

*Symphony in Three Movements:*

Compared to other works from Stravinsky's neo-classical period that we have looked at, I would have to agree that this Symphony certainly seems to have many of the sounds of his early ballets. Although almost every work by Stravinsky seems to have a strong sense of pulse or at least a strong rhythmic profile, the rhythmic intensity of the first and third movements seems the most apparent attribute that links this work to his Russian period. For example, the repeated "bounce" figure in the strings and winds around Reh. #s 7-16, a figure that seems to reappear somewhat in the third movement around Reh. #s 157-159, give an aggressive feel to these "non-periodic" rhythms. The liberal use of horns and drums, I suppose in keeping with the theme of a "war" symphony, also sonically link these outer movements for me to the more "brutal" sounds of his early work.

On listening to the second movement, I was actually struck by some similarities to the *Septet*, which of course was not to be written for almost a decade later and in an ostensibly different style and obviously different instrumentation. For example, the flute solo melody in the first few bars of the second movement (Reh. #s 113 and 114), which is a melody that returns again in numerous ways throughout this movement it seems, bears a noticeable resemblance to the clarinet melody that opens the first movement of the *Septet*. Both melodies outline a triad, starting on  $\hat{1}$  then descending to  $\hat{5}$ , followed by a linear, sixteenth-note scalar descent to  $\hat{1}$  in the second half. It's uncanny, I think. As well, there is something about the final cadence in this second movement that reminds me of the way the cadences are handled in the *Septet*. I suppose it a centric quality, where the instruments sort of expand out or contract into a fairly consonant sonority that almost seems to come out of nowhere after a period of somewhat dissonant passagework.

*Three Songs from William Shakespeare:*

The phrasing of the text for the second piece, "Full Fathom Five," seems strikingly Baroque to me. I also hear this phrasing in the A section of the third piece, too. It is almost as if a Baroque aria has been copied but the pitches changed to be more dissonant. Especially with so many little neighbor-note figures and little scalar passages in both songs, it seems like the voice is singing something vaguely tonal but in a key or collection completely different than that of the surrounding instruments. Listening back to the first piece again, I do sense this phenomenon there, too, but it's not as strong. I suppose the vocal part of the first piece has more tricky leaps, which give the melody a more angular sound.

*In memoriam Dylan Thomas:*

I think that if someone told me that a piece was written for choirs of trombones and strings playing dirge canons, I would expect the piece to sound somewhat in the vein of Renaissance music. Especially for Stravinsky, who has a strong grounding in Orthodox chant, I might expect a more chant-like sound from the Prelude and Postlude. Yet despite the music on the page looking like chant music, the high level of chromaticism makes the music sound nothing like chant or choral music to me. If the song in the middle section is supposed to be

reminiscent of Webern because of the dense patterning of serial polyphony, then I do not hear that either. The song is not sparse enough to be Webern, in my opinion. It just goes to show that a composer like Stravinsky will appropriate techniques and subsume them into his own style.

*Movements for Piano and Orchestra:*

This piece has what I would call a certain "pointillistic" quality. Each instrument comes in so clearly, often with just single notes, that it creates the sense of little dots of paint or color, akin to a painting of Seurat perhaps. As I recall, Stockhausen had a similar theory, which he worked into his pieces from this era, so I wonder if we can see a debt to Stockhausen a bit in this piece. Certainly, it is not only the pitch techniques but also the notation of this piece that varies greatly from the works of Stravinsky up until this time. Davidovsky's *Synchronisms* pieces would not be until a few years later, but the way the score in *Movements* shows different instruments lining up with the piano at different time to keep the parts synchronized reminds me of the notational techniques used by Davidovsky to keep the instruments aligned with the tape.

*Elegy for JFK:*

It's hard to exactly put my finger on why, but this song reminds initially of those by Ives. Perhaps it is due to the oddly tonal yet obviously non-tonal pitch environment. Perhaps it is due to the relative brevity of the work. Perhaps it is because the lyrics are in English and Ives is the first composer to come to mind because of the fairly large number of songs he wrote. Of course, the songs of Ives predate this work by about four decades at least, and I would guess that Ives had reached enough fame at this point in history for Stravinsky to be familiar with his work on some level.