

*Appalachian Spring*, written by Aaron Copeland in 1944 was written to be a ballet. It is a piece with 8 different sections. The beginning begins very softly, starting out with a clarinet solo. The other instruments also come in slowly and even though they are harmonic it slightly sounds like a form of dissonance as they repeat the melody of the clarinet. When the violins come in they bring a disjunct melody and high range. Towards the end of the first section it ends with how it began, with a soft clarinet solo. When the second section starts it does suddenly with an allegro tempo. There seems to be a polyphonic melody playing during this section. The dynamics are very loud and the notes in some parts stay very short. The piece ends up slowing down to a moderately slow tempo but then quickly speeds up in the next few sections. However the piece returns to and ends on the moderately slow tempo.

In the first part of *Appalachian Spring* we hear a calm peaceful community coming together in peace and harmony. We know this by the smooth melodic writing from the composer. This is a ballet based around people who are pastoral, where they are living off the land with what they grow and with the animals they farm. The simple harmony in this piece evokes the peacefulness of the new spring that is being born. The single sound of the triad evokes soft comforting images creating a soothing tone poem. The second part portrays a community celebrating. We know this by the change in tempo. It gets faster and the music speeds up and the strings play shorter notes and they also pluck the strings, this is all part of the celebratory nature of the music. It is all about celebration. Later in the piece we come to the Shaker Hymn *Simple Things*. This is an example of theme and variations. Copeland took a simple shaker melody and used it to make a great climax of the piece. This conveys a meaning

of the people living in peace with their god's creation and evokes that harmony with the community.

*Rite of Spring*, being a very different piece when compared to *Appalachian Spring*, is one that evokes blood raising emotions. This piece, written by Igor Stravinsky, goes way further and beyond in toying with emotions. This is all created through complex rhythms, dissonance and the usage of accented short notes. The piece, being very dramatic, leads you on wondering what will happen next or how the piece will conclude.

This piece is barbaric and evokes primal emotions. The story revolves around a community that is coming together to sacrifice a young maiden. They will have her life taken away in order to please their god so that they may have plentiful crops, and healthy livestock. The way this is conveyed is by the harmonic clashing that is very dissonant. By this there come unsettling and earth wrenching sounds made by the orchestra. It is written to put you on edge, to upset you, and it tries to tap into that deep sense of fear that the audience may be able to relate to. This piece is all about conflict. The dynamics of the piece vary going in and out between loud and soft. This helps with drawing you back in and remembering the situation you have put yourself in. The tempo also varies. Some sections are extremely fast and others are moderate. The range is very wide which is also what causes it to have a frequent dissonance pattern.

Taking a moment to compare and contrast these pieces; both of these are ballets that convey the message of spring. They both have sections in them that have that are very rhythmical and complex. However, the intention behind both pieces is very different. They

both give you different urges. Both are using music to paint a picture of what the story of the ballet is. They both represent a community coming together. The different views they have are one is a pleasant happy joyful spring. This is explained in the music by the happy harmonic tones. We can sense joy, love, and celebration in this piece by Aaron Copeland. The other spring is very dark and is explained by the constant torment of the music. Each piece has a different story. This community in the *Rite of Spring* is one where you hope that by killing this person that God will grant you a plentiful season. This is done by using dissonance to convey that it is about a community that lives in fear of their god. What easily sets these two pieces apart are their rhythms.

I enjoy listening to both of these pieces and one day hope to see both of the ballets. As mentioned before, these pieces are very different. *Appalachian Spring*, if treated like a soundtrack would be part of a happy ending movie. I imagine the sun rising and people leaving their small cottages to and going to work on their farm. Then, at sunset, they gather for a wonderful celebration to enjoy their successes. Now the other piece gives me a much different feeling. Through the constant dissonance I feel the rush of time speeding by. The change of hope leaving before it was even caught by the slightest glance. If written for a movie soundtrack this piece would be attached to a thriller or horror. After reading a little bit about the piece I noticed the mixed emotions about the reception. People were upset about the style. To them it was very hardcore and a style that was not highly looked upon. In 2012, we would probably relate it to something similar to rap or heavy metal since in our communities that seems to be what we feel is most shocking to hear. Each piece had a few similarities, but even as different as they were I still enjoyed them both.