

Assignment: Ives, “Down East”

For Thursday, listen to the three Ives songs posted on our website. “The Cage” is in Burkhart; “Down East” is a handout; listen to “Tom Sails Away” without score. Post **five questions and five observations** about each of the first two songs, “The Cage” and “Down East”.

For Tuesday, complete the pages below.

Ives is known for his use of preexisting material: patriotic tunes, marches, popular songs, hymns, and bits of the 19th-century classical repertoire. The term “quotation,” often used to describe Ives’ music, fails to capture the range and complexity of his various techniques of musical borrowing. Peter Burkholder, in his study of Ives’ music *All Made of Tunes*, lists fourteen different modes of borrowing, from traditional ones (variation, reharmonization) to more radical ones Burkholder calls patchwork, layering, collage, and extended paraphrase.

“Down East” is a good example of “extended paraphrase,” in which a whole piece is somehow related to the essence of a preexisting piece, whether or not that piece is ever explicitly quoted. (In spirit it has a lot in common with the parody mass technique of the Renaissance.) Listen to the recording once and **answer questions 1 and 2 before you look the piece over in detail.**

1. Where exactly did you first get a sense that a pre-existing music (some tune or other) was being quoted or suggested?
2. If you know the tune Ives is referring to, where (exactly) did you first recognize it?

Now look over the score and answer the remaining questions:

3. Where does Ives quote the tune exactly—pitch and rhythm—for four or more notes in a row? (There are at least three separate places: list them all, and be precise.)
4. How does the introduction (mm. 1-2) relate to the hymn?
5. How does the introduction suggest the original melodic span of the hymn tune’s first two measures, even though the melody has been “denatured” into a narrow span of successive half steps?

6. In “The Cage” there is contrast between the pitch organization of the voice and the piano parts, but they mix more near the end. In “Down East” there is a sharp contrast of harmonic style between the opening section and the 6/8 music. Yet there are connections here as well. Compare the pitch collections (total pitch content) of

- a) the end of m. 3, piano chord and voice;
- b) the end of m. 7, piano chord and voice;
- c) m. 23 (from the A-flat on beat 2) to m. 26, inclusive.

How are these pitch collections similar?

Do these three places have any similarity in formal function as well?

7. The extended “chord” of mm. 23-27 is one example of the “corruption” of the diatonic music of the 6/8 section by the chromatic/whole-tone music of section 1. Where else do chromaticism or whole-tones creep in?

9. The text (by Ives) is really about musical recollection, so it can give us insight into the meaning of musical quotation for Ives. The tense yet impressionistically suspended and static harmony of the opening section suggests a dreamlike state, a sort of fade-in from the nostalgic present to the actual remembered scene of childhood, which is represented by the regular meter and diatonic harmony of the second section. (Interestingly, Ives claimed never to have seen a movie.) Given this scheme of things, how do you interpret the chromatic “incursions” within the second section? What might it tell us about Ives’ idea of the relation between the past (musical or personal) and the present? Is Ives a “nostalgic,” as he is often called?

(extra credit) Ives gradually “reveals” the tune; by the time we recognize it, we have been hearing it “subconsciously” already. Show how the vocal line in mm. 8-15 is a sort of recomposition of the first four measure of the hymn. (Use musical notation, on a separate sheet. A thoughtful diagram, perhaps lining up the original tune with Ives’ melody, will require little or no verbal explanation.)