

21M.260: STRAVINSKY TO THE PRESENT

ASSIGNMENT due at Class 5, February 18

Reading: Auner, p. 64-67, 70-76.

Anthology work: Igor Stravinsky, *Le sacre du printemps*, Part I, Introduction

Supplemental: Stravinsky: *Firebird* and *Petrushka* [videos of the ballets]

Before you begin, skim the Grove Music Online article about Stravinsky. Listen to the anthology excerpt at least twice.

This is one of the most famous openings in all of Western music. The very beginning (through m. 24) creates a strange and alienated mood. As before, it is possible to trace this mood to specific musical features. Focus on each of the following parameters in turn and find concrete features that make the music sound "not normal" (according to, say, common practice tonality).

SCALE/MODE:

RHYTHM:

TEXTURE:

METER:

TIMBRE:

MELODY/GESTURE:

Now attend to m. 46-51, in all staves. What is this chunk of polyphony "made of"? That is, how should the various layers of activity be described to account for the resulting texture?

From rehearsal **9** until the double bar at the end of m. 65 is “one gesture” made up of “many gestures.”

a) How is a buildup of texture like this executed?

b) How does it change your perception of structure and form?

According to Auner, what are the thematic reasons for the idea that the *Rite* is an expression of Russianness? What are the musical reasons?

What associations does the word “primitive” have? Are they primarily negative or positive?

Supplemental listening (option 1: *Firebird*; option 2: *Petrushka*)

Watch one of the two ballets carefully with *no distractions* except a notetaking apparatus (pencil/pen/keyboards). While you watch, take notes on what you hear and observe. Then, write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on the following questions: to what extent is it important that this work was written for dance? Given that it is often played in the concert hall instead, what are some advantages and disadvantages to this? Cite specific features of the music / choreography as appropriate.

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