



Ballet Music: The Soul of Movement

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Tuesday, October 7-28, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET

Ballet Music: The Soul of Movement

Week 4, Oct. 28th: Ballet's Diaspora

The United States saw some of the finest ballet creations of the 20th century. Aaron Copland created a score of enormous beauty, *Appalachian Spring*, working with the great choreographer Martha Graham. Jazz found its way naturally into the masterpiece *Fancy Free* by Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins. We also look at how choreographers such as Balanchine and Frederick Ashton used classical music not originally composed for ballet, and explore Prokofiev's monumental *Romeo and Juliet*. We finish with the electric choreography by Alvin Ailey to music by Duke Ellington.

Works explored, media used:

Aaron Copland (1900-1990): Appalachian Spring, 1944

- Copland interviewed (by artist Paul Jenkins), plays the end of his ballet, *Appalachian Spring*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_LcjNe9fMQ
- San Francisco Symphony - Simple Gifts - 7/4/1996 - Shoreline Amphitheatre
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Oi1XV15h_M
- Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* Part 3, film directed and photographed by Peter Glushanok, 1959.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91y-NEdTj-g>

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990): Fancy Free, 1944

- Fancy Free, From 1986. NYC Ballet. Choreography by Jerome Robbins. Dancer Joseph Duell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ou-O9Awkzo&t=1366s>
- Bernstein conducts Fancy Free, Danzon. New York Philharmonic From the Young People's Concert: What is a Mode? Aired November 23, 1966
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHPRWEpyxfM&t=9s>

Georges Bizet (1838-1875): Symphony in C, 1855

- Ballet created by George Balanchine in 1947. Filmed in Berlin with the New York City Ballet in 1973. Sara Leland, John Clifford.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bz58u6WnO0>

Edward Elgar (1857-1934): Enigma Variations, 1899

- Enigma Variations, G.R.S Variation (George Robertson Sinclair), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, on Naxos.
- Frederick Ashton, Royal Ballet: Enigma Variations, 1968. Sinclair variation/Wayne Sleep coaching Valentino Zucchetti
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8so6BvznKs>

Piotr Tchaikovsky 1840 - 1893: Serenade for Strings, Op. 48, 1881

Balanchine, Serenade, 1935

- Boston Ballet
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ra-i_u0nlw
- Sara Mearns, NYCB
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gza2jhUWI2Q>
- Ballet Academy East, Serenade
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNEIRN2f1Qo>

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953): Romeo & Juliet, 1935

- Opéra national de Paris, choreography Rudolf Nureyev: Dance of the Knights
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92YhJ4ZVmCg>
- Royal Ballet, Margot Fonteyn, Rudolph Nureyev. Choreography Kenneth Macmillan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtBRN5BXt6o>

- Royal Ballet, complete ballet, David Blair- Mercutio, Desmond Doyle – Tybalt
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ7KzRjllnc&list=RDHQ7KzRjllnc&start_radio=1

Duke Ellington (1899-1974), The River Suite, 1970, Such Sweet Thunder, 1957

- Alvin Ailey, The River, 1970. Trailer from 2013
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDyfWg4PRFY>
- Ailey, Pas de Duke, 1976. Trailer from 2013
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvR3lyTHv9A&t=61s>

Short feature on Balanchine's Serenade with NYCB

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhY8Z5f8cKI>

Recommended website: Katherine Teck's "Appreciating Ballet's Music"

<https://www.appreciatingballetsmusic.com/>

Fine resource, wide-ranging, erudite and approachable. The author is a professional scholar, teacher and musician in the field of theatrical dance.