

21M.260: STRAVINSKY TO THE PRESENT

ASSIGNMENT due at Class 11, March 10

Reading: Auner, p. 148-149, 153-161.

Anthology works: Aaron Copland, "Billy the Kid" Suite, "Street in a Frontier Town"

Supplemental: Copland's *Appalachian Spring*
Ralph Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 3 "Pastoral"

Before you begin, skim the Grove Music Online article about Copland. Listen to the anthology excerpt at least twice. Then, answer the following questions.

What are the archetypal characteristics of "the West" to which Copland refers in this work?

What musical features of this movement evoke this version of "the West"?

What musical features arguably "elevate" this work and turn it into something more than pastiche?

Why would it make sense to tie a sense of American landscape or nationalism to this idea of "the West"? Can you imagine any drawbacks to this identification?

How does Auner use the term "musical homelands" (p. 149), and how is this concept political?

What does Auner mean by “all traditions are invented to some degree” (p. 149)? Do you agree?

How does Vaughan Williams’ style constitute a reaction to war, and why is this counterintuitive?

How did events of the 1920s and 1930s change ideas about what counted as “American”?

According to Auner, why might there be irony in Copland’s status as an archetypal American composer?

Supplemental listening (Copland or Vaughan Williams)

Listen carefully with *no distractions* except a notetaking apparatus (pencil/pen/keyboards) to either the “Pastoral” Symphony or *Appalachian Spring*. While you listen, take notes on what you hear. Then, write 6-7 sentences to substantiate with musical evidence the thesis that “The most important aspects about [the “Pastoral” Symphony / *Appalachian Spring*] can be traced to the [British / American] identity of its composer.” N.B. I don’t care whether you agree; I want you to impersonate someone who does.

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