



MUS434-571.3

Music of the Modern Era

American Identity – Feb. 7, 2013

Hybridization of musical style

- Transference – cultural resources borrowed or appropriated within another dominant context
 - Work song fashioned into theme and variations for orchestra (completely out of context) – quotation
- Syncretism – procedural merger of materials
 - Borrowing techniques / timbres, not specific material – jazz techniques in brass writing, blues vocal style in operatic setting
 - Still discernable as separate elements interacting
- Synthesis – transformation of cultural idioms and resources into a hybrid entity
 - Be-Bop – modernism + jazz create new language

From Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau's *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004)

Charles Ives – *Three Places in New England* (1914)

- Programmatic
- Redefines counterpoint
 - Cumulative Form (melodies / musical materials come forward in relief against a static harmonic background, “nebula”)
 - Polytonality + layering / juxtaposition
- Redefines symphonic form (slow–fast–slow)
- Fragments of popular / African-American songs are basis for motivic material or are directly quoted
- Revised 1929

Augustus Saint-Gaudens – Robert Gould Shaw Memorial (1897)



Will Marion Cook – *Swing Along*

- Traditional classical conservatory education
 - Oberlin / Berlin
- More opportunities writing musicals
 - Tin Pan Alley
- Operatic treatment of folk material
 - Orchestration / chorale harmonization
 - Bel canto singing style

George Gershwin – *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)

- Rhapsody – structure based on late Romantic chromaticism
- Jazz-infused language (rhythm, harmony, delivery)
- Fragmenting and repeating phrases (real sequences) reminiscent of Stravinsky / modernism – riffs

Duke Ellington – *Black, Brown, and Beige* (1943)

- Chronicles experience of African-American community
 - First-person perspective
- More difficult to discern what is notated and what is improvised
- Expand form beyond 3 minute side
 - Influence of recording technology on popular music
- New generation of Harlem Renaissance
 - Langston Hughes / Zora Neale Hurston
 - Validate cultural resources and unique identity (hot jazz, rural blues) rather than assimilation (writing symphonies)
 - American identity – quotes Yankee Doodle, patriotic twist

Summary

- American musical identity draws heavily from African-American music (blues, jazz, hymnody)
- Different approaches to use of materials
 - Quotations / remixing / recontextualization / synthesis
- Deterred by the classical establishment, African-American musicians create their own opportunities / scene / market / style
- Harlem Renaissance – popular forms elevated, recognized as high art (demanding equal validation for African-Americans in general)