

American “Mainstream”

And the reappearance of tonality

Aaron Copland (1900-92)

- ◆ studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger
- ◆ 1930s caught up in social consciousness of the times:
 - ◆ how can music relate to large, diverse audience?
- ◆ sought simpler music, amateur music
- ◆ Uses familiar folk songs for “home spun” atmosphere

Copland: Select Works



- ◆ Ballets:
 - ◆ *Billy the Kid* 1938
 - ◆ *Rodeo* 1942
 - ◆ *Appalachian Spring* 1944 (earned Pulitzer Prize)
- ◆ *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942/43)
- ◆ Film Scores, Symphonies; almost all genres

Appalachian Spring (1943-44)



Describes
Pennsylvania barn
raising

Originally ballet; later
orchestral suite

Appalachian Spring (1944)

- ◆ Ballet later arranged as suite for orchestra; choreographed by Martha Graham
- ◆ Celebrates simplicity of rural life, Americana
- ◆ Shaker hymn “’Tis the Gift to Be Simple”

William Grant Still (1895-1978)



- ◆ Studied popular and experimental music
- ◆ First African-American to:
 - ◆ have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra
 - ◆ have an opera performed by major company
 - ◆ conduct a major symphony orchestra

Afro-American Symphony (1931)

- ◆ Written during “Harlem Renaissance”
- ◆ Newly composed blues themes and Jazz sounds
- ◆ Wanted to demonstrate that blues could be “high art”, too
- ◆ Includes banjo in the orchestra

Neo Romanticism

Term given to composers who consciously rejected Modernism and sought a “return” to some of the musical vocabularies of the past.

George Rochberg, *String Quartet No. 5* (1978)

David del Tradici *Final Alice* (1975)