impressionism seeks to create a mood or an atmosphere
- ▶ It uses light and color in nontraditional ways
- ▶ Textures are soft and gentle
- ▶ Imagery is often related to the beauty of nature



Atonality

- ▶ Atonality is the complete avoidance of any suggestion of a tonal center, typically avoiding any familiar combinations of notes such as triads
- ▶ The three composers most associated with atonality and expressionism in music were:
 - ▶ Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)
 - ▶ Anton Webern (1883-1945)
 - ▶ Alban Berg (1885-1935)
- ▶ These composers formed what is known today as the Second Viennese School
 - ▶ (What do you think the first Viennese School was?)