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Composing America: Patriotism, Mythology, and Piety in the Film Scores of John Williams

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Images

Abstract

John Williams has been associated with the sound of Classical Hollywood Cinema (1933–58) since his popular neoclassical scores of the 1970s seemed to revive the central European tradition represented by composers such as Max Steiner and Erich Wolfgang Korngold (among others). Alongside this popular European romantic style, however, Williams's scores often reference a diverse array of American musical idioms. When scoring American-centric narratives, or specific genres, Williams seems to rely on three distinct idioms, each with their own specific histories and associations both within and outside of their films. For westerns (*The Cowboys*), Coplandesque pastoralism serves to glorify landscape and maintain a myth of the West in ways reminiscent of Copland's ballets of the 1940s. For political dramas (*JFK*) or war epics (*The Patriot*) the use of dignified brass fanfares, marches, and calls summon metatextual links to ceremony and the military to endow images with an earnestness and a patriotic air. In historical dramas (*Lincoln*) a hymn-inspired vocabulary generates a sense of the reverential or noble. Taken together, these idioms form a lingua franca of American-associated sounds, demonstrating how Williams cultivates the musical legacies and traditions of his homeland, while referencing European compositional practices. Three chapters investigate the histories of each of these idioms and their manifestations across a selection of Williams-scored films. By tracing the lineage of each idiom, exemplifying their associative rigidity, and revealing how Williams adapts them, this thesis not only showcases Williams's own nationalistic mode, but additionally highlights issues arising from the pervasiveness of this style in a broader Hollywood context.

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None of this would have even been possible without Maynooth's John Hume Doctoral Award.

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When conferences made their slow return to the real world in my final year, I was lucky enough to present my first in-person doctoral papers at *John Williams, dernier des symphonistes?* in Paris, and, later, at *Music and the Moving Image* in New York. To the welcoming communities I discovered there, thank you for your support and encouragement.

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Introduction

On the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, 8 February 2022, *The New York Times* published an interview with John Williams.[1] In it Williams reflects on his long career, his collaborators, personal losses, significant milestones, and the importance of music (an 'oxygen' that, as he puts it, 'has kept [him] alive').[2] The composer reveals to interviewer Javier C. Hernández that, as he was approaching ninety, he had few pressing film projects, giving him time to compose for the concert stage and to study scores by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. Later Hernández summarises how Williams came to forge his long-standing partnership with director Steven Spielberg (b. 1946), who, in the early 1970s, was searching for a composer like those titans of Golden Age Hollywood: Bernard Herrmann (1911–75), Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957), Max Steiner (1888–1971), and Dimitri Tiomkin (1894–1979). Like much fan discourse, interviews with Williams tend to dwell on comparisons to such Hollywood giants and European masters — more often than not the so-called romantics and late romantics like Strauss, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner. These are not unfair or unwarranted comparisons given that Williams's most popular scores seem to reference the music of figures and their styles in almost kaleidoscopic fashion. Less discussed is the impact of American musical traditions that might loom over Williams, a surprising omission considering the composer was born and studied in the United States, served in the US Air Force, initially made his name as a jazz pianist, and has since written music for a baseball stadium, a president, and the Statue of Liberty.

Even in the lengthy and reflective *New York Times* interview, American music goes unmentioned by both composer and interviewer. However, accompanying photographs of Williams and his home reveal what has been left unsaid.[3] One of them is a simple image of a bookshelf, the contents of which display the composer's connections to the music of his homeland: a bust of Aaron Copland (1900–90), the 'Dean of American Composers', takes pride of place in front of volumes of his film scores; in a stack of books to its side, *The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter*; and, on a shelf above, the authoritative textbook *Orchestration* by Walter Piston (1894–1976).[4] If American influences like these seem not to surface explicitly in some of Williams's most popular scores (more on this later), their significance across his career, I will argue, is pervasive nonetheless. Scanning the composer's lifetime working in Hollywood, it

[1] Javier C. Hernández, 'John Williams, Hollywood's Maestro, Looks Beyond the Movies', *The New York Times*, 8 February 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/arts/music/john-williams-hollywood-film.html> [16 June 2023].
[2] John Williams quoted in Hernández, 'John Williams, Hollywood's Maestro'.
[3] The pictures included in the article were all taken by Chantal Anderson.
[4] Above the Cole Porter sits *Cinema Changes: Incorporations of Jazz in the Film Soundtrack*, eds. Emile Wennekes and Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019).

becomes evident that American styles and themes — what I will call Americana (defined in due course) — are more than a matter of interior décor.

Williams's connections to his American musical heritage were made most clear after his appointment as principal conductor of the Boston Pops, America's orchestra (as it is often called), in 1980. With this post, and by virtue of its ties to Tanglewood, the favoured venue of the Pops, a link to the preceding 'spiritual leaders' of the institution was solidified.[5] Besides conducting the music of numerous composers of American art music, film music, and popular music during his tenure, Williams later expressed a reverence for his forebears by commissioning a bronze bust of Copland, unveiled in 2011 at the formal gardens of Tanglewood, where Copland's ashes were scattered; similarly, he commissioned sculptures of Serge Koussevitzky (1874–1951) and Leonard Bernstein (1918–90) — 'giants' of Tanglewood's history, in Williams's view — which were, upon completion, placed not far from the Copland memorial on the Tanglewood grounds.[6] As well as preserving the memory of revered figures, might these monuments offer Williams something of a shrine to American art music? As the *New York Times* observed in an article on the sculptures, 'it is not uncommon during the summers to see [Williams] wandering the verdant grounds of Tanglewood after a morning of writing at the piano.'[7] While the composer has acknowledged Nature as a muse, could it be that inspiration at Tanglewood also comes from an awareness of its associations with Copland and Bernstein?[8] The significance of such spiritual connections seems to surface in a concert work written by Williams for the occasion of Bernstein's centennial (2018), *Highwood's Ghost*.[9] The title references Highwood Manor House, the location of the Bernstein sculpture in Tanglewood, and was inspired by Bernstein's once exclaiming that the house was haunted; Williams, in turn, described the piece as being 'a little haunted by Lenny [Bernstein].'[10]

Williams clearly reveres Copland and Bernstein, whose shadows hang over most American composers and conductors. Yet, in recent years, a similar esteem has been directed at Williams himself: Hans Zimmer (b. 1957) declares that Williams is 'the greatest composer

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[5] Andrés Valverde, *John Williams: Vida y obra* (Seville: Editorial Berenice, 2013), 147 (translation mine).
[6] James C. McKinley Jr, 'Musical Titan Honors His Heroes', *The New York Times*, 18 August 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/arts/design/john-williams-honors-copland-bernstein-and-koussevitzky.html> [16 June 2023]; Zoë Madonna, 'New Koussevitzky bust unveiled at Tanglewood', *The Boston Globe*, 25 June 2019, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/music/2019/06/25/new-koussevitzky-bust-unveiled-tanglewood/yny65PEzMF1rZbbDNfk0nO/story.html> [16 June 2023]. With thanks to Samantha Tripp for being my virtual Tanglewood tour guide.
[7] McKinley Jr, 'Musical Titan Honors His Heroes'.
[8] When Gustavo Dudamel asked Williams where he finds inspiration, the composer's immediate response was 'Nature', subsequently referencing trees, 'a butterfly, a leaf, the sky'. See 'John Williams Celebration: Performance & Interview |Sound/Stage', LA Phil, 8 July 2022, John Williams interviewed by Gustavo Dudamel, <https://youtu.be/djsTZS02QXo> [30 June 2023].
[9] Bernstein is also the dedicatee of *For New York (To Lenny! To Lenny!)* (1988), written for his seventieth birthday. Similarly, Tanglewood is the subject of *Just Down the Street… On the Left* (2015), written for the Music Center's seventy-fifth anniversary.
[10] John Williams, programme note for 'Highwood's Ghost', *The Leonard Bernstein Memorial Concert*, 19 August 2018, <https://bso.netx.net/portals/public/#document/214904/page/79>.

America has had, end of story', while Spielberg remarks that 'I hadn't heard anything of the likes since the old greats', and Yo-Yo Ma (b. 1955) regards his collaborator as 'one of the great American voices.'[11] While Williams's own likeness has not (yet) been preserved through sculpture, his numerous plaudits indicate a national admiration not always afforded film composers and not guaranteed by Academy Awards. In 1993, Williams's name was emblazoned (next to Brahms) on the Hatch Memorial Shell in Tanglewood, an honour granted to few composers beyond those first included in 1940.[12] In 2009, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama — following a succession of American composers such as Elliot Carter Jr (1908–2012), Copland, William Schuman (1910–92), Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021), and Virgil Thomson (1896–1989), among others (including Bernstein, who had refused the award).[13] And, in 2016, he was the first composer to receive a Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, which dubbed him 'a living history of the American movie soundtrack'.[14] With this acclaim, it is evident that, over the course of his career, the composer has become something of a modern national voice. It seems appropriate, then, to explore the film scores that may have helped him establish this high standing, one which, as I will show, is distinct from his general reputation as a celebrated film composer. Accordingly, this thesis asks: what does Williams's America sound like? From where does it come? How does it contribute to the construction of America in film? And what impact might it have on film viewers?

According to Col Timothy Foley, once leader of 'The President's Own' United States Marine Band, Williams's music 'is as much a part of the fabric of [an] American culture as John Philip Sousa's was 100 years ago.'[15] Despite this, the Americanness of Williams's music has been little remarked upon in scholarship. This is in part, I propose, due to the association I identified earlier: that Williams's reputation is shaped by the success and enduring cultural popularity of his scores for blockbuster hits, not by his music for westerns or historical dramas. (Similarly overshadowed, Williams's concert works receive little critical attention.) Given the almost inimitable success of the *Star Wars* (1977–2019), *Indiana Jones* (1981–2023), or *Harry Potter* (2001–2011) series, explicitly American-styled scores to *The Cowboys* (Mark Rydell, 1972), *Born on the Fourth of July* (Oliver Stone, 1989), or *Lincoln* (Spielberg, 2012), despite their quality, have tended

[11] Hans Zimmer and Steven Spielberg quoted in Hernández, 'John Williams, Hollywood's Maestro'; Yo-Yo Ma quoted in Jake Coyle, 'John Williams, 90, steps away from film, but not music', *AP News*, 23 June 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/john-williams-indiana-jones-star-wars-music-af541b3979fd6c0ea624bb200c322f42> [16 June 2023].
[12] 'The Composers on the Hatch Shell', *Esplanade Association*, <https://esplanade.org/the-composers-on-the-hatch-shell/> [30 June 2023]; 'Vote on Names to Appear on Esplanade Shell Casts Light on Musical Opinion', *The Boston Globe*, 7 March 1940, 4, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/23648650/names_on_the_hatch_shell/> [30 June 2023].
[13] While some past recipients of the award had written music for film, Williams was the first (and remains the only) composer predominantly known for their work in film to be so honoured.
[14] 'John Williams: 44th AFI Life Achievement Award Honoree', *AFI*, <https://www.afi.com/laa/john-williams/> [30 June 2023].
[15] Col Timothy W. Foley, 'Introduction by Col Timothy W. Foley', *John Williams & "The President's Own"* (Marjer Music, 2021).

to fall by the wayside in the cultural consciousness. It may be the case that only Williams's patriotic-influenced work for *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg, 1998) has bucked this trend; ironically, however, its score is critically praised largely for its subtlety, its lack of intrusion, rather than for any memorable theme or a quintessential Americanness.[16] The scores for blockbusters seem to have skewed our general conceptions of the composer, and perhaps led to an overstatement of a European influence on his compositional voice. Recurring generalisations have given us the impression of Williams as some sort of Europhile, and while such a description might not be entirely undeserved (he often notes Haydn and William Walton among his favourite composers), the Eurocentric discourse undervalues the influence of American music on film composers.[17] Of course, the celebrated composers of Golden Age Hollywood, almost all European émigrés, did build upon the legacy and traditions of late European romanticism, and Williams effectively revived such classical Hollywood traditions in his own 'neoclassical' style.[18] Yet, while the composer has extended the reach of European romanticism in film scoring and, more recently, returned the Hollywood style to its notional birthplace with performances at Berlin's Philharmonie, Vienna's Musikverein, and La Scala, Milan, he has, just as consistently, been shaping and defining an American sound in Hollywood. Moreover, the performances at these European temples of art music would not have been possible without Williams's groundwork in the United States with the Boston Pops, which helped make film music 'widely accepted as legitimate concert material', as Emilio Audissino has observed.[19]

I do not wish to diminish the influence of European music on Williams, nor call into question the scholarship that has explored this facet of the composer's career and legacy; instead, I believe that our focus on the composer's stylistic inheritance has been too narrowly focussed. A more thorough understanding of Williams's American-inspired work promises to address what has been previously unexamined, and also permits us to recontextualise his other work in the process. After all, it was thanks to the military draft that the young Williams wrote his first score. Composed while stationed in St. John's, Newfoundland, the short travelogue *You Are Welcome* (1952) employed various folk tunes and was performed by the limited forces of the Northeast Air Command Band.[20] Although being posted in Canada and incorporating local folk tunes, the

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[16] *Saving Private Ryan* was ranked ninth by *ClassicFM* in their 'John Williams: 10 best movie soundtracks' and tenth by *Entertainment Weekly*. While such rankings are by no means authorial or definitive, they do give an indication of the popularity of the score in comparison to others discussed in this thesis, none of which appeared on either list. 'John Williams: 10 best movie soundtracks', *Classic FM* <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/williams/guides/john-williams-ten-best-movie-soundtracks/saving-private-ryan-10/> [02 February 2023]; Alex Galbraith, '15 essential John Williams scores, ranked', *Entertainment Weekly*, 23 August 2022, <https://ew.com/movies/best-john-williams-scores-ranked/> [02 February 2023].

[17] Emilio Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams: Reviving Hollywood's Classical Style* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), 143.

[18] Ibid., 139–57.

[19] Emilio Audissino, *Film Music in Concert: The Pioneering Role of the Boston Pops Orchestra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 65.

[20] Maurizio Caschetto, 'A New March King: John Williams and The Concert Band', *The Legacy of John Williams*, 1 February 2019, <https://thelegacyofjohnwilliams.com/2019/02/01/a-new-march-king/comment-page-1/> [7 July 2023]; 'Star Wars composer John Williams's first score a 1952 Newfoundland film', *CBC News*, 30 September 2015, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/star-wars-

rudimentary musical aesthetics of this score can be argued to anticipate attributes of his later Americana (which also adapts folk traditions) and the dutiful circumstances of the composition itself could be said to prefigure his future patriotic commissions (perhaps similarly accepted to fulfil some national obligation). This musical training ground, his early jazz albums (1957–61), and his frequent work as a studio pianist for American film composers (Elmer Bernstein (1922–2004), Adolph Deutsch (1897–1980), Alfred Newman (1900–70), and Henry Mancini (1924–94), among others), demonstrate a rootedness in North American traditions, long before he would become associated with such composers as Korngold, Steiner, Wagner, or Strauss. And furthermore, those neoclassical Hollywood aesthetics associated with these European composers were first foregrounded in Williams's quintessentially American scores for westerns (as I will show in Chapter Two). Given the role of this heritage and schooling in the formation of Williams's style, it seems timely to focus on the Americanness of certain film scores and their potential to shape our understanding of Williams's music more generally.

Rather than consider Williams's American-styled work in isolation, I identify overlaps between the features and aesthetics that have defined both the composer's most popular scores and his more explicitly American scores (these two loose categories should not be taken to be mutually exclusive). Although I will show that Williams's American idiom is underpinned by distinct reference points, characteristics, and approaches, given the shared idiomatic vocabulary of Hollywood cinema, many components of his American vernacular feature in his celebrated blockbuster scores. To name but one example, the fanfare recurs as a coded idiom across numerous film scores, often to exalt heroic feats or to celebrate victory. In the case of *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977), a bold and rising arpeggio trumpet figure acclaims Luke Skywalker's heroism as he swings across a canyon to get himself and Princess Leia to safety. And in *The Patriot* (Roland Emmerich, 2000), ornate and flourishing arpeggio-like trumpets ring out as inspired soldiers follow their flag-waving leader into battle. Both scenes use similar idioms to connote codified associations of bravery, daring, hope, triumph, and celebration. However, distinctions of idiomatic affect hinge on narrative context and metatextual references. Those musical signifiers of a heightened and fantastical (Hollywood) heroism in *Star Wars* can be harnessed for patriotic purposes in the case of *The Patriot*, where the fanfare, now coloured by the film's Revolutionary-War-era setting, suggests patriotism and the imperative of national duty. As these broad musical reference points vary from film to film, it might be possible to speak, on

composer-john-williams-first-score-a-1952-newfoundland-film-1.3241603> [21 October 2022]. The score includes quotations of 'Yankee Doodle' (accompanying a shot of US airmen), as, variations on 'Pop Goes the Weasel', and Newfoundland tunes including 'Jack was Ev'ry Inch a Sailor', among others. Williams has said little on this beginning to his career. However, the film is available on YouTube: "You Are Welcome', composer John Williams' first score', DJBonseye (pseud.), 12 July 2014, John Williams's first film score for *You Are Welcome*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3Yd3o-_00w> [08 March 2023].

the one hand, of an application of a cultural-generic Hollywood code (the fanfare) to specifically American subjects (the Revolutionary War), and, on the other hand, of a potential universalisation of affective associations rooted in Americanness (Luke Skywalker's trumpeted feats may insinuate an American heroism). Coded idioms encourage us to believe in the film text, yet, due to the inherent denotative ambiguity of music and its operation on a level within the film of which we are not consciously aware, potential nationalist resonances or implications might run the risk of passing unnoticed by the discerning listener.

Despite these intersections, this thesis will show how Williams consciously draws upon an American musical tradition to develop a specific nationally associated idiom. I situate Williams as an avowedly patriotic composer and, in this light, evaluate the resonances of cues by addressing the political implications of the ideologically loaded scenes they accompany. Simultaneously, I consider the potential meta-narratives music might suggest, and critique instances where the patriotic, understood as an intentional expression of national devotion or admiration, might cross into the nationalistic, in the sense of indicating an unwavering and fervent belief in the national that appears to glorify one nation — Williams's United States — above all others. For example, in Williams's short patriotic cantata, *America, The Dream Goes On* (1982), incessant jubilation, a 'supersaturated major mode', and saccharinely idealistic lyrics (by Alan and Marilyn Bergman) steer the ostensibly patriotic into something that risks parodying itself, without ever actively signalling any parodic self-awareness.[21] As my case studies will reveal, Williams has not infrequently succumbed to such nationalistic pretensions, perhaps by virtue of his own wartime socialisation and the aesthetic decisions of his most common collaborator, Steven Spielberg, whose ardent critics have called him one of the 'chief cinematic purveyors of American exceptionalism and triumphalism in contemporary filmdom.'[22] In observing this musical outlook in Williams's scores, I not only critique the composer but also show that potentially propagandistic effects are an inevitable outcome of the Hollywood system, Americentric perspectives, and the resonances of specific *topoi* (recognisable musical formulae with clear significations), which operate in combination to construct and maintain a specific national image, to convince one that 'the dream goes on'.

[21] Tom Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance in Themes by John Williams', *The Journal of Film Music*, 6/1 (2015), 49–74: 52. Tom Schneller's assessment of the work is in line with my own. He writes, 'the relentless brightness, combined with the simplicity of the melodic material, creates an effect of banality that makes *America, The Dream Goes On* a fitting counterpart to the hollow optimism of the Reagan era ('It's morning again in America!')'. See Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 64. One might view such a composition as a continuation of the aesthetic from Arthur Fiedler's Boston Pops tenure, rather than as an indication of Williams's own preferences. Fiedler leant more into the 'low brow', often with '"trashy" arrangements' of popular and classical music, as Audissino has observed in 'Bringing Film Music Outside of the Screen: Conductor John Williams', paper presented at *Music and the Moving Image XVIII* (NYU Steinhardt, 28 May 2022).
[22] Frank P. Tomasulo, 'Empire of the Gun: Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* and American Chauvinism', in *The End of Cinema as We Know It: American Films in the Nineties*, ed. Jon Lewis (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001), 115–30: 115.

Before continuing, it is worth offering a preliminary overview of what I mean by Williams's American style. In its simplest terms, I observe particular American idioms in his numerous — approximately thirty — scores for films on topics in American history or historical fiction. These include war films (*1941*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Patriot*), westerns (*The Rare Breed*, *The Reivers*, *The Cowboys*), and historical dramas (*Rosewood*, *Amistad*, *Lincoln*, *The Post*) (examples provided here are inexhaustive). In scoring these films, Williams has relied on specific *topoi* that have come to be coded as American. To offer a greater degree of musical specificity, it is easier, for now, to establish this vernacular by noting the 'soundalikes' rather than outlining rigid sets of musical features. Most often, Williams's American language is simplified and compared to that of Copland, specifically the earlier composer's works from the late 1930s and early 1940s, composed in the folk-influenced 'imposed simplicity' style (a phrase Copland coined, and later regretted) characterised by pandiatonicism, lean orchestrations, and clear, stratified textures.[23] The popularity of Copland's works from this period was no doubt aided by their accessibility; many have since become canonic, including *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942) and his three ballets, *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Rodeo* (1942), and *Appalachian Spring* (1944). Another frequent reference point for commentators is the patriotic marches of Sousa (1854–1932), America's 'March King', a connection that suggests a particular national spirit more than a singularly definable style. The continued popularity of Sousa's music and its place in American culture have helped intertwine this particular sound with notions of spiritedness, freedom, victory, and optimism; Williams's marches in a similar style thus frequently connote ideas of nationality and patriotism. Given these two common reference points for Williams's American writing, I address the specific associations of the Sousa march and Copland pastorale in turn. Consequently, their codified sounds have provided a structure for this thesis and a focal point for the first two chapters.

With this notion of style, I should also qualify my use of the term Americana, adopted liberally throughout this thesis. When using the term, I do not refer to its musical application to the combined folk-bluegrass-blues genre originating from the southern United States; instead, I use it, in the sense defined by Webster's dictionary, to denote something characteristic or typical of American culture, history, or society, or to encompass the array of *topoi*, styles, and settings that constitute Williams's American-inspired scores (as in 'Williams's Americana' or 'Americana associations'). The conventionality and rigidness of what this musical Americana comes to

[23] Copland, quoted in Lawrence Starr, 'Copland's Style', *Perspectives of New Music*, 19/1-2 (Autumn, 1980–Summer, 1981), 67–89: 69. Elizabeth Crist explores the resonances of this accessible style with the Popular Front politics of the 1930s and 1940s (with which Copland was aligned) in *Music for the Common Man: Copland During the Depression and War* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005) as well as in 'Aaron Copland and the Popular Front', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 56/2 (Summer 2003), 409–65.

represent will be addressed as the thesis progresses. Additionally, I occasionally use the term Americanism to refer to a specific musical gesture (or a group of them) that suggest associations to the United States; I also adopt the term in reference to an American nationalism of the early twentieth century, with which much of Williams's music is in dialogue.[24]

My concentration on an unfixed notion of American style has led me to cast a wide net over Williams's filmography. Although specific periods or instances of his career might be defined by a predominance of Americanisms and American-themed films (1966–76 or 1995–98), I have decided to approach Williams's film-composing career rather broadly, addressing approximately twenty-five film scores from 1966 to 2017, and occasionally the composer's early work for television and his *Gebrauchsmusik* for celebratory American occasions. As a result, some scores receive more particular attention. Two (*The Cowboys* and *Lincoln*) are explored in close analytical detail, with breakdowns of themes and associations acting as the centrepiece to their respective chapters; several more are discussed via close readings of specific scenes and cues (*The Patriot*, *Midway*, *1941*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *JFK*, *Superman*, *Rosewood*, *The Post*, *Amistad*); while the remainder serve as musical examples or narrative comparisons which facilitate more widely focussed arguments. That these scores share so many characteristics indicates just how associatively and contextually consistent Williams's American writing has been across his career, not to mention how associatively and affectively rigid specific sounds and styles are in film scoring as a practice and in Hollywood as an institution.

Literature

The most significant impetus for this project was Neil Lerner's 2001 article 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces: Surveying the Pastoral Trope in Hollywood'.[25] Here, Lerner identified some of the gestures that comprise the Coplandesque style, overviewed the historical origins of American pastoralism, and, most significantly for this thesis, detailed how the *topos* — reused to such an extent that Lerner calls it a 'trope' (a term I also adopt in reference to similar overuse) — became ingrained with a sense of Americanness. I expand upon Lerner's short study, investigating Coplandesque features in more detail and exploring filmic concerns in greater depth to elucidate connections between Williams's scores and Copland's music. As well as elaborating on Lerner's work, I also expand upon the thematic focus of his article, which centres on the origins and manifestations of the pastoral *topos* across a selection of examples. Where I diverge

[24] As an appropriate and accessible, and also recognisable, shorthand, America is taken to apply to the USA, not the whole continent of North America.
[25] Neil Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces: Surveying the Pastoral Trope in Hollywood', *The Musical Quarterly*, 85/3 (Autumn, 2001), 477–515.

from Lerner is in my exploration of the ways that Williams's scores have transformed the associations of certain *topoi*. With its more general focus, Lerner's article could allude only briefly to this question by positing a few illustrative examples, such as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Amistad* (Spielberg, 1998), and *Superman* (Richard Donner, 1978). I unpack these examples more extensively here, but I also reconsider some of the perspectives that Lerner offers. For example, while Lerner views a loosening of meaning as a sign of the overuse of the Coplandesque *topos*, I have found the evolution of semantic meaning to be more complex, in certain circumstances; tropes occasionally revisit established associations and affects as a deliberate nostalgic strategy.

More recent work regarding the influence of the Coplandesque sound on Hollywood film scoring has come from Stanley Kleppinger, specifically his video essay, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare' (along with his related papers on the subject).[26] Kleppinger has broadened understanding of Copland's influence from a single 'pastoral trope' to five distinct, albeit loosely defined and associated, 'Copland sounds'.[27] These categorisations have offered me a conceptual framework. Kleppinger's video essay thoroughly explores connections between Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and Williams's *Summon the Heroes* (1996) (alongside James Horner's score for *Apollo 13* (Ron Howard, 1995), also discussed by Lerner), comparing and contrasting both the universalist and nationalist connotations of both works. He also identifies numerous recurring musical features that demonstrate how Copland's *Fanfare* has served as a model for an idiom he dubs 'triumphant exordium'.[28] I find Kleppinger's distinct classifications of 'Copland sounds' to be an effective means of positioning my chosen Williams case studies within particular stylistic heritages. However, as Kleppinger acknowledges, there are issues with these limiting categorisations; for example, the broadly defined 'sounds' could easily be applied to music that does not derive from Copland, and the very process of labelling *topoi* appears to shackle their associative potential. More significantly, I attempt to diverge from the accreditation of these associative musical idioms to a single author. For this reason, when briefly addressing Williams's *Gebrauchsmusik* written in this vein, or manifestations of Copland-related *topoi* in film, I try to expand the possible range of inspiration beyond Copland alone, highlighting the music of other American symphonists as well as other American vernaculars. Given Copland's pronounced influence over American art music, this proves to be a challenging undertaking, but it is necessary in order to demonstrate the variety and nuance of Williams's work in the patriotic vein.

[26] Stanley Kleppinger, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare', *The Society for Music Theory Videocast Journal*, 8/4 (June 2022); Stanley Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation', paper presented at *Society for Music Theory Fortieth Annual Meeting* (Arlington, VA: November 2017).
[27] Ibid.
[28] Kleppinger, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare'.

In addition to scholarship on the enduring Copland sound in Hollywood, this research is built upon the efforts of numerous scholars of Williams's music specifically.[29] Not least among these is Frank Lehman, whose 'Scoring the President: Myth and Politics in John Williams's *JFK* and *Nixon*' was among the first dedicated academic texts concerned with the American strand of Williams's film music.[30] Lehman's article has influenced my numerous case studies, not least by offering an important model for my own work on *JFK* (Oliver Stone, 1991). Lehman focusses on how Williams's score — thanks to careful thematic placement and persuasive, carefully cued *topoi* — assists director Oliver Stone (b. 1946) in authoring histories and mythologising the memory of President John F. Kennedy. In Lehman's reading, the director's left-wing politics are ingrained into the fabric of the film and the ideological rhetoric of Williams's American scores is blatant. Accordingly, I consider how a similar ideological rhetoric might manifest in Williams's scores for less overtly political directors like Spielberg. *Lincoln* and *The Post* (2017), for example, do not challenge accepted histories but serve to reinforce them, and although the mythopoetics of Williams's music may be more clandestine, I argue that similar mythologising properties are evident here too.

The centrepiece of Lehman's article is a cue-by-cue analysis of a complex montage from *Nixon* (Stone, 1995), which serves to underline the 'rhetorical punch' of Williams's tightly synchronised cues and highlight the simultaneously critical and sympathetic approach he takes to scoring President Nixon.[31] I adopt this strategy and apply it to the rhetoric of Williams's brass *topoi* and the grander meta-narratives at play in scores to films depicting (real or fictionalised) moments of US history. Taking the climactic battle sequence of *The Patriot* as an illustrative case study, I shift focus from an assessment of political allegiance to an exploration of Williams's mobilisation of idiomatic clichés. This is not to say, however, that I shy away from addressing the question of Williams as a political composer: such question are appropriate, I argue, when scrutinising films concerned with politicised and nationalised representations of the self, and also when considering the composer's ceremonial music for patriotic occasions.

With regard to other literature on Williams, although scholars have long acknowledged the extensiveness of Williams's American oeuvre, few attend to it in much detail, instead offering a cursory nod to the tradition by way of comparison to Copland or another American composer.[32] That being said, the academic study of Williams's music has emerged only recently,

[29] Alongside Lerner and Kleppinger, the work of Neil Butterworth, Aaron J. Johnson, Beth Levy, Paula Musegades, and Howard Pollack has been most instructive.
[30] Frank Lehman, 'Scoring the President: Myth and Politics in John Williams's *JFK* and *Nixon*', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 9/4 (2015), 409–44.
[31] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 433–49.
[32] See Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 103–4; Jeremy Orosz, 'John Williams: Paraphraser or Plagiarist?', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 34/4 (2015), 299–319: 306–08; Mervyn Cooke, 'A New Symphonism for a New Hollywood', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television and the*

and it is understandable that scholars sought to define the composer's key aesthetics and study his most influential work before critically engaging with the kind of questions that concern this thesis. Audissino's work has been essential in this regard, particularly his monograph *The Film Music of John Williams: Reviving Hollywood's Classical Style* (the second edition of which I refer to most often), alongside his edited collection *John Williams: Music for Films, Television and the Concert Stage*, and his case study of the Boston Pops in *Film Music in Concert*.[33] This thesis parallels Audissino's account of Williams's neoclassicism in the 1970s and 80s, in that I highlight the legacies of American composers just as Audissino did (in *The Film Music of John Williams*) with the heritage of composers of European origin in Hollywood.

Just as Audissino compared Williams's early-career practices to those of Henry Mancini, I establish Williams's Americana via similar methods. My intertextual comparison of *topoi* (what Philip Tagg would call 'interobjective comparison') establishes those components of Williams's musical grammar that effect American associations, as well as signalling the recurring affective resonances across art and film music traditions.[34] This approach predominates my studies of each *topos*, and echoes the methods of Jeremy Orosz in his article 'John Williams: Paraphraser or Plagiarist?', in which instances of Williams's 'borrowing' from specific pieces are assessed based on their 'degree of similitude', the 'duration' of their similitude, and their 'distinctiveness' from pre-existing works.[35] For example, I position one of Williams's hymns alongside canonic hymn tunes, comparing melody, rhythm, harmony, and form to account for the sense of reverence which the composer's tunes generate, and I assess a cue from *The Cowboys* alongside Copland's 'Buckaroo Holiday' from *Rodeo* to establish commonalities in voice-leading and harmony and to demonstrate how the composer pays homage to that famed pastoral style.[36] The selected pieces that bear resemblances to those of Williams might be considered 'blueprints', a stylistic model, or even a potential temp track selected by a director or music supervisor to guide Williams along a particular trajectory.

A similar comparative approach is adopted by Tom Schneller in his article 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance in Themes by John Williams', which analyses themes in less-considered Williams scores, including those that foreground Coplandesque and other

Concert Stage, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 3–26: 8; Robynn Stilwell, 'The Western', in *The Cambridge Companion to Film Music*, eds. Mervyn Cooke, Fiona Ford (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 216–30: 225.

[33] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 135–57; Emilio Audissino, 'Introduction: John Williams, Composer', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Televisions and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), ix–xxiv; Audissino, *Film Music in Concert*.

[34] Phillip Tagg, *Kojak — 50 Seconds of Television Music: Toward the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music* (PhD Thesis, Göteborg: Musikvetenskapliga Institutionen, 1979), 75.

[35] Orosz, 'John Williams: Paraphraser or Plagiarist?', 302. Orosz's own approach was influenced by the work of J. Peter Burkholder.

[36] Here I take a lead from the methods of Aaron J. Johnson, '*The Best Years of Our Lives*: Hugo Friedhofer's American Sound', *The Journal of Film Music*, 10/1 (2017), 1–24.

American features.[37] With a particular emphasis on harmonic progressions and cadences, Schneller persuasively identifies recurring traits that signify Americana across a varied range of Williams's scores both popular and obscure. His transcriptions and reductions have been an indispensable resource (given that many of Williams's orchestral scores have yet to be published) and have offered a model for my own musical examples. While Schneller's study is largely music-theoretical in its perspective, my analysis of themes is mostly concerned with unpacking their associative dimensions and understanding their capacity to reinforce a pervasive American ideology. Moreover, my analysis typically addresses melody, rhythm, and orchestration, and not harmony alone. Even so, I am indebted to Schneller's identification of systematised progressions such as Williams's 'Cowboy Half-Cadence' — first observed in Copland-styled scores by Mervyn Cooke in *A History of Film Music* — and Mixolydian-inflected American-associated harmonies, as well as his outlining of connections to the music of Copland, and more specifically to mid-century westerns such as *The Big Country* (William Wyler, 1958) and *The Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges, 1960).[38] In a similar vein, Lehman has considered these connections in 'Hollywood Cadences: Music and the Structure of Cinematic Expectation'.[39]

My exploration of the history of western scores has benefitted significantly from consultation with the work of Kathryn Kalinak and Mariana Whitmer. Kalinak's edited collection of essays, *Music in the Western: Notes from the Frontier*, and her various other writings on the western, have thoroughly documented the dominant trends in western scores, particularly those of classical Hollywood and renowned western director John Ford (1894–1973).[40] The western is perhaps America's most storied film genre and consequently has an intricate history and a nuanced relationship to national culture. As a relative newcomer to the genre, I have found Kalinak's histories and analyses essential in forming the building blocks of my own research into Williams's westerns. Helping to round off the canon of western film scores, Mariana Whitmer's *Film Score Guides* on *The Big Country* and *The Magnificent Seven* provide background context, cultural history, and detailed musical analyses of two landmark scores with which Williams was undoubtedly familiar.[41] My repeated references to Whitmer's work are testament to the importance I attach to the legacy of these scores in the vast web of Williams's film music and art

[37] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 49–74. Tom Schneller and Táhirih Motazedian have additionally cited long overlooked Williams scores through the purview of harmonic schemas in Hollywood love themes in 'Tugging at Heartstrings: Bittersweet Harmonies in the Classic Hollywood Love Theme', *The Journal of Film Music*, 10/2 (2017), 7–48.
[38] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 53–60; Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 129.
[39] Frank Lehman, 'Hollywood Cadences: Music and the Structure of Cinematic Expectation', *Journal of the Society for Music Theory*, 19/4 (December 2013). Lehman also focussed on the 'Cowboy Half-Cadence' and its specific indebtedness to Jerome Moross in a presentation that has been made available on YouTube: 'Jerome Moross's Harmonic Language and the Rise of Cowboy Chromaticism', paper presented at *Society for American Music Conference* (Lancaster, PA, 2014), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBBgIXRk8wE> [14 July 2023].
[40] Kathryn Kalinak, 'Introduction', in *Music in the Western: Notes from the Frontier*, ed. Kathryn Kalinak (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1–18.
[41] Mariana Whitmer, *Jerome Moross's The Big Country: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012); Mariana Whitmer, *Elmer Bernstein's The Magnificent Seven: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

music references. Given the idealised and mythicised status of the Wild West in the American cultural consciousness, my investigations of Williams's contributions to the cinematic genre also offer an opportunity to address wider questions of nationalism in American music.

An expanding body of scholarship enriched my understanding of American art music. Barbara Achter's encyclopaedic account of this overlooked and vast body of music proved essential in this regard. Her thesis, *Americanism and American Art Music, 1929–1945*, has accounted for and contextualised composers and compositions that would otherwise have proved elusive, and, despite the historical limits identified in her title, numerous composers of the early-twentieth and nineteenth centuries are also addressed.[42] While limited by historical records and the accessibility of some music, Achter documents various narratives that have assisted the contextualisation of Williams's national inheritance and also my identification of those practices that are more idiosyncratic.[43]

One gap in Achter's thesis is the lack of attention paid to the rich history of American hymnody. Acknowledging that her focus was on art music, it is understandable that the intricacies of this tradition could not be detailed; yet given how significant hymns are to some of the most acclaimed American compositions of the period in question (for example, *Appalachian Spring*), this represents an obvious omission. Due to this dearth of attention (which extends beyond Achter), I consulted other histories that foreground hymnody, particularly those of Richard Crawford and Gilbert Chase (among others).[44] In their respective monographs, Crawford and Chase outline the progression of American hymnody from the practices of early-eighteenth-century colonists to the coalescing of disparate traditions before the twentieth century, effectively filling in the historical lacunae of Achter's thesis. Crawford and Chase, however, pay little attention to the actual styles and gestures of American hymnody, and here I have relied on my own examinations of nineteenth-century American hymnbooks. Surveying repertories of tunes from various denominations, periods, and locations helped identify possible roots for Williams's hymn style, still largely ill-defined and under-researched. Moreover, my study of the writings and orations of hymn reformist Lowell Mason (1792–1872) suggested a possible aesthetics of Williams's hymnal vernacular, and a means of characterising it.[45] Supplementing these sources with Copland's writing on hymnody and (given the origins of the tune 'Simple

[42] Barbara Achter, *Americanism and American Art Music, 1929–1945* (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1978).
[43] The possibility of other links between Williams's music and American musical history is further illuminated by the records of his conducting career with the Boston Pops (recorded on the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Performance Archive) and the few interviews in which these mostly unmentioned sources of inspiration have been discussed.
[44] Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001); Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955); George Pullen Jackson, 'America's Folk-Songs', *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 12/1 (January 1936), 34–42.
[45] Carol A Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985).

Gifts' featured in *Appalachian Spring*) literature on the Shakers, I argue that the hymn style represents for Williams a form of spiritual patriotism.[46]

As much as the work of topic theorists sowed the seeds of this research — particularly the work of Raymond Monelle, Leonard Ratner, and Robert Hatten — the perspective from which I came to these texts led to an inevitable sense of disappointment given their (unsurprising) heavy emphasis on European traditions. It hence became imperative to establish the specifically American roots and resonances of the *topoi* addressed here. What Matthew Riley and Anthony D. Smith might call the 'semiotics of national music' emerges, then, through my analysis of the interplay between works composed in similar traditions, and, at the same time, the distinctions between the local and the 'perceived universal tradition'.[47] Topic theorists have lent much credence to this 'perceived universal tradition' — the European one — yet, as Riley and Smith argue, specific meanings emerge through 'internal developments and dialogues within traditions'.[48] Accordingly, although topic theory undergirds this research, the work of these prominent topic theorists has not detailed how American *topoi* have manifested and matured. Instead, it is scholars like Lerner, Kalinak, Schneller, and Whitmer who have offered for me the requisite American and cinematic foundations of *topoi*, establishing what Monelle calls the 'imaginative burden' of the America signifiers with which Williams plays.[49]

The central framework for my topic-oriented approach is derived from Matthew Bribitzer-Stull's *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*. When observing how one musical work can influence an entire style and form the basis of a network of musical signification, Bribitzer-Stull writes, 'what starts out as quotation relaxes into allusion and eventually becomes topical'.[50] Here, Bribitzer-Stull addresses how musical meaning evolves from 'piece-specific' associations to 'cultural-generic' associations, a process which results in an intertextual layering of potential meanings (what he calls, following linguist Charles Morris, 'ascription').[51] While this idea is central to my understanding of Williams's Americana and returns at key points of the thesis, I do not rehearse this developmental process on a *topos*-by-*topos* basis. For instance, the histories of the martial *topoi* in the art music tradition have already been explored sufficiently by Monelle and others; for these *topoi* I need only contextualise the specifically American martial sound to unpack the associations prompted by Williams. Similarly, the roots of the American pastoral vernacular have been effectively traced by Lerner; on this

[46] Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); Anna White and Leila Sarah Taylor, *Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message* (Columbus, OH: Press of Fred J. Heer, 1905).
[47] Matthew Riley and Anthony D. Smith, *Nation and Classical Music from Handel to Copland* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2016), 15.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Raymond Monelle, *Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 24.
[50] Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 124.
[51] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 11, 121–24.

subject, my efforts are to broaden understanding of *topos* development to avoid accrediting popularisation to a single composer and to amend misconceptions caused by terminology. As Timothy Scheurer has observed, 'because the subject of the classical Hollywood film score has been expertly handled by others… it is not necessary for me to go into great depth about the history, conventions, theories and practices of scoring these films.'[52] Consequently, my approach shifts with the respective focus of each chapter. Still, a detailed historical exploration in line with the Bribitzer-Stull quotation is pertinent when I address the American hymnal sound, the origins of which are less often mentioned and the roots of which cannot be contextualised via reference to art music alone.

Regarding Bribitzer-Stull's three-stage developmental process, quotation and allusion are most swiftly recognised, while topicalisation proves difficult to track comprehensively — due to the stylistic diversification and associative hybridity that arise when a *topos* becomes part of a Hollywood vocabulary.[53] At this later stage of development, the original object of quotation has also become increasingly distanced. Now, the recognisable and associatively stable style has become so readily deployed, so often reused in specific narrative contexts, that it can be immediately understood by 'perceivers' (to borrow Kassabian's term highlighting audiences passivity) *au fait* with the conventions of the popular Hollywood film score.[54] This process has been recognized by Kofi Agawu, who observes that 'sometimes these devices acquire their conventional roles through simple overuse, so what was once, in its earlier history, an original expressive feature, becomes later on something more like a signifier'.[55] Consequently, the post-quotation process of acculturation and assimilation might obscure the influential original work to the point that audiences no longer need to be aware of the source to understand *topos* meaning. The signifier *automatically* points to the signified. This process of evolution and increasing familiarity outlined by Bribitzer-Stull acts as the backbone to this study of Williams's musical Americana. It also facilitates an exploration of the composer's relationship to his national predecessors and an investigation of how disparate styles and traditions have fused. As the thesis progresses however, I find cause to complicate Bribitzer-Stull's statement and explore the aftermath of multiple processes of topicalisation and the interdependent associations that can cohere around interrelated *topoi*.

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[52] Timothy Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 18.
[53] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 124
[54] Kassabian observes that 'perceivers call upon [the language of classical Hollywood] during every film event', a 'sociohistorically specific musical language' they have acquired 'subconsciously'. Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film* (London: Routledge, 2001), 49.
[55] Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 16–17.

After outlining establishing how Americanised *topoi* are used by Williams, it has proven worthwhile to address how meanings and styles have been transformed and/or developed. Here again, the work of Bribitzer-Stull has provided support. Bribitzer-Stull has theorised that musical meaning is not simply denotative but involves a blending of multiple associations within and beyond the narrative; this ascriptive nature of a theme comes to bear on my own interpretations given my focus on the layering of associations in art music and film music history, and in Williams's scores themselves.[56] As I will indicate, Williams's Americana frequently operates on both textual and meta-textual levels, conveying meaning in different, though not unrelated, fashions. Furthermore, such polysemous resonances can point to the 'cultural-generic associations' of *topoi*; this semantic flexibility, which has resulted in a softening of denotations over time, allows music to signify with stability.[57] Elaborating on those examples that Bribitzer-Stull provides, I unravel the intertextuality of Williams's pastorals and hymns by paying heed to how idiomatic signifieds and signifiers both intersect and diverge.

The revived styles of Williams's scores are not alone in their recall of the past; the films featured in this thesis often address the past in myriad ways. To understand how scores might generate a patriotically tinged reminiscence, scholarly literature on these films has been most instructive. The rich and extensive work on popular films like *Saving Private Ryan* or *JFK* permits me to identify possible musicological parallels. Many of the case studies of this thesis function as 'memory texts' (to use Barbara Biesecker's term): films that can reframe our perspectives of the past through a patriotic and sentimental lens.[58] Numerous film scholars — Albert Auster, Robert Burgoyne, Catherine Kodat, Lester Friedman, Robert Rosenstone — have referred to the other case studies of the thesis in a similar fashion, noting how certain narratives might encourage a quasi-religious relationship to the past, might conceive of narratives through a politicised nostalgia, or might suggest a meta reading of history. In the case of films not addressed in any literature, my interpretations adapt and apply the strategies outlined in reference to more popular films; scholarship on such films offers a skeleton upon which readings of the scores can be built, allowing me to locate music within the wider mythopoetic strategies of a film, and to uncover how musically triggered affective responses relate to the ideologies of specific films and Hollywood more generally.

Lastly, when addressing the reception of Williams's Americanist scores and the films to which they belong, it was essential to consult film and soundtrack journalism as a means of

[56] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 123–25.
[57] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 123–24.
[58] Barbara A. Biesecker, 'Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 88/4 (November 2002), 394–409: 394–95.

verifying and supporting my own conclusions. Where referring to public opinion, at least two separate reviews are referenced to ascertain a degree of consensus (flawed as I know that is). Additionally, quotes taken from interviews, liner notes, or roundtables with the composer, directors, cinematographers, or screenwriters supplement these materials. Furthermore, the numerous album liner notes written by Mike Matessino, the forums and resources on *JWFan.com*, and the interviews and articles from *The Legacy of John Williams* have disseminated many historical details on Williams and his scores; this has amounted to a veritable Williams archive which has proved an invaluable reference point throughout this thesis.

Structure and Methods

Each of my three chapters focusses on a distinctive American-associated *topos* and, more loosely, a film genre. Moving from the clichéd to the idiosyncratic, the discussed *topoi* reveal how Williams relies on well-worn associative codes and how he carefully adopts a less-troped vernacular to suggest more subtle affects. My *topos*/genre structure suggests an alignment between the aural and the visual, and that the associations of certain *topoi* might lend themselves more manifestly to the concerns of some genres over others. While, of course, film composers often deploy an eclectic array of *topoi* in any film score, I take the *topoi* addressed in each chapter — their pertinent associations, their history in art music, and the links between their suggested affects and the subject position of the audience — as emblematic of the genre under discussion. For example, the pastoral and the western are paired as both frequently glorify landscape, building upon conventions established before the rise of Hollywood as a film-making institution. When addressed in combination, these musical and filmic structures permit me to contextualise Williams's music in established practices and unpack associativity in greater detail. Indeed, this *topos*/genre kinship has already been observed by Timothy Scheurer, who implicates musical gestures and codes in genre films' mythopoesis. Through repetition and careful placement, genre-associated musical conventions function 'as indexical signs signifying mythic values and as mnemonic marks that ensure continuity and comprehension of the narratives — i.e., devices that contribute to the auditor's competency.'[59] In my identification of those stable sites which help construct the 'mythic foundations and formations' in these genre films — recurring imagery and consistent placement of *topoi*, for example — I expand upon Scheurer's claim that music plays a 'ritualistic aspect' in genre films, by observing how specific *topoi* not only relate to genre rituals

[59] Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film*, 24.

but socio-cultural rituals too.[60] Occasionally, I also ground such ideas and any theories related to affect in Annabel Cohen's 'Congruence-Association Model'. For example, any congruency between generic and societal rituals represents an overlap of 'internal' (filmic) and 'external' (societal) meanings and also indicates a 'shared musical-visual structure', which serve to generate a consistent 'affective quality'.[61] Such notions of congruence and affect most obviously come to bear in discussions of the bugle call and pastoral *topoi*.

A project devoted to a filmography as extensive as Williams's inevitably necessitated certain limitations. Consequently, while films scores such as those to *Star Wars*, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982), or *Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993) do include examples of the *topoi* I assess, they lack the explicit American idiom that is my focus. However, the question of how these scores might connect with Williams's Americana in a more implicit way is a subject worth exploring in its own right. An additional caveat is that little space could be afforded a study of Americanisms in the composer's concert music. While Williams's many concerti and chamber works do not form part of my study, this thesis does consider his occasional music — specifically those works written for events in American culture where correlations to his film scores are most evident.

Furthermore, for similar purposes of space and focus, Williams's jazz writing could not be addressed.[62] Although jazz lies within an American vernacular, for Williams it seems to have associations removed from the *topoi* investigated in this thesis. As Audissino has observed, jazz in Williams's film scores often oscillates between connotations of 'America' and 'Crime/Immorality'.[63] Yet, interestingly, the 'America' category rarely manifests when the United States is the subject of the narrative, and is instead adopted to establish new settings, and often only briefly or in a diegetic capacity — in *The Post* short piano cues accompany luncheons in fancy restaurants and in *1941* (Spielberg, 1979) a Benny Goodman pastiche plays at a jitterbug contest. Even when sounding extensively in American-set films like *The Long Goodbye* (Robert Altman, 1973) and *Catch Me If You Can* (Spielberg, 2002), Williams does not use jazz to serve a noticeably patriotic function, but rather as a code for film noir or a period setting, or to denote a sense of mischief or deviance. Associations in these films relate more closely to Audissino's

[60] Ibid., 14, 18..
[61] See Annabel Cohen, 'Congruence-Association Model of Music and Multimedia: Origin and Evolution' in *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, ed. Siu-Lan Tan, Annabel J. Cohen, Scott D. Lipscomb, and Roger A. Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17–47: 25.
[62] For more on William's jazz, see Ryan Patrick Jones, "Catch as Catch Can': Jazz, John Williams, & Popular Music Allusion', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television, and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 3–26; jazz is assessed in relation to Williams's concert works in Emile Wennekes, 'No Sharks, No Stars, Just Idiomatic Scoring and Sounding Engagement: John Williams as a 'Classical' Composer', in ibid., 71–94; additionally Williams's jazz has been recently investigated by James Heazlewood-Dale in 'John Williams' Symphonic Jazz: Cowboys, Conmen, and Cantinas', paper presented at *Music and the Moving Image XIX* (NYU Steinhardt, 26 May 2023).
[63] Audissino, 'The Multiform Identity of Jazz in Hollywood: An Assessment through the John Williams Case Study', in *Cinema Changes: Incorporations of Jazz in the Film Soundtrack*, eds. Emilio Audissino and Emile Wennekes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 85–97: 86.

second category of 'Crime/Immorality'. For example, in the western *The Reivers* (Mark Rydell, 1969) Dixieland-style kazoo, brass, and percussion herald the arrival at a Memphis bordello; in Williams's concert overture, this trip to Memphis is introduced by the narrator's description of 'the bright and exciting pleasures of sin and wrongdoing.'[64] Of course, such associations would appear to be inapplicable to the virtuous and God-fearing America that is the focus of other *topoi* when Williams is writing in his patriotic mode.

Concerned with the noble America of veterans and martyrs, Chapter One is subdivided into three distinct brass *topoi*, with each subsection investigating the origins, associations, and effects of Williams's (occasionally clichéd) deployment of the *topoi* in different contexts. In the first subsection I overview the fanfare with reference to his *Gebrauchsmusik* to establish his position as a voice of America — an image of the composer I develop throughout the thesis — and to situate his America as inherited from both Sousa and Copland. The study of the second *topos*, the march, develops these links to Sousa and explores associations between the march and the idea of military victory, focussing on three short case studies of war films: *The Patriot*, *Midway* (Jack Smight, 1976), and *1941*. The intent here is to connect Williams's deployment of the march *topos* to ideological conceptions of America and to national musical practices. Similar connections are explored in the concluding case studies centred on the third *topos*: solo brass calls. Focussing on key scenes in *Saving Private Ryan*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *JFK*, I position solo horn and trumpet calls as elegies for the fallen, and as redolent of the bugle call *topos* (exemplified in 'The Last Post'). Building upon the work of Todd Decker, I consider the meta-narratives of sacrifice in military service and the American culture of memorialisation, both of which are prompted by this *topos* and evocative imagery.[65] In assessing the music of these war(-related) films and political thrillers, I illustrate how Williams's Americana upholds commonly held beliefs in the nation and can maintain national rituals and traditions. These three brass *topoi* are shown to reinforce an essentialist view of America as a nation conceived in victory and one which honours sacrifice above all else.

Contextualising Williams's compositional practices, Chapter Two opens with an examination of Copland's pastoral trope before assessing its manifestations in Williams's early western scores. With a chronological overview of the pastoral in American art and film music, I construct a network of historical precedents from which Williams variously draws, and problematise the (often casual) use of the term Coplandesque. Through comparative case studies of melodic characteristics and an assessment of Williams's filmic intertexts, I show how

[64] John Williams, Boston Pops Orchestra, 'The Reivers', *Music for Stage and Screen* (Sony Classical, 1994).
[65] Todd Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen: Combat Movie Music and Sound After Vietnam* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017).

Williams's pastoral writing in *The Cowboys*, though heavily indebted to Copland, goes beyond the 'Dean' alone. Simultaneously, I overview the significance of the mythicised West in the national mindset to formulate an understanding of how Williams has developed the Copland style and its once-rigid associations. In a close reading of a pivotal scene from *Superman*, I argue that a specific cue, 'Death of Jonathan Kent', reveals the significance of the vocabulary of the western to the superhero's American identity. As well as sustaining an image of America (as with the brass *topoi* of Chapter One), these pastorals are shown to serve a function increasingly bound up with idealised conceptions of Americanness. With their ties to the American Dream and Manifest Destiny (thanks to Copland and westerns), pastorals help extend a belief in an American ideology and the revered land that defined it, while also permitting Williams to traverse a national musical territory cultivated by many of his predecessors.

Chapter Three moves beyond the most familiar clichés and tropes and focusses on Williams's hymnody. Using the score to *Lincoln* as a principal case study, I locate the *topos* among Williams's most mythopoetically significant and among his most idiosyncratic. Due to the dearth of attention paid this *topos* across film musicology more generally, I devote considerable attention to possible historical models for Williams's hymn-like writing. In so doing, I also recall the lectures of Copland and cite Williams's own interviews to explore the significance of this vernacular to a national identity. From this vantage, I demonstrate how this *religioso* register can impact film reception and perception, critically positioning Williams's music as a sociologically propagandistic device of the American film industry (with brief reference to other scores that adopt hymnal *topoi*, including *Rosewood*, *The Post*, and *Saving Private Ryan*). The subtly politicising properties of Williams's American *topoi*, together with his more general aesthetics of emotional persuasion, result in, as I conclude, a potentially troubling perpetuation of American ideology and of a constructed national self-image. Unlike brass and pastoral *topoi*, hymns, I argue, are not fundamental to constructing or maintaining a specific perspective of America; but, moreover, they seem to encourage a universalised reverence for an American past. Not burdened by established filmic associations or a troped status, the hymnal idiom reveals the composer's most personal connections to the traditions of American music and his most personal mode of musical patriotism.

Running through all three chapters is a concern for the question of how Americana functions as a form of ideology. Given this focus, I position film music as a device suggestive of an ideologically coded filmic and cultural gaze, one that is indicative of how the 'prevailing attitudes, patterns of behaviour and ideology of late capitalism are encoded in the musical

mainstream', as Philip Tagg has observed.[66] Williams's themes are not considered as having an intended ideological coding but instead, through specific gestures and narrative associations, they are seen as emblematic of the implicit biases of specific films, directors, and Hollywood. Along with costumes, editing, lighting, *mise en scène*, sound design (each addressed when appropriate), music is discussed as a tool in the director's creative arsenal, one which disguises ideology most effectively. Consequently, my various readings of the films and scores explore what David Bordwell would call 'symptomatic meanings': those that 'divulge [the] "involuntary"' by exploring the unconscious political, contextual, or cultural influences on the composer or director.[67] In rarer cases where message-making appears deliberate, I explore the 'implicit meanings' which occasionally clash with the explicit and which are anomalous to the film text.[68]

I take my bearings, as well, from James Buhler's contentions that specific sounds are rarely chosen for what they might represent but rather for what they reproduce, or the implicit part of the filmic apparatus which they echo.[69] It is this standpoint that underlines my conception of specific *topoi* as codified devices that can reveal the 'political unconscious' — to borrow Fredric Jameson's term — of the film or, indeed, of wider society.[70] Asserting that the musical gestures of Williams's scores draw out any one ideological idea would be undoubtedly contentious; however, it is not unfair to argue that musical codes, bound up with affective images and narrative situations, might serve to reinforce and disseminate the ideological implications of these *topoi*. While music on its own might not hold any intrinsic or universal meaning, in film codified communicative *topoi* have acquired a capacity to 'domesticate difference', as Arjun Appadurai has argued.[71] Throughout the history of Hollywood, audiences have been taught the definitions of specific *topoi* through recurring visual and sonic patterns, an essentialising process of continued 'identification and reinforcement'; this has resulted in what Anahid Kassabian has called 'assimilating identifications'.[72] These are musical codes which conform to homogenised image or identity types that map on to a dominant ideology, as in love themes that code characters as objects of amorous affection, or whole tone or pentatonic scales and a woman's wailing voice deployed to mark locations or settings as 'exotic'.[73] Such 'assimilating

[66] Philip Tagg, 'Analysing Popular Music: theory, method, practice', *Popular Music*, 2 (1982 (revised 2015)), 37–65: 63.
[67] David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 9.
[68] Ibid.
[69] James Buhler, 'Ontological, Formal, and Critical Theories of Film Music and Sound', in *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, ed. David Neumeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 188–225: 190–96.
[70] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).
[71] Arjun Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1999), 220–30: 227.
[72] Tagg, *Kojak — 50 Seconds of Television Music*, 59; Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.
[73] See Williams's love themes in the *Star Wars* or *Indiana Jones* series as examples of the former, and 'Munich, 1972' from *Munich* (Spielberg, 2005) or *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Rob Marshall, 2005) for the latter. The gendered issues of love themes, and some of Williams's specifically, are comprehensively explored in Rebecca Fülöp's *Heroes, Dames, and Damsels in Distress: Constructing Gender Types in Classical Hollywood Film Music* (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2012).

identifications' have been examined in film musicology with particular reference to classical Hollywood practice and marginalised identities, but have less often been applied to depictions and reinforcement of dominant identities like the American self.[74] Musical analysis alone cannot assist in examining this (often self-occluding) American ideology; it is instead my evaluation of idiomatic operations within the context of film structure and semiotics that enables me to articulate the wider ideological paradigms with which Williams's music is involved.[75] As Buhler has contended, such an understanding of the role of music within larger structures is essential to 'deciphering the systematic and systemic displacements by which hegemonic power reproduces itself' — in this case, how America reproduces itself through Williams's music.[76]

In conjunction with this analysis of music within film form, I consider the social, cultural, and national histories of these various *topoi*. Such an appreciation of idiomatic precedents and of Hollywood practice might help to reveal the colonialist ideologies nested in these systems of musical signification.[77] After all, it is not only historic musical practices and popular works that have shaped and codified *topoi*; over the past century, films themselves have been significant sites of composition and have permitted the 'contextualisation and ideological construction of music', as Guido Heldt has observed, echoing Tagg.[78] For example, if the 'musical conventions' of the western genre were constructed and ingrained by the 1910s, as Kalinak notes, how might their markers of differentiation — for cowboys and native Americans, for an us and them — reverberate in society today?[79] This is an especially provocative line of thought when considering how musical identifiers of an assumed American self — reflected in the cowboy, the soldier, the president, the superhero, the common man — have progressed in film scoring as a practice and have been developed through the work of composers like Williams. Recognition of repeated codes, recurring contexts, and associated visual stimuli, offers to expose ideological beliefs inscribed within the gaze of the camera, and by extension the film score. This study follows this line of reasoning as a means of unpacking Williams's (conscious or unconscious) references to musical, filmic, and lived pasts. With this fetishisation of America and its ideals, the auto-exoticising nature of Williams's scores is drawn out and their conservative resonances are evaluated.

These notions of pastness and ideology in film music have already been discussed in Caryl Flinn's seminal *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia, and Hollywood Film Music*, in which she

[74] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 116.
[75] Buhler, 'Ontological, Formal, and Critical Theories of Film Music and Sound', 214.
[76] Ibid., 215.
[77] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 174–88.
[78] Guido Heldt, 'Film-Music Theory', in *Cambridge Companion to Film Music*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Nottingham: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 97–113: 98
[79] Kalinak, 'Introduction', 2.

examines the role of music in 'triggering […] widescale yearning for yesterday.'[80] Flinn noted these regressive utopic desires, seemingly inherent in film, as stemming from modes of 'cultural production' and our own 'interpretative situations'.[81] While her subjects of study were primarily film noir and the maternal melodrama, I find similar qualities of utopian longing in the separate genres viewed in each chapter of this thesis. Just as Williams's popular scores often rely upon the 'utopian value' of Hollywood's classical film scoring models, his patriotic scores bank upon the comparable value of revered national composers and their associated sounds. In line with Flinn, I regard these Williams scores as falsely utopic, wistful for a country that never was. The past that Williams signifies through his American *topoi* might consequently be viewed as a site of fantasy — a '"no place"' — assembled by various musical and filmic representations of America, which naturalise power dynamics, hierarchies, and ideological presuppositions.[82]

The constructed nature of this America is established through comparative analysis, by observing how Williams's various musical renderings of America resemble, or differ from, those of his forebears and collaborators. While Williams's music often mirrors the nation depicted within the film and screenplay, tensions come into play when recognising discrepancies between the America of the film and that of the score; this friction between score and narrative illuminates a fuller understanding of Williams's position as an American composer — something, as I shall argue, that has occasionally conflicted with his reputation as a Hollywood composer. The conflicts arising from these comparative analyses are further developed by my narratological readings of Williams's music. Rather than considering themes and cues in isolation, I find it necessary to bring the narrative and its national resonances into my interpretations of the score; this allows me to assess compositional intention (as much as reason permits), and draw out contextual resonances, mythopoetic ploys, and meta-narrative associations on a case-by-case basis.

A final qualification, and one that will not come as a surprise to any film musicologist, is the frequent lack of availability of orchestral scores. Printed orchestral suites and piano folios of certain Williams scores are available (mostly through publisher Hal Leonard) and these have been treasured references and sources for musical examples. However, the majority of such publications are concerned with the composer's most popular scores. Unless otherwise stated, the examples included are my own transcriptions. Moreover, while some of Williams's earlier

[80] Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 152.
[81] Ibid., 153–55.
[82] Buhler, *Theories of the Soundtrack* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 202–04. The word 'nostalgia' is etymologically derived from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algia*, the state of being in a condition that is mournful or painful. Its original and popular meaning referred to the sense of homesickness felt by soldiers fighting abroad. See Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 10, 93, and Svetlana Boym, *Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 19.

works are now finding new listenerships in first-time releases or overdue remasters, some of the smaller-scale projects or forgotten films addressed here have yet to be officially published. In the cases of musical examples from unpublished scores (*The Rare Breed*) or of cues unreleased as part of official soundtracks (*The Patriot* and *Lincoln*), I made transcriptions directly from the film. As a battle between transcriber and the dense multi-layered soundtrack (score, dialogue, sound effects) of the film, this task stretched my own transcribing abilities to their limits: while endeavouring to offer an accurate representation of certain cues, I am aware that certain errors imposed by the limitations may remain.

Chapter One: In Sousa Country

> I think the Sousa march and the swingy march — the kind of marches the Bill Finnegan and Glenn Miller band played — go to some place in the American soul and are part of what defines us as a nation. — John Williams.[1]

> If, as some argue, American cinema has conquered the world, then Williams can lay claim to having written the victory march. — Tom Shone.[2]

Some of the most renowned John Williams themes are ones that foreground brass: 'The Imperial March' and 'Main Title' of *Star Wars*, the fanfare and march of *Superman*, 'Journey to the Island' from *Jurassic Park*, and 'Raiders March' from the *Indiana Jones* series. Brass-fronted *topoi* like marches, fanfares, and trumpet or horn calls in such films frequently connote larger-than-life characters (both heroes and villains), adventure, and majesty. Across much of Williams's filmography, however, these *topoi* have played a crucial role in channelling an American-specific rhetoric. This chapter focusses on these varying brass *topoi* and their related affects and concepts. I analyse a selection of scores and scenes associated in narrative and affective terms with the notion of victory and sacrifice, highlighting the discursive expressivity of each distinct *topos* and showing how they imply what Ronald Rodman calls 'sociographic and demographic meanings'.[3] In line with Rodman's investigations of musical codes and his discussion of the viewer-listener's 'social knowledge' of styles and signifiers, I also pinpoint how the signifying capacity of brass codes might be understood to function and also how the political underpinnings of these *topoi* relate to, and reflect, cultural rituals in American society.[4] In revealing the ideological building blocks (or 'ideologemes' for Fredric Jameson) and the value-laden connotations of these *topoi*, I demonstrate how Williams's music serves to reinforce a specific American self-image.[5]

In several films, the composer's music elucidates an implicit American (self-)perspective. Consequently, while my focus is mostly on the effects and resonances of brass *topoi*, I also position the music — itself influenced by narrative context and directorial perspective — as an ideological tool of filmmakers, film genre, and American culture. Most of the films analysed in this chapter could be classified within the war genre, a category that brings with it a specific cultural heritage (both within and beyond the narrative) and corresponding musical codes. Familiar *topoi* operate within the genre with such regularity that they are frequently troped. While music's semantic flexibility means that *topoi* are generally open to interpretation, the visual and

[1] Williams quoted in Michael J. Colburn, 'John Williams Returns to Bands where He Began 50 Years Ago', *Instrumentalist* (June 2004), 11–16: 16.
[2] Tom Shone, 'How to Score in the Movies', *Sunday Times*, 21 June 1998, quoted in Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 4.
[3] Ronald Rodman, *Tuning In: American Television Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 72–3.

narrative conventions of film genre have served to restrict the range of their potential meanings and stabilise signification; film genre has, in short, shaped musical *topoi* into corresponding and reactive codes.[6] A *topos* like the march — particularly the American march, the style of which is so associated with Sousa — might consequently be noted for what Rodman calls 'assimilated unmarkedness', a lack of innovative or marked renderings, making the style seem clichéd.[7]

With these stylistic and generic limitations comes an associative rigidity, and thus just as marches are locked into a specific style so too are our interpretations shaped by a conventionalised mode of perception. This consistent functionality and lack of differentiation — caused by a combination of similar reference points, by Williams's cycle of self-imitation, and by inter-genre citation — lend such *topoi* a clichéd quality, and can also link them more strongly to extra-textual, real-world references that heighten emotive intensity.[8] The fanfare, march, and call are not only troped components of film music's vocabulary with their own reliable affects or 'expressive genres' (to borrow Robert Hatten's term) — bravery, heroism, nobility — but each have their own resonances in long-standing musical traditions and forms: a rich history that implies connections to grandness, militarism, and nationalism.[9] Indeed, Raymond Monelle has noted that the associations of the solo trumpet or horn call *topos* have 'passed down into the subconscious' and had proliferated in the symphony; hence art music composers of the nineteenth century could 'suggest the idea of heroism, as it were, without listeners having to think about the intermediate level [of signification] of the hunt or the battle.'[10]

Now, in the Hollywood film score, these codified associations return, but in renewed form. The visual narrative — more dominant/immediate than the soundtrack and potentially stronger than any 'intermediate level' of interpretation in art music alone — has redrawn associations and affects, (re)aligning them to film genre.[11] For listeners, these associations might not even have been learned via art music (as Monelle proposed) but instead have now been assimilated through film, where they are re-emphasised with repeat viewings, paratextual engagements with soundtracks, and genre intertexts. With the pervasiveness of Hollywood film, its socio-cultural references, and meta-textual citations, we might no longer think of the hunt or battle at all when hearing a fanfare, march, or bugle call and instead are normatively drawn

[6] Ronald Rodman, '"Coperettas", "Detecterns", and Space Operas: Music and Genre Hybridization in American Television', *Music in Television: Channels of Listening*, ed. James Deaville (New York: Routledge, 2011), 35–56: 53; Tagg, *Kojak — 50 Seconds of Television Music*, 34; Buhler, *Theories of the Soundtrack*, 100.
[7] Rodman, *Tuning In*, 237–38.
[8] Tagg, *Kojak — 50 Seconds of Television Music*, 34.
[9] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 290.
[10] Raymond Monelle, 'Horn and Trumpet as Topical Signifier', *Historic Brass Society Journal* 13 (January 2001), 102–17: 105.
[11] Ibid., 105.

toward a cinematic visual of a presidential icon or a dutiful sacrifice (as my case studies will show).

Recognising the patriotic underpinnings of these *topoi*, their filmic associations, and Williams's nationalistic inheritance, I foreground the legacies of popular American composers like Sousa and Copland in my analyses. That Williams perpetuates the militaristic and nationalistic traditions their music embodies demands that we assess the politics of Williams's tradition-oriented music. Inheriting readily-associative codes and patriotic idioms in American-centred Hollywood narratives, Williams encourages an 'assimilating identification' of America — a characterisation which, as Kassabian observes, guides filmgoers toward a 'rigid, tightly controlled' perspective that aligns 'comfortably with aspects of dominant ideology.'[12] These implicit ideologies and the nationalistic origins of certain *topoi* will reveal much about Williams's music and Hollywood's scoring practices more generally; despite the varying treatments of familiar idioms and the disparate aesthetics and viewpoints of each film, the processes of assimilation remains surprisingly consistent across the selected scores.

These practices are not made explicit to implicate Williams as some mass propagandist serving a covert agenda. Rather, I will show that idiomatic conventions are so ideologically stable, and associations so uniformly consistent, that Williams cannot but adopt the patriotic rhetoric that Hollywood may have naturalised. The American film industry was, after all, once regulated by the Production Code Authority (which enforced specific depictions of the US flag) and had a historic partnership with the Office of War Information during WWII (which, as I later detail, affected films and composers discussed here). Although these regulations and collaborations have long since ended, it does not seem too speculative to suggest that those traditionalist attitudes once pervasive in Hollywood might continue to linger, under the surface, in certain contexts — especially given that the policed films might have made deep impressions upon Williams and his collaborators in their youth, helping them assimilate specific biased ideals, perspectives, and filmic conventions.[13]

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[12] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.

[13] While the extent of governmental meddling in Hollywood is far beyond the scope of this research, it is worth bearing in mind throughout. The Production Code Authority did not explicitly regulate scores but if screenwriting and filming were regulated, the supporting score was by extension curtailed to suit conservative moral standards. Williams (or his collaborates), who came of age with this media and who gained success in Hollywood as this era was coming to an end, may well have internalised, and consequently perpetuated, many of these traditional values and "pure" American ideals of Hollywood. Tricia Jenkins's recent research has shed light on how the US military can influence narrative depictions in the superhero genre. Tricia Jenkins, *Superheroes, Movies, and the State: How the US Government Shapes Cinematic Universes* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2021). Of course, it might also be useful to recall that although composers were not actively restricted by the Hays Code itself they were subject to studio system regulation. As an example, in his autobiography, *Double Life*, Miklós Rózsa recounts how 'one of the most celebrated studio heads issued a direction to the music department that no minor chords were to be used (minor chords, of course, meant dissonances for him). Another told the composer that the heroine's music was to be in the major key, the hero's in the minor, and that when the two were together, the music should be both major and minor! Bi-tonality *à la Hollywood*.' Miklós Rózsa, *Double Life: The Autobiography of Miklós Rózsa* (Kent: Baton Press, 1984), 98. This story would also inspire the title of André Previn's auto-biography, *No Minor Chords: My Days in Hollywood*.

The rhetorical functions of the brass *topoi* I survey are divided into victory and sacrifice, understood as opposing sides of the same patriotic coin and concerned with the differing outcomes of military duty (most often) or any act of national service.[14] Marches, fanfares, and calls are only one manifestation of the broader themes of victory and sacrifice that run through these films; these concerns also recur within the war genre and in various American historical genres. Consequently, the overlap between idiomatic affects and narrative themes permits a focussed exploration of these *topoi* and their manifestation in several similarly staged and contextually related case studies.

The scores to *The Patriot*, *Midway*, and *1941* each adopt a prominent march theme that reveals much about the relationship between the *topos* and victory. These commonly overlooked films within Williams's oeuvre might be seen as less innovative and influential within his long career; nevertheless, they are essential in establishing how Williams constructs, and conceives of, America at its best (as the music seems to suggest).[15] While the scores adopt different styles of marches for different purposes, I show that the semantic associations in each film have much in common. On the other side, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *JFK* will serve as examples of an aesthetic with which the composer is less famously associated: one of sober reflection.[16] While these scores have the occasional grandiose musical moment, my focus is instead on the intimate scenes, that is, the quiet (often dialogue-free) sequences in which music is foregrounded but simultaneously understated. With the clearest of connections to functional musical practices, and beyond serving as an emotional anchor, Williams uses the brass funereal *topos* to take us outside the film into a consideration of wider nationalistic themes. In this regard, I demonstrate how the elegiac call serves a meta-ritualistic function.

By way of introduction to these conceptual comparisons and analyses of *topoi*, I will consider Williams's public role as a *fanfarer* of America. Between his dual careers as a Hollywood composer and concert conductor, Williams repeatedly accepted commissions for fanfares for a variety of ceremonial activities — commemorations, dedications, and anniversaries. With these compositions, Williams takes up the role of a dutiful, patriotic composer, following Sousa, Copland, and many other American composers.[17] Accordingly, before turning to the march and

[14] The twinned themes of victory and sacrifice could also be considered pervasive in nationalist rhetoric and propaganda more broadly.
[15] The two earlier films are sandwiched between his name-making 1970s' blockbusters, while the later third straddles franchises (both new and revived) of the early 2000s.
[16] Of course, there are obvious exceptions to this, such as his Oscar-winning *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993). However, for the most part, the popular *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981), and *Harry Potter* are associated with a grand emotional sweep and an epic scale, not musical subtlety.
[17] Numerous other composers served similar patriotic roles, including, but not limited to, Howard Hanson (1896–1981), Roy Harris (1898–1979), William Grant Still (1898–1975), Morton Gould (1913–96), Piston, Schuman, and Thomson. Additionally, if critics were to begrudge the identification of someone predominantly known as a film composer as one of America's most celebrated composers, they would also need to double-check the credentials of composers afforded a similar status before him. Sousa wrote almost exclusively for the masses; Gershwin straddled jazz, Tin Pan Alley, and the classical domains, and wrote for Broadway; Copland wrote a selection of film scores and conceived of his

trumpet and horn calls that depict America for the big screen, I will demonstrate how Williams has saluted America via a different idiom, and on a different stage.

1.1: Fanfares for America

> I don't think there's any question if [WWII] was part of my musical formation and my formation as a musician, probably as a person also. But I have to also say […] that World War Two was an enormous influence on, certainly, me as a child, and I think our generation […] And, of course I remember the music; and, of course, I remember the country's spirit at the time; and how, in my young mind, the effort really defined who we were at that point, completely. Twenty-four hours a day it was our mission [… to] get through this difficulty. And so I'm certainly not a military composer in any kind of sense but since you [the interviewer] mention 'Hymn to the Fallen'. The impact of [*Saving Private Ryan*] on me was not simply the impact of the film but it was the impact of my childhood, and of what I remember of the adult suffering, and of the loss of these kids, and the horrors that war created. I was old enough to appreciate what was happening to a pretty great extent.[18]

When asked whether his military service influenced the style of *Saving Private Ryan*, Williams distances himself from the label 'military composer' (although the title was not brought up by the interviewer). However, he highlights the impact of his wartime upbringing, stressing how his awareness as a child of what was at stake and how his memory of the war prepared him for his work on the film. Taking into account such biographical aspects and his position as a pianist, arranger, and composer when serving in the Northeast Air Command Band, the composer admitted that such formative experiences shaped his relationship to military music and to his homeland:

> The accumulation of all of this, and *my experience in Air Force bands*, is something that is a part of me, that for better or worse, that is part of what defines how I think and how I feel about our music, and about our country, and about where I've been.[19]

Indeed, the ties to band culture are evident from the source of these quotations: an interview with Col Larry Lang, conductor of 'The President's Own' US Marine Band. Williams led concerts of his music with the band in 2003 and 2008 at the John F. Kennedy Center. These would lead to a commissioned piece for the band's 215th anniversary (a virtuosic fanfare entitled *For "The President's Own"* (2013)) and the album *John Williams and "The President's Own"* (2021). Williams noted the collaboration as one 'of the highest honors of my working life in music'.[20]

most popular ballets in a simple style; Bernstein's best-known composition was Broadway's *West Side Story*, whose success was augmented by two Hollywood adaptations (the second by Williams's regular collaborator, Spielberg).

[18] Williams in 'Interview with John Williams', The United States Air Force Band, 7 June 2016, an interview between John Williams and Col Larry Lang, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFXCfXkJSmA> [13 July 2021]. See Appendix B for the full quotation and context.

[19] Williams in 'Interview with John Williams', The United States Air Force Band.

[20] Williams, programme notes for *John Williams & "The President's Own"*, i.

The privilege extended further in 2023, when, following his fifth concert with the band, Williams was made an Honorary Marine.[21]

His early experiences in the Air Force and this continued relationship with the military music tradition shed light on the nationalistic foundations of Williams's career.[22] His stints with military bands also invite comparison with John Philip Sousa, 'The March King', who helped bring 'The President's Own' to 'an unprecedented level of excellence' during his directorship (1880–92).[23] Any comparison with Sousa also invokes the American march tradition, a form defined by, and representing, as Ben Arnold puts it, 'the glorification of the martial, patriotic, and expansionistic spirit of the turn of the century'.[24] A titan of the American music tradition, Sousa was identified as a 'distinctly American composer' through his position with the Marine Band, "'the pride of the Navy Department'" — a posting that made him America's veritable "'Musician-in-Chief'", as an 1892 article in the *Daily Herald* noted.[25] In picking up Sousa's (metaphorical) baton when leading 'The President's Own' at the John Philip Sousa Band Hall in Washington D.C., Williams was not only grappling with tradition but highlighting parallels that had begun some years earlier.[26]

Beyond his guest-conducting duties, Williams's tenure at the Boston Pops, and his subsequent laureateship, granted opportunities to exemplify his command of the band canon. Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, the end-of-concert signature of the Pops, has been conducted by Williams countless times. Moreover, fragments of the tune appear in the concert overture *Pops on the March* (1981), a citation in tribute to Williams's predecessor, Arthur Fiedler (1894–1979), to whom the work was dedicated.[27] Not only an authority on the Sousa repertoire, Williams has been positioned as a successor to the bandmaster, their marches programmed consecutively in concerts and on the albums *Pops on the March* (1980) and *I Love A Parade* (1991). The broad appeal of the two composers to the 'middlebrow demographic' — the demographic of both the Pops' audience and the masses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries — is indicative of their almost unprecedented acclaim and status in the American canon.[28]

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[21] 'Maestro John Williams: Honorary Marine', United States Marine Band, 18 July 2023, Williams being conferred as an Honorary Marine following his concert with 'The President's Own', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfEsHB3iuZw> [26 July 2023].
[22] Jazz was undoubtedly a major influence too; however, as mentioned, it is beyond the remit of this study.
[23] 'About the Marine Band', *Marines* (The Official Website of the United States Marine Corps), <https://www.marineband.marines.mil/About/Ensembles/> [20 February 2023].
[24] Ben Arnold, 'War and the Military in Music', in *Oxford Companion to American Military History*, ed. John Whiteclay Chambers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 458.
[25] *Daily Herald* cited by Patrick Warfield, 'The March as Musical Drama and the Spectacle of John Philip Sousa', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 64/2 (Summer 2011), 289–318: 296.
[26] A hyperbolic review exemplifies just how rooted Sousa's music is in American tradition. His music was described as 'stirring enough to rouse the American Eagle from his crag and set him to shriek exultantly while he hurls his arrows at the aurora borealis.' See Warfield, 'The March as Musical Drama and the Spectacle of John Philip Sousa', 290.
[27] Audissino, *Film Music in Concert*, 20. Williams also cites the tune in *Not With My Wife, You Don't* (Norman Panama, 1966).
[28] Audissino, *Film Music in Concert*, 19–20.

Williams was not the first American composer since Sousa to capture the attention of such a wide audience; Copland was similarly celebrated in the 1930s and 40s. While Sousa's popularity was fuelled at least partially by his right-leaning appeals to an audience of 'middle-class Americans, conservative in their political orientation', Copland's populist turn was facilitated by his socialist politics.[29] Like Sousa, Copland believed in music for all, declaring that 'it is the composer who must embody new communal ideals in a new communal music.'[30] Copland expressed this sense of community not only textually in his opera *The Second Hurricane* (1937, designed for school performance), but through the avowedly less complex style of his ballets (a musical affirmation of a 'democratic ideal'), his fleeting career in Hollywood, and the inclusive dedication of his *Fanfare for the Common Man*.[31] When invoking America through his music, then, Williams is inevitably compared with the 'March King' and with the 'Dean of American Composers', Copland.

Of all American works of the twentieth century, Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* has arguably cast the longest shadow across Williams's career. Jeremy Orosz has noted that the *Fanfare* is 'both sonically and programmatically akin' to cues from *Always*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *Lincoln*, while Schneller has reviewed its harmonic influences on *Liberty Fanfare* (1986) and *Olympic Fanfare and Theme* (1984).[32] The markers of Copland's *Fanfare* extend across Williams's career, from the popular 'Main Title' of *Star Wars* to the inconspicuous finale of *The Post* (in the cue 'The Court's Decision'). The *Fanfare* has been disseminated to such an extent that it has become a more generic signifier in media music, connoting, in Copland-biographer Howard Pollack's words, 'sport, space travel, and other heroic topics.'[33] It has also served various political agendas through citations at numerous political events.[34] Given this proliferation, Stanley Kleppinger has identified the *topos* not just as Coplandesque but as a distinctive 'Copland sound', categorising it as 'triumphant exordium'.[35]

The central features of the *topos* include a slow tempo, an unaccompanied brass solo line, percussion interjections, a diatonic pitch collection stressing triadic harmony, and melodies that

[29] Neil Harris, 'John Philip Sousa and the Culture of Reassurance', *Library of Congress*, <https://loc.gov/item/ihas.200152753> [20 February 2023]. Sousa's published fiction exemplified some of his political leanings. They were described as 'quite consonant with orthodox Republicanism' by Harris, in ibid.
[30] Copland quoted in Crist, *Music for the Common* Man, 148.
[31] Crist, *Music for the Common Man*, 148. The leftist undercurrent of *The Second Hurricane* served as a point of condemnation for the opera's sharpest of critics. Ethan Mordden damned the 'witless' work's reflection of 'the condescending faux naïf of the leftist Popular Front of the 1930s'. See quotation in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 310.
[32] Orosz, 'Paraphraser or Plagiarist?', 306.
[33] Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 361. This sport connection also surfaces in Timothy Scheurer's *Music and Mythmaking in Film*, wherein Randy Newman's score to *The Natural* is compared to Copland's *Fanfare*. See Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film*, 211.
[34] Crist has noted the appropriation of Copland's *Fanfare* for a 2000 Republican Convention recruitment video, where it accompanied 'images of massive ships and reinforced the call to patriotic duty'. See Elizabeth Crist, 'Aaron Copland and the Popular Front', *Journal of the American Musicology Society*, 56/2 (2003), 409–65: 411–2, 440.
[35] Kleppinger, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare'.

are sustained, angular, and disjunct.[36] Given its extensive applicability, the *topos* has garnered a diverse complex of associations; however, above all of these, the *Fanfare* (and pieces in a similarly evocative style) has become what Kleppinger calls a veritable 'musical token for Americanness'.[37] This connotation seems at odds with the humanist core of the work. Having originally considered more war- or American-specific titles such as *Fanfare for* 'the Four Freedoms'/'the day of Victory'/ 'Future Heroes'/'the Post-War World'/'the Spirit of Democracy', Copland chose the 'common man'.[38] On the naming, Copland recalled that 'it was the common man, after all, who was doing all the dirty work in the war and in the army. He deserved a fanfare.'[39] Although his intent was not just to herald America, the work, not soon after its premiere, came to signify the country's 'euphoric spirit' and reflect 'the rhetoric of triumph [that] seem[ed] to herald the dawn of the American century', as Elizabeth Crist said of its quotation in Copland's Third Symphony (1946).[40]

Given the work's status and connotations (and those of the 'sound'), it is hardly surprising that Williams's music recalls Copland's *Fanfare* most directly in his occasional music for American-hosted or America-celebrating events. Kleppinger cites Williams's *Summon the Heroes* (composed for the 1996 Summer Olympics) to ask whether the appropriated 'triumphant exordium' acclaims the international (given the humanist nature of the competition and the global spirit of collaboration) or the national (due to the 'leading *American*' composer being hired for the music, and to the American host city, Atalanta).[41] He concludes that context 'smudges the distinction between transnational humanism and American nationalism', leaving room for varied interpretations, as was the case with Copland's *Fanfare.*[42] One might similarly characterise *Olympic Fanfare and Theme* (for the Los Angeles Olympics), *The Olympic Spirit* (for NBC's coverage of the 1988 games in Seoul), *Winter Games Fanfare* (1989's World Alpine Ski Championship held in Colorado), and *Call of the Champions* (for the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics) as musically blending American patriotism with the spirit of the international games, due to their fusing of the fanfare *topos*, with bugle calls, marches, hymns, and, in the case of *Call of the Champions*, a triumphal chorus.

Despite the semiotic haziness of the *topos* in Olympic settings, it is clear from Williams's other citations that the idiom strongly evokes heroic-*cum*-patriotic values. Although Williams is

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid. His contemporaries stuck to war-related titles: William Grant Still's *A Fanfare for American Heroes* and Morton Gould's *Fanfare for Freedom*, to name but two of the eighteen commissions.
[39] Copland quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 360.
[40] Copland and Perlis quoted in Crist, 'Aaron Copland and the Popular Front', 453.
[41] Kleppinger, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare'. Emphasis in video.
[42] Ibid.

not as (openly) politically aligned as Copland, it is clear from the film composer's occasional music for the American public that he might hold similar left-leaning values about communal music.[43] However, the 'Copland sounds' also have been partly appropriated in right-leaning politics (see the 'Morning in America' advertisements of Ronald Reagan's 1984 presidential campaign), which may have the effect of tinging certain *topoi* with conservative nationalistic attitudes. While it can safely be assumed that Williams does not imply such rhetoric, in certain contexts, as will soon be revealed, these resonances are almost unavoidable.[44] Williams has frequently adapted the 'triumphant exordium' *topos* for his commissioned fanfares dedicated to American people and institutions: *For "The President's Own"*, *Fanfare for Fenway* (2012), *Celebrate Discovery* (1990), *Fanfare for Ten-Year-Olds* (1988), *Fanfare for Michael Dukakis* (1988), *Celebration Fanfare* (1988), *Liberty Fanfare*, *Fanfare for a Festive Occasion* (1980), and *Jubilee 350 Fanfare* (1980).[45] His music for American sport — like *Wide Receiver* (for NBC Sunday Night Football, 2006) and *Of Grit and Glory* (for ESPN College Football Championship, 2023) — also relies on the idiom to varying degrees.[46] In these manifestations, the heroism of 'triumphant exordium' might be substituted for athleticism, strength, or excellence. Above all, though, *American Journey* (1999), commissioned by the Clintons in celebration of the millennium, most clearly relates the *topos* to American history and a sense of exceptionalism. (Additionally, the theme of the final movement, 'Flight and Technology', is borrowed from the finale of *Far and Away* (Ron Howard, 1992), intertextually and thematically tying a sequence depicting Manifest Destiny to the work; just as Joseph and Shannon (Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman) conquered the land, so too might America conquer the twenty-first century.) With each of these occasional works, Williams inherits not only the 'Copland sound', but also the American spirit and collectivism (and politics) that Copland's music (like Sousa's) came to embody.[47]

The coalescence of Williams's roles as a conductor, composer, and *fanfarer* of America are nowhere more obvious than in his performance of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' for the anthem's

[43] Williams's affiliation to the Democrats can be seen in his work for the party in *A Timeless Call* (written for the 2008 Democratic National Convention) and his *Fanfare for Michael Dukakis* (written around the time of the eponymous Democrat's 1988 presidential campaign). The communal and heroic aspects of the *topos* also surface in his recent music for *Galaxy's Edge*, the *Star Wars* area of Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California. The appropriation of Williams music for theme parks has been explored by Gregory Camp, 'Inside the Score: John Williams and the Theme Park Experience', paper presented at *John Williams, dernier des symphonistes?* (University of Évry, December 2022).

[44] Lerner notes that 'since the bicentennial [Copland's pastoral *topos*] has begun to be associated with more conservative arguments'; the same might be said for the *Fanfare*-inspired *topos*. See Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 481. For a more detailed breakdown of the political resonances of Copland-styled music see Paul Christiansen, *Orchestrating Public Opinion: How Music Persuades in Television Political Ads for US Presidential Campaigns, 1952-2016* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

[45] To the best of my knowledge, commercial recordings of *Ten-Year-Olds*, *Dukakis*, and *Celebration Fanfare* have never been released; however, piano reductions are available in *John Williams: Fanfares and Themes* (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Publications, 1989).

[46] Even Williams's brass themes not overtly related to sport or Americana have appeared at American sporting events: for example the simple 'Krypton' call of *Superman* appeared at a National Championship game. See 'UGA Krypton Fanfare at the National Championship', Jay Squillace, 12 January 2022, a football game featuring a band performance of music from *Superman* (0:10–0:35), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUyR5E4IKIw> [08 March 2023].

[47] Kleppinger, 'Appropriating Copland's Fanfare'.

200th anniversary (2014).[48] Williams was tasked with arranging the tune for a performance at 'A Capitol Fourth' in Washington D.C.[49] Enlisting the help of the US Army Herald Trumpets, the Joined Armed Forces Chorus, the Choral Society of Washington, and the National Symphony Orchestra, Williams intermingles anthem, fanfare, march, and melodrama: an arrangement redolent of the political cantatas of nineteenth-century Europe, or Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* (1942) (as well as his own *American Journey*). He himself acts as a speaker, and, underscored by hymnal strings, actively invokes a sense of community when affirming that 'through the power of music, this proud old tune continues to unite us all.'[50] Then, taking to the podium, he strikes up the fanfare of ascending and open brass lines with prominent timpani interjections before the anthem begins. With this performance, Williams follows Sousa as a 'celebrity entertainer', and marks himself as a patriotic performer (beyond his typical role of conductor and composer); at the same time, he draws from the Copland *topos* to magnify the sense of nationalistic significance and ground the non-anthemic introduction in an identifiably American vernacular.[51]

It is clear from this performance, his occasional music, and the reuse of *topoi* inherited from Sousa and Copland, that the fanfare and march are key musical ingredients in depictions and evocations of America. By bridging Sousa's music *of* America and Copland's music *about* America, Williams constructs an American imaginary: indebted both to the nation's ordinary music practices and its idealised representations in art. For Williams, these traditions are nostalgic, and facilitate 'a kind of regression that leads back to an earlier time': an America of baseball and hotdogs, as he particularises when discussing the Sousa march.[52] In referencing baseball and hotdogs, Williams draws upon familiar icons as rhetorical agents, suggesting commonly understood traditions as emblems of an ideology; his music functions in a similar manner, 'replacing and simplifying' memory with something familiar and politicised.[53] Whether or not these patriotic musical forms were actually involved with such stereotypical traditions is irrelevant. Rather, they indicate that these nostalgically viewed musics inform the fabric of America, as a construct. Williams is not recreating the sounds of Copland or Sousa; instead, he draws upon those composers' legacies and the reputed ideals inherent in those sounds to invoke

[48] 'John Williams – National Anthem', Stevep73 (pseud.), 5 July 2014, John Williams performs his arrangement of the national anthem, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-JAbbhuO-s> [8 March 2023]. With thanks to Martin Knust for reminding me of this performance.
[49] This was not the first time Williams arranged the tune. He had arranged it for the Boston Pops brass section in 2007 for a performance at the opening game of the World Series at Fenway Park, an arrangement subsequently recorded by 'The President's Own'. Earlier still, in 2004, Williams arranged the anthem and conducted it in the Pasadena Stadium when serving as Grand Mashal for Pasadena's annual Rose Parade; it was performed by the USC Trojan Marching Band and the University of Michigan Marching Band, with all the additional pomp and grandeur expected of a performance in a stadium principally known for college football.
[50] Williams, 'John Williams – National Anthem'.
[51] Patrick Warfield, *Making the March King: John Philip Sousa's Washington Years, 1854–1893* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 226.
[52] Williams quoted in Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 169–70.
[53] Biesecker, 'Remembering World War II', 397.

a specific image of America in — and from — the collective conscious: an America that is both real and fantastical.

1.2: 'Modern-day March King'

Given how ingrained the Sousa march is in US culture, it is no surprise to discover that in film the idiom has become a conventional code for establishing America or the American; it is a *topos* with its own incumbent associations of pastness, and of the patriotism and optimism that marked Sousa's career. A *topos* such as the march can generate communal feelings in which a nation recognises itself through actions done for the collective, a collective that sees itself 'through ensembles dedicated to the ritual performance of miliary music', as Philip Bohlman contended (with regard to European traditions).[54] Given these resonances, Williams's selective channelling of the style is rather telling. When not functioning solely as a trope for heroism, Williams's adaptations of the idiom frequently connote a sense of triumph or community, often as an adjunct to orthodox depictions of US culture and society.

In this regard, the march acts as a heavy-handed patriotic code to overcompensate musically for simplistic characterisations (often in films that one would be tempted to call generic). By way of example: in his appraisal of the historical epic blockbuster, film historian Mark Glancy described the score to *The Patriot* as 'rousing'.[55] This simple description is a significant one, in that it indicates that the music is not simple accompaniment (its acknowledgement outside of film musicology is something of a rarity), but perhaps that it might even inspire; by complementing an American grand narrative of hope, optimism, triumph, daring, and resolve, it might have the potential to arouse in the audience a patriotic fervour. The idiomatic breadth of the score — from patriotic marches and fanfares, to intimate folkish love themes, period-appropriate fifing tunes, and complex modern action scoring — might be seen to make up for an emotional hollowness, a 'corny and melodramatic' nature (according to *Variety*).[56] With the film's epic scale and broad 'cartoon[ish]' treatment of conventional ideals of heroism and nationhood, the *topos* is not only apropos but, more significantly, adds a weightiness to the generic quality; it is befitting of the blockbuster's idealistic imagining of the victorious birth of America.[57] This clichéd march *topos* tracks with a particular victorious self-image and a spirit of

[54] Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2004), 146.
[55] Mark Glancy, 'The war of independence in feature films: *The Patriot* (2000) and the 'special relationship' between Hollywood and Britain', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25/4 (2005), 523–45: 523.
[56] Todd McCarthy, 'The Patriot', *Variety*, 16 June 2000, <https://variety.com/2000/film/reviews/the-patriot-2-1200462809/> [16 February 2023].
[57] Roger Ebert, 'The Patriot', *RogerEbert.com*, 28 June 2000, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-patriot-2000> [9 March 2023].

triumphalism (the perceived inevitable end point of American exceptionalism) that pervades such films.

Williams's interpretations of this triumphant and American-coded march style — a 'simple and direct' sound to be 'grasped at once' by 'the people', as Sousa described his own music — act as the sonic counterpart to an American grand narrative.[58] The nostalgic sound, by virtue of its origins and entrenched societal links, subscribes to and derives from an idealised image of history, one that reinforces established (national) traditions and ideologies. Given its firm associations, the Sousa-associated tradition has found a place in numerous films that are nostalgic in their perspective or that position themselves in a specific past. In such films, Williams leans toward either the bombast or sincerity of the march form to match film tone and the mode of patriotism on display.[59] *The Patriot* is perhaps the most recent example in Williams's career of a film foregrounding the sincerity of the *topos* to generate earnest patriotic sentiments. However, while the associations of this march were conventional, its style was not.

Ritualistic Rhetoric

The march theme of Roland Emmerich's *The Patriot* (2000) draws not from the post-Civil-War Sousa sound but, as befits the film's setting, from aspects of the musical traditions of the Revolutionary War. Williams even deployed an entire section of piccolos, as well as some fifes, in an attempt to add a period flavour to the score.[60] As a conventional Hollywood epic blockbuster — a 'potboiler' (according to Schneller) — the film uses marches in the most expected of ways: consistently marking every victory in battle, and tying patriotism, heroism, and righteousness together.[61] The blockbuster epic mingles the generic heroic monomyth story, familiar patriotic imagery, and musical tropes to fabricate a conventional tale of American heroism at the birth of the United States.[62] The film's hero, Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson), is a character with a dark past who is prone to savage violence, yet the march with which he is associated characterises his actions selectively, marking patriotically fuelled heroics and not his desire for revenge against Tavington (Jason Isaacs), the hyperbolically villainous British colonel who murdered two of Martin's sons. Although this is a tale of historical fiction and the lead character is a composite of various legends, the music and narrative treat him as it would any noble icon of America's past.

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[58] Sousa quoted in Paul E. Bierley, *John Philip Sousa, American Phenomenon* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973), 119.

[59] Williams often strikes a balance between the earnest and the cartoonish in certain contexts, like in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (and the *Indiana Jones* series as a whole). The stylistically 'direct and strictly functional' 'Raiders March' projects an earnestness in noble renditions (see 'To Morocco' from *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*) and more often an unashamed bombast befitting of its B-movie status/homage (see 'Ride to the Nazi Hideout' from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 159.

[60] As revealed by flautist Geraldine Rotella in Maurizio Caschetto, 'L.A. Studio Legends #18: Geri Rotella', *The Legacy of John Williams Podcast*, 7 June 2023, <https://thelegacyofjohnwilliams.com/2023/06/07/geri-rotella-podcast/> [10 June 2023].

[61] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 59.

[62] Alex Von Tunzelmann, 'The Patriot: more flag-waving rot with Mel Gibson', *The Guardian*, 23 July 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jul/22/the-patriot-mel-gibson-reel-history> [20 June 2023].

As a result, the cartoonish villainy and the fabricated hero could be accepted as history by the unwitting audience, with the earnest central march theme not helping to distinguish historically accepted truth from nationalistic myths designed for the popcorn-peddling multiplex, and, instead, grounding the heightened narrative with a restrained and noble theme. Given its overdetermined and overplayed nature, concurrent narrative themes of heroism with musical Americana have perhaps never been so barefaced in a Williams-scored film, nor so intertwined in one of his themes, in this case the titular march, simply called 'The Patriot' in its Hal Leonard publication and on the original soundtrack.

The theme is deceptively simple in construction and devoid of the jazz-based rhythmic ticks and textural or harmonic complexities that mark many of Williams's other marches. In fact, its most obvious debts are to Williams's 'Dry Your Tears, Afrika' from *Amistad* and 'Civil Rights and the Women's Movement' of *American Journey* (each released within a four-year span).[63] All share a markedly similar melody (Figure 1).

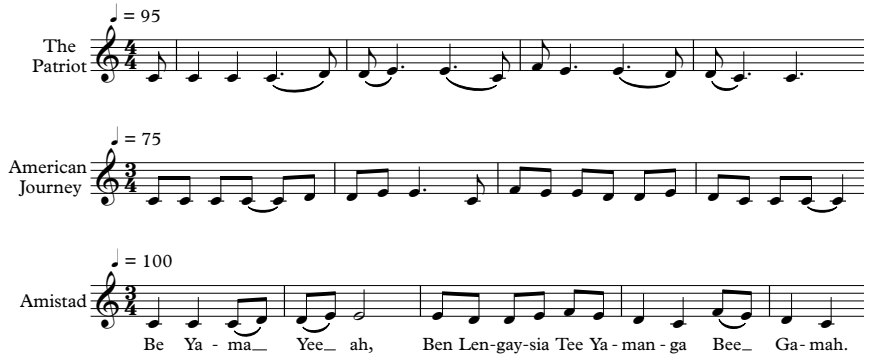


Figure 1: *The Patriot*, 'The Patriot' (above); *American Journey*, 'Civil Rights and the Women's Movement' (middle); *Amistad*, 'Dry Your Tears, Afrika' (below). All transposed to C major for ease of comparison.

John O'Flynn has characterised 'Dry Your Tears' as a faint evocation of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', by virtue of their shared stepwise diatonic movement and the choral arrangement; given their similarities I would extend the comparison further to *American Journey* and *The Patriot* (although these are never arranged for chorus).[64] Like Beethoven's setting of Schiller's 'An die Freude', each of Williams's themes acclaims an idea of unity and freedom (particularly in *Amistad*), but beyond that *The Patriot*, as I will show, extends those connotations to fraternity and victory. Yet, if Beethoven advocated for a universal brotherhood, the march from *The Patriot* evidently favours an American brotherhood.

[63] Emile Wennekes has similarly noticed the link between *Amistad* and *American Journey* in, 'No Sharks, No Stars, Just Idiomatic Scoring and Sounding Engagement', 79–81.
[64] John O'Flynn, 'America Sounding its Others in *Amistad* (1997)', paper presented as *Music and the Moving Image XII* (NYU Steinhardt, 1 June 2019).

These associations of masculinity, victory, freedom, and unity arise from a conventional use of the theme within the narrative. This predictability may have been caused by the hurried composition process resulting from Williams's late-in-the-day hiring (after David Arnold's score was dropped, ending his up-to-then fruitful collaboration with the director).[65] Many reviews derided Williams's music as lacklustre, with critics leaning toward the positive but concluding that the score was unremarkable. Straight to the point, *Empire* noted it as full of 'bombast and sugar'; *Soundtracks.net* summarised it as 'standard Williams fare. That is to say, it's quite good — but not brilliant.'[66] The most critical of all was *FilmTracks.com*, which concluded that the score was 'extremely derivative of [Williams's] other works, and, thus, utterly predictable'; that the 'execution of its nobility and heroic aspirations are pure Williams in style'; that the 'respectful Americana' sounds contained the 'familiar progressions'; and that the instrumentation was in Williams's standard 'Americana-ready ensemble'.[67] This charge of musical overfamiliarity affords an opportunity to establish what the American march *topos* in its essence conveys, before assessing its more complex manifestations in other films.[68]

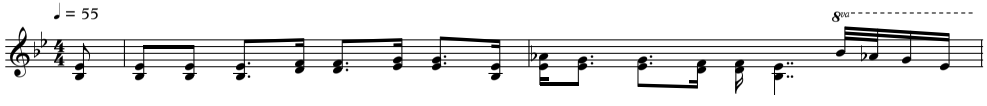
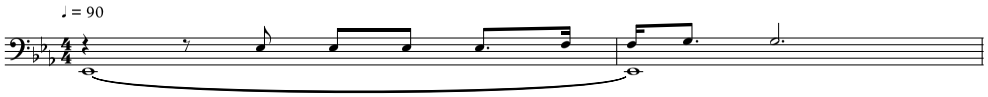
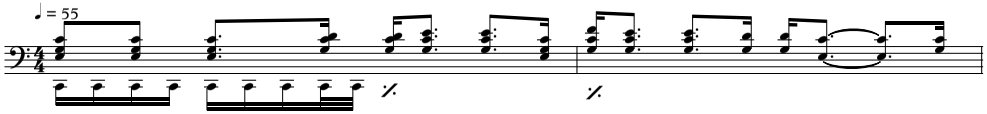
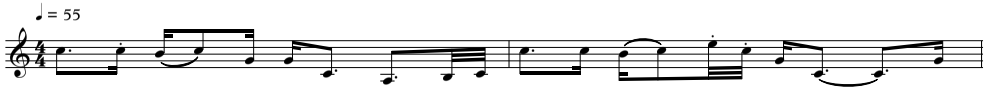
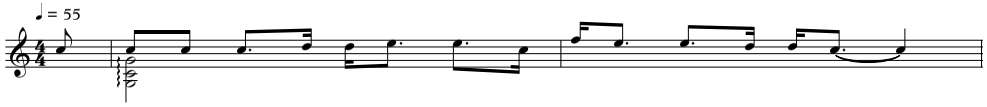
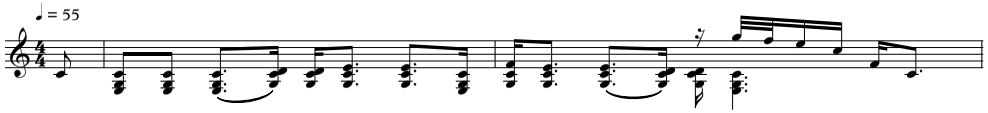
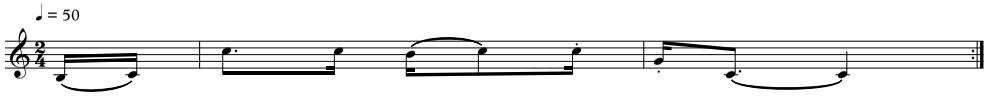
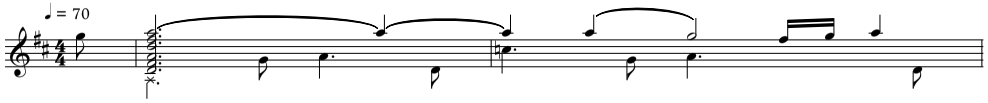
The climactic sequence, the Battle of Cowpens, uses the march theme frequently and, as I will soon show, conventionally. The narrative construction of the climax gives Martin the chance to avenge his sons and to set off events leading to America's victory. The tides of battle turn often, creating a sense of suspense and lending the score the opportunity to act as commentator. The initial (premature) British charge sets the Revolutionaries on the retreat; however, Martin's hidden forces empower the Americans to gain the upper hand. As victory seems to draw near, Martin turns to exact revenge on Tavington, yet, with their leader absent, the Americans are suddenly overwhelmed and fall back. Martin chooses duty over vengeance, managing to 'hold the line' (as he screams) through literal flag-waving heroics and leadership. With victory secured, Martin engages his sons' murderer at last. Hope seems lost when the hero is felled, but he feints from a final blow to make a sly fatal stab at his opponent.

To accompany the climactic battle, Williams leans into what he calls 'old-fashioned action-melodrama', with a succession of several cues that 'rage and storm and make theatrical gestures' across the extended sequence.[69] There is virtually a wall-to-wall musical commentary

[65] Other potential hints at the score's hasty composition are instances of "temp love", where Williams's cues seem heavily influenced by others. Online chatter and reviews often remark at the similarity between Williams's 'Susan Speaks' and Ennio Morricone's 'Deborah's Theme' from *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984). Additionally, Williams seems to draw upon his own 'Massapequa Theme' from *Born on the Fourth of July* in the elegiac string section of 'Martin vs. Tavington'.
[66] Colin Kennedy, 'The Patriot Review', *Empire*, 1 January 2000, <https://www.empireonline.com/movies/reviews/patriot-review/> [13 July 2021]; Dan Goldwasser, 'Review: Patriot, The', *Soundtracks.net*, 23 June 2001, <https://www.soundtrack.net/album/the-patriot/> [25 June 2021].
[67] Christian Clemmensen, 'The Patriot', *Filmtracks.com*, 30 June 2000, <https://www.filmtracks.com/titles/patriot.html> [June 25, 2021].
[68] A similar analysis could easily be undertaken regarding the manifestations of the fanfare *topos* in the finale of *Far and Away*.
[69] Williams quoted in Jon Burlingame, 'Cream of the Crop', *Variety*, 17 January 2001, <https://variety.com/2001/film/news/cream-of-the-crop-1117792252/> [13 January 2023].

surrounding the battle, amounting to over twenty minutes of music (not including the credits).[70] The score falls silent at certain moments to help heighten suspense or draw attention to brutality, but overall, the soundtrack is texturally dense and tightly synchronised. Table 1 maps points at which the march theme, its subsidiary fanfare, or heroic brass *topoi* are cued with instances of victory. The table indicates the basic associative properties of the *topoi* and their narratological functionality, while underlining how intertwined these types of sounds are with interrelated conceptions of victoriousness, optimism, bravery, and heroism, among others. These connotations implied by the score mark this key narrative (and historical) battle as leading to what is portrayed as the glorious birth of a new nation. Given lay audiences' fluency with conventional scoring procedures, this table may come across as obvious, but that is precisely the point; Williams leans into the victory trope. The table solidifies the functionality of the march *topos* within a generic blockbuster film, and elucidates how an American composer depicts his own country as conceived in victory.

[70] The detailed and extensive approach to scoring the conflict recalls much of Williams's music in the *Star Wars* series: 'The Last Battle', 'The Battle in the Snow', 'The Battle of Crait', and numerous others, which often involve a complex combination of carefully spotted cues.

Time	Narrative Cue	Musical Cue	Topos (orchestration)	Archetypal affect
2:27:20	Martin recruits his guerrillas for battle.		March (plaintive clarinets answered by harp filigree, with distant field drum support).	Comradery, pre-battle excitement.
2:28:40	French major comedically leaves his tent.		March (stately solo trombone over bass pedal).	Nobility, humour.
2:28:52	Colonist forces march to the frontline.		March (strings and brass take a *forte* statement over field drum with bass and celli).	Unity, bravery.
2:29:10	Martin arrives at the frontline.		Fanfare (trumpet motif answers the brass and strings march theme).	Heroic resolve, leadership.
2:29:38	British General Cornwallis spies guerrillas forming at the frontline.		March (soft solo flute over harp: the timbre and dynamic shift indicate the distant perspective).	Foolhardiness, dedication, bravery.
2:30:00	Martin passes on a letter addressed to his children.		March (warm violins and horns with wind filigree).	Heroic resolve, sacrifice, hope.
2:30:16	Colonist guerrilla sets his racist beliefs aside.		Fanfare (soft horn echoed by clarinet then oboe).	Fraternity, hope.
2:35:00	Colonists ambush British with hidden forces.		Solo calls and fanfare (tutti chord with cymbal crash, high string pedal, rising horn calls, and trumpet fanfares).	Triumph, unity, daring.

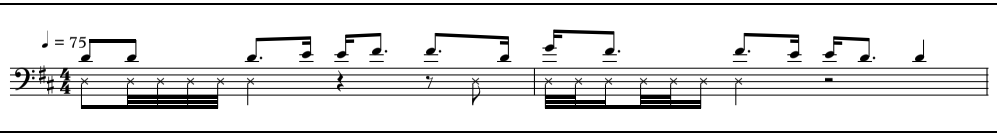
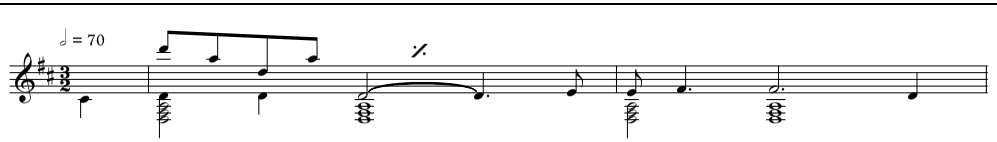
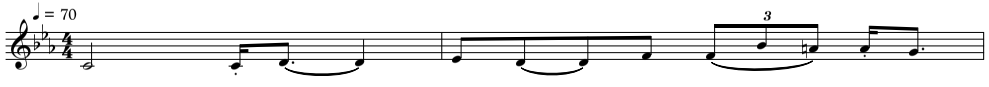
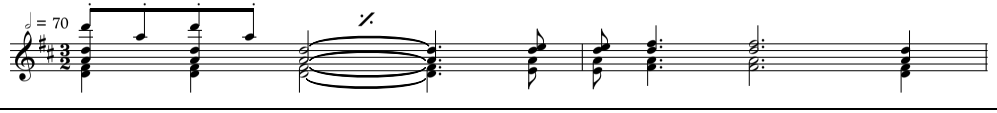
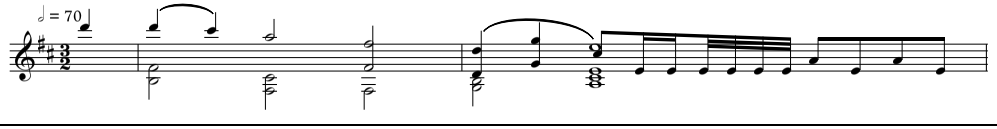
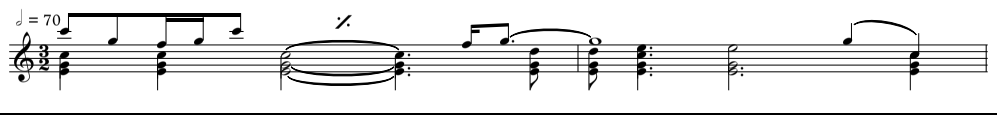
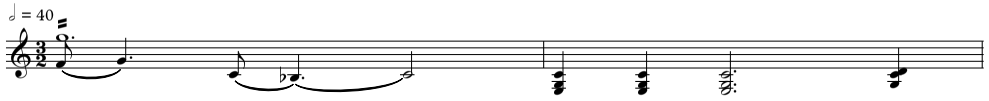
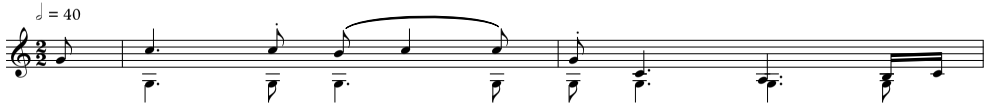
2:35:13	Numerous British fatalities as colonists fire at range.		March (string theme over snare with timpani hits and trumpet fanfares).	Triumph, hope, unity.
2:35:35	Colonists charge and overrun British.		March (stately brass under propulsive arpeggio-like strings, with down beat bass emphasis).	Bravery, fraternity, unity, hope, perseverance.
2:37:12	Martin turns from revenge to help his men (slow-motion).		Solo calls (minor horn answered by major trumpet).	Duty, heroic resolve, leadership, patriotism.
2:37:43	Colonists stop the retreat; Martin shouts, 'Push forward men.'		March (tutti forces with prominent brass theme, and woodwind and violins tonic-dominant obligato).	Fraternity, bravery, hope, patriotism.
2:38:13	Onlookers cheer and follow Martin.		Fanfare (march's lyrical answering phrase in strings, bolstered by trumpet fanfares).	Triumph, hope, awe, patriotism.
2:38:38	Wide shot of battle (then combat close-ups).		March (horn and trombone theme with woodwind obligato and trumpet countermelody).	Daring, urgency, triumph.
2:42:44	Martin's victory.		Solo call and march (horn under string tremolo gives way to chorale brass theme that eclipses diegetic sound).	Duty, victory, nobility.
2:43:08	Martin looks at victorious revellers.		Fanfare (full trumpet statement, with low brass, cymbal crashes, and fife countermelodies).	Victory, celebration, comradery, fraternity.

Table 1: *The Patriot*, summary of brass *topoi*, their associations, and suggested affects in the climactic Battle of Cowpens.

As the table shows, the march theme (evident in the first row) is exclusively linked to each of the colonists' victories, regardless of their insignificance or brevity. Appearing ten distinct times, the *topos* mostly reinforces the sense of triumph over adversity, solidifying ideas of bravery and hope that mark the heroic actions of Martin and his compatriots. Given the prominence of military signifiers — foregrounded brass, field drum accompaniment, fife obligato — in certain instances the score seems like a diegetic call to action, recalling the functional origins of the march *topos* (in the grandiose Williams style). With these resonances, one could almost read the music as intra-diegetic, appearing to empower Martin and his guerrillas or perhaps even emanating from their heroics.[71]

Table 1 also reveals two other points that indicate the connection between specific *topoi* and conceptions of victory. Firstly, and crucially, as indicated by absence, the march theme is never linked to moments of defeat; nor to the prolonged sequence showing Martin's savagery (his unseating of Tavington by impaling his enemy's horse with a flag mended by his deceased son); nor to his turns from patriotic duty to vengeance. Instead, these are frequently accompanied by an anguished, descending chromatic trumpet line associated with Tavington. Secondly, the fanfare theme (evident in the final row), which serves as an answering theme to the march, is most often reserved for Martin's incisive heroic moments. It enshrouds his actions, including his personal vendetta, with a dignifying patriotic purpose, and announces his arrival and eventual victory.

Looking beyond the sequence overviewed by the table, the march, when not sounding in battle, occasionally connotes the familial through warm strings but, more often, signifies ideas of justice and bravery when, for example, it sounds in noble brass as Martin stands outside a courthouse and as he recruits militiamen. Throughout the film, the *topos* continually and selectively aggrandises the patriotic idealism of Martin and the narrative, until this final battle, where it becomes an all-purpose theme of victory, uniting Martin's patriotic heroics with the triumph of the new nation. Strangely, the semantic ties defined in this final sequence come at the expense of an established stately theme dubbed 'Colonial Cause' by Schneller.[72] While this theme had regularly established ties to Martin's guerrilla forces it is absent from this battle, and the heroic march seems to subsume its established associations under one broad associative umbrella. Schneller has observed that this 'Colonial Cause' theme had harmonic ties to an established 'Love Theme' (through their recurring ♭VII–I harmonies), which reflected the film's broader conflation of 'individual and collective aspirations' — 'the imperative to defend the

[71] Winters notes that intra-diegetic music may be 'considered to be produced by the characters themselves' or 'by the geographical space of the film'. See Ben Winters, 'The Non-Diegetic Fallacy: Film, Music, and Narrative Space', *Music & Letters*, 91/2 (May 2010), 224–44: 237.
[72] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 60.

homestead is intertwined with the imperative to defend the national cause.'[73] Yet, the apparent sacrifice of the 'Colonial Cause' theme in the final battle might reveal the obligation of the film to depict national victory and masculine heroics, and its dispensing of the familial concerns that had motivated the plot in the first place.[74] The national takes precedence over the individual in the concluding battle of the narrative, and, in the process, thematic consistency is put to the side in favour of veritable musical jingoism to accompany the Patriot.

Persuasive Processes

The titular march from *The Patriot*, while perhaps somewhat unimaginative, fits the triumphal aesthetic of the predictable narrative.[75] By contrast, the ultimate march cue of *Midway* (1976), 'Midway March', seems somewhat misaligned as the triumphal idiom comes across as shoehorned and is not entirely cohesive in terms of emotion. The film follows the eponymous Battle of Midway, recounting how the American navy discovered Japanese plans to invade their strategic outpost in the Pacific, and depicting the twists and turns of the battle that led to America's eventual victory. In an attempt to add nuance to plot conventions and tiresome dialogue, the final scene avoids cliché (like the saccharine patriotism, fraternal bonding, and reunited families of *The Patriot*). The victory at Midway Island is a pyrrhic one, with no celebrations, an understated tone given the numerous fatalities and casualties, and a tragedy-tinged final heroic act in which an American pilot, Capt. Garth, crash-lands aboard his own carrier (the death is all the more unexpected as Garth was played by top-billed Charlton Heston).[76] The score, also, occasionally diverts from convention. For the most part, music takes a documentary-like approach to the action, which itself strove for verisimilitude by reusing war film combat footage amplified by Universal Pictures' new Sensurround cinema sound system. The 'spare' score (only about thirty minutes in the over two-hour film) rarely exaggerates emotions or succumbs to contrivances.[77] Instead of "'mickey-mousing" every dropping bomb', Mike Matessino observes that Williams 'compels the audience to take note of decisions' that influence the battle.[78] In this regard, it anticipates Williams's acclaimed approach to *Saving Private*

[73] Ibid., 59–60.

[74] Furthermore, in Martin's narration following the victory, images of his children accompany his hoping that 'the sacrifices borne by so many will spawn and fulfil the promise of our new nation.' Here, his children are shown firstly to serve the purpose of representing the potential of the new American nation, and only then are familial issues addressed as Martin says he will soon return to see them. The nationalistic takes narrative precedence over the individualistic and the familial.

[75] The following two case studies have been presented as papers and are in part informed by feedback from *Music and the Moving Image XIX*, *Society for Musicology in Ireland's Plenary Conference*, and *Sound on Screen*. These papers were entitled "'Jazzy Nautical Swagger" and "Imaginary Parades": John Williams and the American March' and subsequently "'American in Spirit": John Williams and the Legacy of John Philip Sousa'.

[76] To heighten the impact of this death, Williams's music is edited to dramatically cut out as the plane crashes ('Matt's Crash' on the OST is a minute longer than the cue as it appears in the film).

[77] Mike Matessino, liner notes for *Midway* (Varèse Saraband, 2011), 7–8

[78] Ibid. The composer, perhaps surprisingly, does not stylistically differentiate the Japanese perspective from the American, avoiding the exoticising tendencies of mid-century and Golden Age film scores. The same cannot be said of *1941*, albeit here the exaggerated styles and 'orientalism' were likely intended for comedic effect. However, his score *None But the Brave* (Frank Sinatra, 1965), which depicts the Japanese

Ryan, where music did not exaggerate or sensationalise combat. (Evidently, this same discretion was not followed in *The Patriot*.)

When the surviving troops return from battle, some hurried off in stretchers, the American Adm. Nimitz (Henry Fonda) asks 'Were we better than the Japanese — or just luckier?' This poignant question is underscored with 'Men of the Yorktown March' in plaintive and vaguely optimistic solo horn with warm strings. Yet rather than the score's taking a moment to reflect on Nimitz's rhetorical question, subtlety and meditation are sacrificed for musical flag-waving. A new march immediately enters (Figure 2), introduced by a low wind ostinato that cues the arrival of the saluting navy on deck. A quote from Winston Churchill further pushes pathos to the side:

> The annals of war at sea present no more intense, heart-shaking shock than this battle, in which the qualities of the United States Navy and Air Force and the American race shone forth in splendour. The bravery and self-devotion of the American airmen and sailors and the nerve and skill of their leaders was the foundation of all.

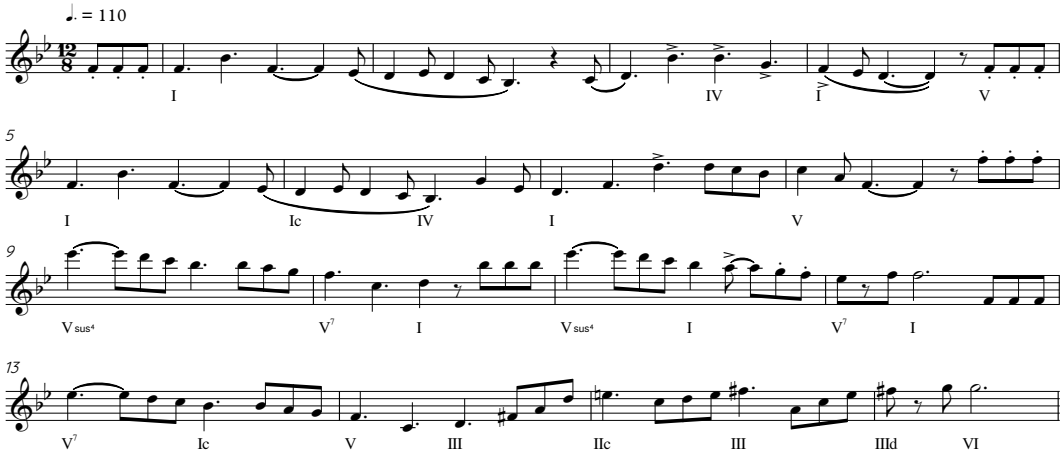


Figure 2: *Midway*, 'Midway March', the final cue of the film.

The newly introduced 'Midway March' is optimistic and propulsive, establishing a victorious tone befitting the 'splendour' of the 'American race' in lieu of understatedly supporting the introspective coda. As opposed to music marking a costly victory or reflecting on loss like the Admiral, the musical vernacular retreats to established nationalistic territory: Sousa. Williams adopts many of his forebear's distinctive traits: functional harmonic language (including his fondness for chromatic mediants and secondary dominants), simple rhythmic patterns, and clearly differentiated strains. The conservatism extends to the overall form — ternary, with a typical four-bar introduction — and to tonality — with modulations tending toward the

soldiers with a (relative) complexity and sympathy, frequently reverts to clichéd percussion and a theme based on the Hirajoshi scale, as Schneller has noted in 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 56.

subdominant (a Sousa favourite) or dominant.[79] The raucous ending, a dominant Locrian run effecting a minor extended dominant on the final cadence, matches Sousa's emphatic finales.[80] In these regards, as well as in the tuneful and simple melody, Williams captures the spirit of Sousa with a bravado in keeping with the patriotic air of the war.

The nostalgic patriotism stimulated by 'Midway March' demonstrates Williams's ability to work within the established American *topos*, but its appropriateness here is open to question. True, it fits the narrative context of victory and the significance of this moment in terms of the war, but what makes the use of this march bewildering is that it replaces the established and prominent march theme, 'Men of the Yorktown March', which had operated effectively throughout the film.[81] Within the narrative, this march proved adaptable to various scenarios, making it a suitable fit for emotionally varied scenes depicting the navy's battle plans and preparations (Figure 3). Its somewhat lilting quality, with triplet syncopations and plagal tonic-subdominant progressions, proved suitably restrained for quieter scenarios (even appearing pastoral in the cue 'Missing the Flatlands'), while the Americana-charged ♭VII–V cadence and more bombastic instrumentations with urgent tempi lent a different character for typically heroic moments (see 'Crash Landing').[82] The prominence and emotional appropriateness of 'Men on the Yorktown March' throughout the narrative make the use of 'Midway March' in the finale all the more puzzling. Why use such a bombastic arrangement of a theme that had only appeared previously for two phrases in a single cue ('Red Parks Fighters')? Perhaps 'Men of the Yorktown March' was not sufficiently patriotic?

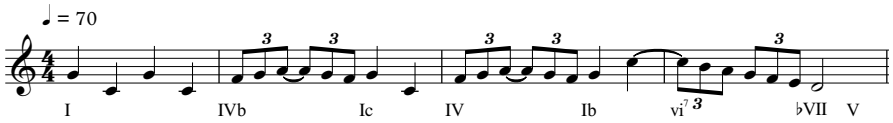


Figure 3: *Midway*, 'Men of the Yorktown March', the most prominent theme of the film.

One answer, I suggest, is that Williams, or the film's director or producers, saw such a bombastic march as a prerequisite for the genre. In the disillusionment following the withdrawal from Vietnam, American audiences of 1976 may have felt the need to recall the patriotic esprit of an earlier war — a nostalgia augmented by the contemporaneous bicentennial festivities. In

[79] Jim Cheseborough, 'Harmonic Content in the Marches of John Philip Sousa', *Journal of Band Research*, 39/2 (Spring 2004), 45–66: 47; Warfield, 'The March as Musical Drama and the Spectacle of John Philip Sousa', 291.
[80] The most obvious dissimilarity between the two styles is Williams's preference for compound metres, contrasting the preferred common metres of Sousa's quicksteps (although, some of Sousa's most popular marches — *Liberty Bell* and *Semper Fidelis* — are in compound duple time). Warfield, 'The March as Musical Drama and the Spectacle of John Philip Sousa', 291; Paul E. Bierley, H. Wiley Hitchcock, 'Sousa, John Philip', *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.may.idm.oclc.org/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002259047?rskey=3Ahsus&result=1> [26 October 2022].
[81] The march is named after a redeployed battle-weathered aircraft carrier.
[82] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 53.

this regard, Robert Niemi opined that the film 'was a final anachronistic attempt to recapture World War 2 glories in a radically altered geopolitical era, when the old good-versus-evil dichotomies no longer made sense.'[83] As well as appealing to outdated patriotic sensibilities, *Midway* also attempted to recapture the filmic style with which this attitude was most associated. As Roger Ebert concluded in his review of the film, 'War movies used to have dash and color and a certain corny sentimentality; *Midway* hardly even makes us care.'[84] Alongside these invocations of cultural and filmic pasts, 'Midway March' almost seems to force audiences to recall this old-fashioned sentimentality at a time when it felt increasingly distant. In this distinct narrative (and societal) context, the Sousa *topos* is not so persuasive and seems to call attention to itself and its rhetoric, making meaning, which might elsewhere be 'symptomatic', more 'implicit' — or even 'explicit' depending on the viewer/listener's own disposition.[85]

By way of comparison to earlier screen media, consider Richard Rogers's 'Guadalcanal March' or 'Mare Nostrum' cues from NBC documentary *Victory at Sea* (1952–53), which uses similar *topoi* to proclaim the greatness of the US navy.[86] As Michael Saffle notes in his appraisal of Rogers's music, the *topoi* 'bolster[ed] confidence in America's armed forces' and 'celebrate[d] Allied World War II victories', while also encouraging the idea that 'America's military triumphs were due in no small part to the nation's productivity and personal character, and that America will *always* triumph in these ways' (emphasis in original text).[87] By invoking that same mid-century attitude through a similar *topos* in *Midway*, Williams recalls those traditional outlooks to alleviate the emotional lack (to which Ebert attests), and aggrandise the all-American sense of triumph.

Williams testifies to this pull of tradition in his liner notes to the concert arrangement of 'Midway March', in which he does not reflect on the film but focusses only on the music's associations with the Sousa sound and personal nostalgia.

> When I was young, I remember my father recounting to me that during his childhood, he'd heard and seen John Philip Sousa conduct his famous band. And so, when the opportunity emerged to compose music for the film *Midway*, I tried to write an orchestral march that would be American in spirit, with a jazzy nautical swagger, and would fit squarely in the tradition of the great American marches that I've loved since my youth.[88]

Williams's 'American in spirit' march granted him the opportunity to toe the patriotic line: an act which shows how Williams-the-American-composer might displace Williams-the-Hollywood-composer. The shifting march style exemplifies what a specifically Sousa-styled march can mean

[83] Robert Niemi, *History in the Media: Film and Television* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 119.
[84] Roger Ebert, 'Midway', *RogerEbert.com*, 22 June 1976, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/midway-1976> [24 February 2023].
[85] Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, 8–9.
[86] The latter cue, a lullaby, veritably whitewashes the sinking of an Italian ship.
[87] Michael Saffle, 'Military Music for America's Peacetime: *Victory at Sea* and 1950s Post-War Television', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 38/1 (2019), 4–15: 11.
[88] Williams, liner notes for *Midway March* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard).

(and how it can manipulate) in film. This idiomatic catch-all for nostalgia, nationalism, and traditionalism (when not used as an associative code for patriotic heroics) can be compensatory, a form of penance to atone for a diminished American spirit: the Admiral's concluding statement on luck is not optimistic or praising of American exceptionalism, so the music must acclaim that which the monologue does not.

Such is the victorious and heroic spirit of 'Midway March' that, beyond evoking Sousa, it also seems to foreshadow the sound of Williams's ultimate American hero: Superman. In consequent phrases, both the marches of *Midway* and *Superman* channel the triumphant by similar melodic and rhythmic means: through typical heroic brass with repeated-note triplets stridently leaping a seventh — minor in *Midway* (dominant to subdominant) and major in *Superman* (tonic to leading note; see Figure 4). While this is a somewhat surface-level comparison (of the likes that doggedly follow Williams's career) and unlikely to have been intended by the composer, it does serve to indicate how codes for American military and Hollywood heroism can overlap in terms of affect and thematic vocabulary.

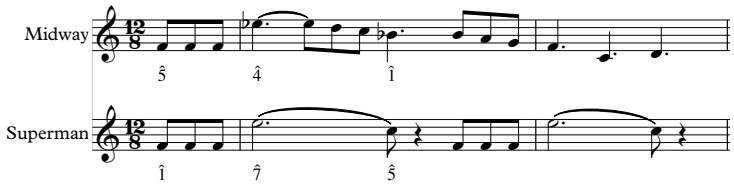


Figure 4: *Midway*, 'Midway March' (above) and *Superman*, 'Main Title March' (below). March and fanfare share rhythmic characteristics and differ in contour only slightly.

'Midway March' is more traditional in its rhetoric than any of Williams's other American-styled marches. The propagandistic label has perhaps never been more appropriate than with the narrative appearance of this theme. Its grandiosity heightens the sense of victoriousness, elevating the deeds of the US navy with idiomatic devices that would not sound out of place in the theme of a superhero; in the process the music distorts the narrative past — attempting to make us forget the cost of the battle so that the viewer may revel in the victory. As indicated in his liner notes, Williams is unquestionably aware of the associative potential and power of the Sousa-styled *topos*. As I will show, however, he does not always treat it with deference.

Politicising Parody

In 1979, three years after *Midway*, Williams again channelled the Sousa-inspired *topos* for Spielberg's *1941*. This was one of the director's biggest critical failures, with contemporary reviews describing it as 'a hectic[,] smug, self-destructive farce' and 'the most appalling piece of

juvenilia foisted on the public'.[89] Like the film, the score fires on all cylinders, providing an almost relentless undercurrent to the narrative action. The main theme is an ostentatious American march that straddles the boundary between power and pretence, seemingly mocking the *topos* that *Midway* had treated in earnest.

The comedic tone of the score is established from the off, when a nameless woman strips for a dawn swim. As she wades in, a familiar semitone motif portends danger, but rather than being dragged to the depths by a Great White, the swimmer instead rises from the sea, gripping the periscope of an emerging Japanese submarine.[90] (That the swimmer is played by Susan Backlinie, reprising her similar part in *Jaws*, adds an additional layer of citation to the parody). On the soundtrack album the cue is titled 'Chrissy Takes Another Swim' in reference to 'Chrissy's Death' from *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975).[91] The score is full of similar referential winks (the extent and variety of which demonstrate the film's excessiveness): beyond *Jaws*, Williams parodies Benny Goodman's 'Sing, Sing, Sing' with 'Swing, Swing, Swing', diegetic dance music that doubles as an action cue; the Irish polka 'The Rakes of Mallow' is quoted to underscore a riot comedically; Hollywood's Golden Age is paid homage in the exoticised harmonies for the Japanese forces, the quoting of 'Deutschlandlied' for a Nazi, and the lush romantic theme between woman and plane; diegetic singing of 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' and 'Strawberry Roan' are accompanied in the non-diegetic score; and, curiously, Elgar is channelled in a pompous American patriotic theme (Figure 5).[92] But the score's longest running musical joke is 'The March from "1941"', which satirises the familiar Sousian idiom (Figure 6).[93]

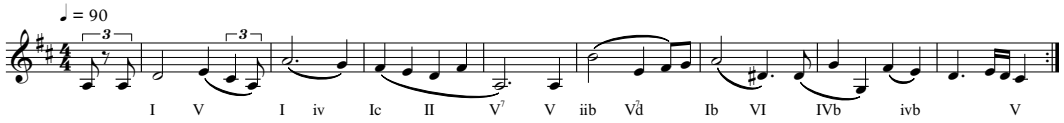


Figure 5: *1941*, 'You Have Been Chosen', an Elgar-styled patriotic march.

[89] Ian Freer, *The Complete Spielberg* (London: Virgin Publishing Ltd., 2001), 89. At one point, the film was conceived of as a Golden Age-style musical that would have included tunes by Williams in a twenties/thirties swing style.
[90] A Japanese soldier spots the naked woman — rear first — cueing a short love theme à la classic Hollywood. The excited soldier then points to the interloper, screaming 'Hollywood!' in celebration. The "humour" continues in this vein throughout the film.
[91] Mike Matessino notes that Williams's original cue was 'a sensual passage leading to a more subtle suggestion of the [shark] theme'; however, this was replaced by a track from *Jaws* itself. See Mike Matessino, liner notes for *1941* (La-La Land Records, 2011), 10–11. The *Jaws* theme would go on to serve similar parodic purposes in *Airplane!* (Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, and Jerry Zucker, 1980) and the *Sharknado* series (2013–18).
[92] References to a selection of pre-existing tunes appear in the cue 'Service Tunes'. Also, Williams's 1984 swing album with the Boston Pops, which concludes with the *1941* track, was similarly titled *Swing, Swing, Swing.*
[93] The jovial capacity of 'The March from "1941"' was imitated in Williams's *We're Lookin' Good!* (written for the 1987 Special Olympics), which more obviously showcases the composer's jazz-derived rhythms.

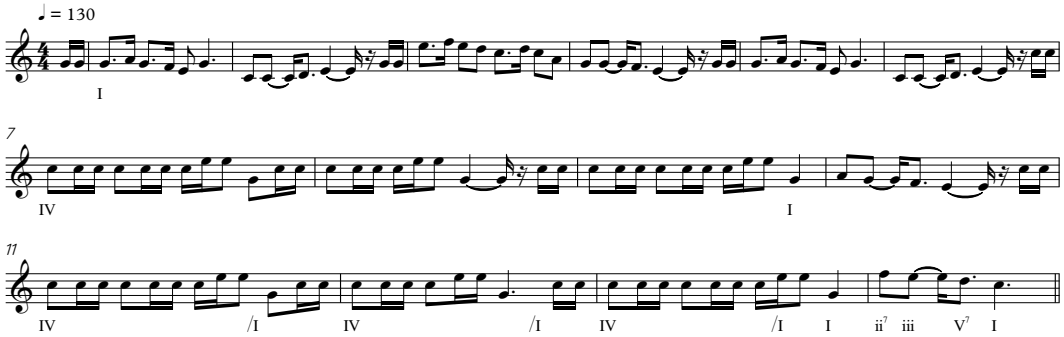


Figure 6: *1941*, 'The March from "1941"'.

The titular march serves as a motif, often accompanying the misjudged patriotic heroics of 'Wild Bill' Kelso (John Belushi). It is uncompromisingly rigid in its associations, never accompanying any other characters and often instantly marking Kelso's appearances. The Air Force Captain's introduction sets a standard continued through the film, in terms of both the style of the theme and the character's attitude. Kelso lands his plane in the middle of a sleepy desert town, demands a random by-passer to 'Fill her up', shoots at a radio after its broadcaster has contradicted him, chases his rogue vehicle down the street, and accidentally blows up a petrol station as he shoots manically in protest. The overbearingly spirited march theme accompanies this preposterous introduction and all Kelso's subsequent antics (including moments of friendly-fire, reckless endangerment, grand theft auto, and general destruction). The theme appears both to valorise Kelso's well-intended foolhardiness and mock the lengths to which one might go in the name of patriotism. Referencing this blurry boundary, Ian Freer describes the theme as treading 'a barely perceptible line between an actual military march and being a parody of one."[94] Given the many failed gags, the ceaseless musical bombast, and the established pompousness of the idiom generally, it is not surprising that Freer found it difficult to categorise the theme with precision.

Yet, for Williams the intent was clear; his task was to write 'a zanily patriotic march' befitting Kelso's brazenness.[95] As with *Midway*, the process of composing in such a patriotic style appeared to lead to personal reflection, the composer asserting

> that certain characters, I think especially John Belushi, that he should be characterized by a typical World War II American march, of the kind that I grew up with as a child and played with [*sic*] even in school. And that march has a kind of jazzy, almost southern swagger to it […] and the accents are tilted and the sync-ups are a little bit off, and it's a little bit impertinent in its character […] It has fun but a miliary aspect of the period also.[96]

[94] Freer, *The Complete Spielberg*, 85.
[95] John Williams, liner notes for *The March from "1941"* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2004).
[96] Williams quoted in Matessino, *1941*, 7.

Again equating the *topos* with personal nostalgia, Williams draws on many of those same features capitalised upon in *Midway*, while also pushing idiomatic sincerity to its limits. Like the film itself, the titular march is relentless, energetic, and unwavering; yet, considering the grandiosity and bombast that the Sousa *topos* already possesses, it can be difficult to determine the limits of satire. With 'The March from "1941"' Williams traverses the idiomatic boundaries between march and satirical march, a veritable *topos* in itself, following a variety of composers who have lampooned the idiom in varying styles — including Shostakovich in the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, Ibert in the 'Parade' movement of *Divertissement*, and Piston in the imitated band of *The Incredible Flutist*, among many others. Already excessive, the Sousa-styled march is difficult to parody. For Williams, then, the most obvious way to satirise was to create farcical associations through selective tongue-in-cheek cueing, as in Kelso's final scene, for example.

The theme's climactic narrative appearance epitomises its incongruous signification. Kelso, who has foolishly allowed himself to be captured by boarding a Japanese submarine on his own, unflinchingly orders his captors to 'Turn this tub around! You're takin' me to Tokyo.' With its brazen trumpets and martial snares, the theme jars with the exploits of the hapless Kelso. Misaligning the American-*cum*-heroic musical trope with Kelso's buffoonery plays on our expectations of idiomatic connotations. Where a march or fanfare variation of the theme presented in a sincere context might typically encourage us to marvel at the hero's bravery, here the cueing appears 'a little bit off' and exposes the pomposity and self-importance of this *topos*.

While his cueing branded the theme as comedic, Williams's concert and end credit arrangements of the march also demonstrate how humour might manifest within the music itself. Williams has been no stranger to writing music for comedies. His early career was defined by them: *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home* (J. Lee Thompson, 1965), *How to Steal a Million* (William Wyler, 1966), *Penelope* (Arthur Hiller, 1966), *Not With My Wife, You Don't!*, *Fitzwilly* (Delbert Mann, 1967).[97] Later, his music for the first two *Home Alone* films (Chris Columbus, 1990, 1992) — similarly characterised by classic mickey-mousing to mimic visuals humorously, stingers to accent surprises, wry melodic quotations, allusions to established composers, and comically exaggerated styles — would become arguably his best known comic scores. The last of these techniques — comic exaggeration — is foregrounded in *1941*: Williams throws the veritable kitchen sink at the march theme, overstating many of the Sousa-style trademarks, along with some additions:

[97] Audissino surveys Williams's classical approach to comedies with comparisons to Mancini in *The Film Music of John Williams*, 111–17. Williams's comedy scores are also addressed in Emilio Audissino, Chloé Huvet, 'Irony, Comic, and Humour: The Comedic Sides of John Williams', *The Palgrave Handbook of Music in Comedy Cinema* ed. by Emilio Audissino and Emile Wennekes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 689–706.

- Light piccolo quickly contrasted with tutti (in introduction and coda): comical juxtapositions of timbre
- Dynamics tending toward *forte* or louder (apart from transitionary sections): deliberate bombast and lack of subtlety
- Frequent note repetition (the answering phrase of the A theme repeats the opening note nine times): obstinate quality (similar to the stylised *Radetzky March* or the 'March of the Swiss Soldiers' of *William Tell*)[98]
- Syncopation: subverts a typical march feature (a trait of stylised concert marches rather than functional marches)
- Key changes approached by punctuated chromatic steps and chromatic contrary motion: exaggerates modulations with a cartoonish quality
- Frequent cymbal crashes: bombastic celebratory tone
- Climactic triple counterpoint of themes: complexity contrasts Sousa's simplicity
- False ending (a stately chord progression hints at conclusion before final coda): subverts expectations
- Vocal tag and crazed laugh ('My name's Wild Bill Kelso, and don't you forget it') ('Finale' of original soundtrack release): subverts expectations
- Cannon fire (end credits only): excess[99]

It is clear from the contextual appearances and musical excess of 'The March from "1941"' that Williams is intimately aware of the triumphal connotations of the *topos* in film, so much so that he can treat it ironically when context deems it appropriate. Despite being conceived as a mockery of the fundamentally American tradition, however, performances by well-known ensembles suggest that the march may have entered the band canon. Its links with the valued tradition and the prestige of a performance by 'The President's Own' or The United States Army Field Band seem to override the tongue-in-cheek nature of the composition; the nostalgic and victorious associations of the *topos* appear amplified by the venerable reputation and status of the performers.[100] In the liner notes to their collaboration with Williams, 'The President's Own' call the march a 'fun-filled romp from beginning to end' but qualify that, though it mocks the tradition, it 'is most certainly among Williams' best efforts in the genre of martial music.'[101] The storied tradition may well be too firmly ingrained for criticism, even if valid, to be given any heed. With these performances and the now heightened patriotic associations, the march is politicised, and its origins occluded or washed over.

[98] Richard Dyer notes that the march 'displays Williams' understanding of the excitement that can be generated by rapid repeated notes'. See Richard Dyer, 'Records of Williams' scores hard to find', *The Boston Globe*, 27 April 1980, 127. Another tune that effects excitement via similar means is the theme from *Superman*, which emphatically concludes with seven repeated tonics.
[99] This allusion to Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* is just one of the score's many references.
[100] It has also proved popular among non-American military bands like The Band of the Life Guards and Band of the Fifteenth Field Artillery Regiment, RCA. Additionally, Williams purportedly told 'The President's Own' that, 'This is the reason I came here. I wanted to hear you all play this ['The March from "1941"']'. See Rachel Ghadiali, 'Rehearsal with Maestro John Williams', *Marines* (The Official Website of the United States Marine Corps), 16 July 2023, <https://www.marineband.marines.mil/News/Article/3459260/rehearsal-with-maestro-john-williams/> [26 July 2023].
[101] Jason K. Fetting, 'March from *"1941"*', liner notes to *John Williams & "The President's Own"*, 31.

More widely, historical and institutional ties to the US military and patriotism lend the march *topos* a nostalgic edge, which might cut through any postmodern attempts at making it ironic. Despite potential associations with a simplistic and out-dated worldview, or links to specific Hollywood narratives, these film marches have imprinted broadly on the collective consciousness.[102] Even the march from *The Patriot*, despite diverging from the more traditional and culturally established Sousa style, is so intertwined with an American vernacular and attitude that it was performed at both Barack Obama's election night rally in 2008 — the *New York Times* claiming it was 'majestic' — and during Joe Biden's Inaugural in 2021 (along with extracts from *American Journey*).[103]

These extra-filmic performances indicate that Williams's adaptations of the idiom have served similar purposes to Sousa's music by imbuing ceremonial and political events with that same patriotic spirit. Like many nationalistic marches, Williams's are 'celebratory and regenerative' and encourage a 'spirit of solidarity and purposive action', as Riley and Smith argue in their study of musical nationalism.[104] Additionally, by evoking the 'regenerative' attitude of the idiom — especially given its present-day links to the nationalism of the past — Williams also perpetuates the grand (meta-)narrative of America as a victorious nation, a perspective clearly assisted by the pasts that these films reimagine. A rhetoric of triumph is an inescapable component of the 'assimilating identification' of America that this *topos* has historically constructed, and which Williams has maintained.[105]

Given its rootedness within the American tradition and Hollywood, it is perhaps unsurprising that Williams's music perpetuates some well-established conventions. In reinforcing these dominant, traditional, and pervasive ideologies about America, the composer has proven himself to be a central agent in this reinforcement of national myth: accenting triumph, overcompensating for pyrrhic victories, and carefully treading the fine line between parody and sincerity. It is in these regards that Williams has earned the status of a 'modern-day march king' (as dubbed by frequent Williams-conductor Leonard Slatkin).[106] With this honorary title comes not only celebrity status but perhaps also an (unconscious) obligation — as 'America's greatest

[102] Beyond his film music repertoire, Williams's music for the Olympics has also gone on to serve a nationalistic function. James T. Johnson found that the trumpet solo from Williams's *Summon the Heroes* was one of the most frequently requested pieces for military band trumpet auditions. See James T. Johnson, *A Survey and Guide to United States Military Band Trumpet Auditions* (PhD Thesis, Florida State University, 2016), 7, 12–14.

[103] Katherine Q. Seeyle, 'Seeking the proper tone for Obama's inauguration', *The New York Times*, 9 December 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/09/world/americas/09iht-09inaug.18506795.html> [15 July 2021]; '59th Presidential Inaugural Programme', 20 January 2021, <https://www.marineband.marines.mil/Portals/175/Docs/Presidential%20Inauguration%202021/2021%20Inaugural%20Prelude%20Program.pdf> [15 July 2021].

[104] Riley and Smith, *Nation and Classical Music*, 164.

[105] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.

[106] Leonard Slatkin quoted in Caschetto, 'A New March King: John Williams And The Concert Band'. On his relationship to the march, the composer said 'as I look back, there are half a dozen of my marches that have hung around longer than I expected'. Williams quoted in ibid.

living composer', according to the introduction of his 2014 A Capitol Fourth performance — to maintain a status quo and specific self-image defined by power, might, and victory.[107]

1.3: 'Not a military trumpet, but an American trumpet'

Similarly related to a constructed American self-image, a bugle-call-inspired *topos* is regularly used in connection with reflection rather than action. While typically the solo call of a horn or trumpet is a troped code for heroism in blockbusters, it also has a wider symbolic function, even in film scores that are less overtly intertwined with American-associated styles. Among Williams's more dissonant and modernist scores, these calls are occasionally reserved until narrative moments where they can have maximum impact. When savoured in such a way, they can generate a sense of hope or optimism (however fleeting) in otherwise brooding narratives and remain in keeping with the overall tone of the score. Indeed, in scores like *Presumed Innocent* (Alan J. Pakula, 1990), *Nixon*, *Sleepers* (Barry Levinson, 1996), and *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg, 2005) — less popular soundtracks due to their challenging modern aesthetic — a solo call is delayed until specific moments where it can symbolise solace or a return to normality. In the case of these films, the normality that is returned to is often a tableau of American domesticity: a child is dropped to school, youth is nostalgically recalled, old friends are reunited, a long-awaited return to a family home. Even the cue titles are revelatory in this regard: 'Return to Normal' (*Presumed Innocent*), 'Growing Up In Whittier' (*Nixon*), 'Reunion and Finale' (*Sleepers*), and 'The Reunion' (*War of the Worlds*) (Figure 7.1–7.4).[108] Likewise, albeit in more traditionally styled scores, reaching safety in *Jaws* and *War Horse* (Spielberg, 2011) is sounded via similar brass orchestration, and in *Stanley & Iris* (Martin Ritt, 1990) a concluding solo trumpet indicates the promise of domestic bliss.[109] These calls exalt normality, as well as praising concepts of return, restoration, or recollection: key themes or ideas in post-climatic scenes of many films. Their prominence in these significant narrative moments indicates their function as an associative device in relation to a specific representation of American culture.[110]

[107] Tom Bergeron quoted in 'John Williams conducts new arrangement of "The Star-Spangled Banner"', JOHN WILLIAMS Fan Network JWFAN, 5 July 2014, John Williams performs his arrangement of the national anthem with introduction by Tom Bergeron, <https://youtu.be/OO7qIIaaGIM> [8 March 2023].
[108] The 'Return to Normal' of *Presumed Innocent* is shortly undercut by a twist in the narrative coda. The protagonist's happy return to simple domesticity is offset by a revelation about his wife's involvement in the central murder. The spirit of the solo horn call in the cue is markedly similar to the trumpet solo in 'Homecoming' from *Born on the Fourth of July* (albeit this cue includes a distinctly pop-inspired accompaniment).
[109] Williams briefly uses trumpet in *Stanley & Iris* also to allude to reflection and grief when (it is implied, though not shown, that) Iris visits the grave of her deceased husband. My thanks to Frank Lehman for reminding me of the trumpet in this score.
[110] Although, of course, these values and concepts are by no means unique to American culture specifically.

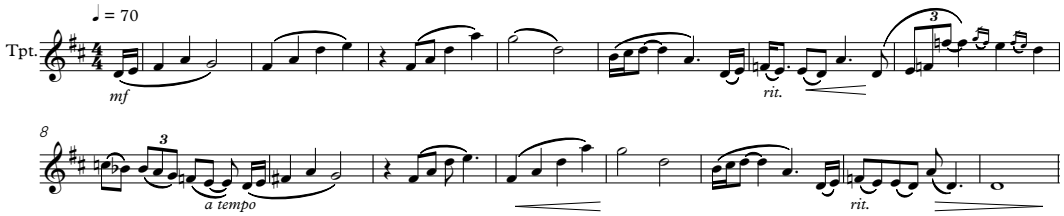


Figure 7.1: *Nixon*, 'Growing Up In Whittier', trumpet solo.

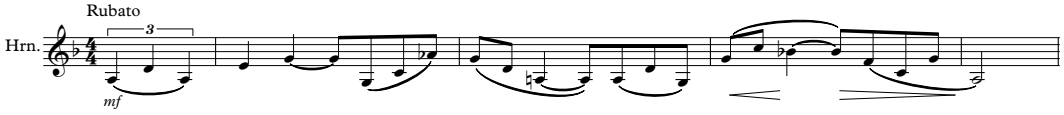


Figure 7.2: *Sleepers*, 'Reunion and Finale', horn solo.

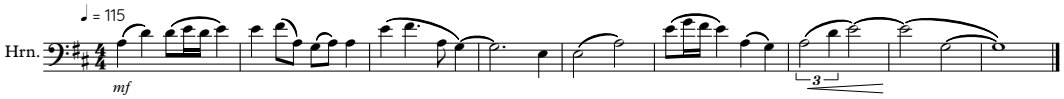


Figure 7.3: *Presumed Innocent*, 'Return to Normal', horn solo.

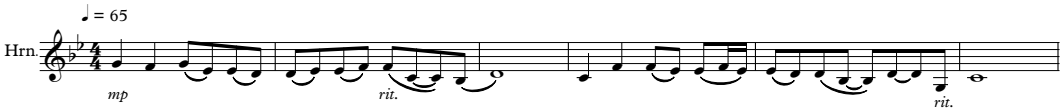


Figure 7.4: *War of the Worlds*, 'The Reunion', horn solo.

When brass calls are used with greater regularity throughout a score, they often signify momentousness and importance, and in certain scenarios they are relied upon for their mournful tone. A clear instance of these twinned associative functions, which foreground an American ideal, is in *Towering Inferno* (John Guillermin, 1974), in which the bold and expansive opening theme accompanying the dynamic helicopter shots of San Francisco suddenly transforms into a more lyrical solo, marking the film's dedication to firefighters (in a pause over a shot of San Francisco City Hall; see Figures 7.5 and 7.6). Bombast gives way to elegy in a musical gesture that seems to reach metadiegetically beyond the film narrative to shared ideals of community and nation. While the dedicative moment is clearly marked in *Towering Inferno*, in other filmic scenarios it is less obvious and hence all the more valuable, as I will show, for critical investigation of its implicit function.

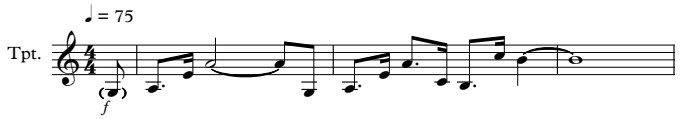


Figure 7.5: *Towering Inferno*, 'Main Title', stirring and expansive horn motif.

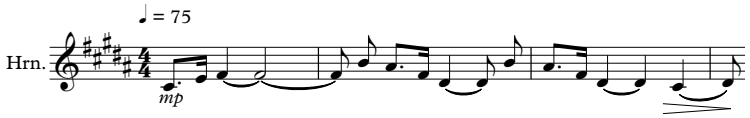


Figure 7.6: *Towering Inferno*, 'Main Title', dedication to firefighters. Poignant variation of main theme with a narrower range.

As an elegiac *topos* fused with what Annabel Cohen would call 'external meaning', the horn or trumpet call recalls the bugle, which often invokes an ideal of sacrifice for, and service to, one's country — nationally regarded ideals and themes that have been explored in numerous Williams-scored films, hence necessitating regular employment of the *topos*.[111] *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Saving Private Ryan* explore these notions in similarly centred narratives and via related musical means; and, in certain instances, *JFK* adopts a similar idiomatic vocabulary but explores these ideals in a more narratively and musically complex manner. While these three films are distinct in terms of setting and style, they each address similar ideas of a lost America, the absence of a home, and an increasingly elusive idealism, and each are marked by the call.

Veneration of Military Sacrifice

Williams's most highly regarded Americana score is also the most traditional in terms of its narrative function.[112] Like the screenplay and the sensitive but visceral direction, the score to *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) treats its subject with pathos, deftly exploring ideas of duty, sacrifice, and brotherhood.[113] Rather than merely recreating the gruesome realities of combat in order to shock, the war epic also has more intimate moments that reflect on soldiers' lives and their sense of duty; these juxtapositions showcase how the film, as Todd Decker states, 'is calibrated for mixed company and multi-generational comfort' by educating, reflecting, and memorialising.[114] With characters that are more sympathetic than heroic, quiet commemorative moments, and an exploration of patriotic valour (amidst the battle scenes), the film and score reaffirm that most fundamental relationship of respect between the United States and its armed forces.[115]

The opening scene at the American Cemetery in Normandy is illustrative of this traditional attitude, establishing a 'patriotic architecture' that is upheld throughout the film.[116] The quiet prologue follows a veteran and his family walking by the seemingly endless white crosses. As the nameless veteran reaches some headstones, he collapses in grief and his family rush to his side. This scene is often absent in published recollections of the film, with its subsequent D-Day landing sequence mistakenly referred to as the opening scene. Perhaps this perceived distinction indicates the separateness of the ritualistic act of remembrance in the prologue from the narrative action. Even if the framing scene is not considered part of the picture, it certainly affects how we regard it. Like an operatic overture, Williams's prologue

[111] Annabel J. Cohen, 'Film Music from the Perspective of Cognitive Science' in *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, ed. David Neumeyer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 96–132: 120–21.
[112] See footnote 16 in introduction for evidence of the popularity of the score.
[113] This case study has been partly informed by feedback received following my paper 'Hymn to the Fallen: Constructing American Values in *Saving Private Ryan*' presented at *SMI/ICTM-IE Joint Plenary Conference* (2020), *BFE/RMA Students' Conference* (2021) and *British Audio-Visual Research Network Colloquia Series* (2021).
[114] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 76.
[115] Ibid., 68.
[116] John Bodnar, '*Saving Private Ryan* and Postwar Memory in America, *The American Historical Review*, 106/3 (June, 2001), 805–17: 806.

establishes the musical vernacular and the reverent attitude that pervades the film: distant horns announce the opening shot of the desaturated American flag (returned to for the conclusion); a low brass chorale accompanies the walk to the graves; a trumpet duet takes over when the veteran arrives at a headstone. (Williams here recalls prominent *topoi* used to signify the American in *Amistad*, released the previous year.) The vernacular is largely diatonic, with duet passages frequently moving in fifths or fourths, effecting that familiar open Americana sound and a restrained militaristic tone, heightened by the subtle opening snare.[117] Normandy is not signified by a specific theme; rather, texture and timbre are fundamental to establishing tone and the reflective air of the setting.[118] This is a score of sensitivity and pensiveness, an effect created not only through the music's lack of intrusion and its quiet dynamic, but also through the considered prompting of a specific contemplative mood (far removed from the bombast and emotional sweep of the previously mentioned war films).

The sense of veneration in the score is enhanced by its restraint, with only around forty minutes of music in the near three-hour film (much less than other Spielberg-Williams collaborations).[119] With the combat sequences eschewing underscore entirely, the presence of music is marked, and its impact is evident. The director lets the frenetic camera work and Oscar-winning sound speak for itself; he did not, he later recalled, want Williams's music to 'sentimentalize or create emotion from what already exists in raw form.'[120] The composer's purpose, Spielberg said, was to give 'us the chance to breathe and remember.'[121] That this musical goal was pursued through specific recurring *topoi* — pastoral, hymnal, and militaristic — indicates their associative reliability and thus the consistent effect they can have on audiences. The *nobilmente* brass of the opening not only grounds the listener in the militaristic and elegiac idioms, but also — due to their nationalistic resonances — solidifies that this will be a fundamentally American story.[122] (The continued use of similar *topoi* in 'Country at War' from Williams's *American Journey* shows their reliability and stability beyond the war film genre.)

Narrative themes of sacrifice and duty seem to have influenced not only the reverential score but also the very process of recording the music itself. In the film, the dangerous mission to save Ryan is proposed by a reading of Lincoln's Bixby letter — a message consoling a widow

[117] These timbres and textures recur in the narrative coda as the veteran (revealed to be James Ryan) stands and salutes the headstone (now unveiled as that of Capt. Miller, who died to protect him).
[118] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 231.
[119] Ibid., 48. *The Fabelmans* (Spielberg, 2022) and *Schindler's List* are among the other outliers in the director's score-heavy filmography.
[120] Steven Spielberg quoted in Mike Matessino, liner notes for *Saving Private Ryan: 20th Anniversary Limited Edition* (La-La Land Records, 2018), 3.
[121] Ibid.
[122] In addition to Williams's recycling of familiar American-related *topoi*, the Americentric nature of the film is clear from the central mission. Robert Rodat's screenplay is unconcerned with liberating Europe from Nazi tyranny; there is but a brief mention of the British, nothing of the Russians, and the short scene with the French is not subtitled (further distancing their perspective). Likewise, the group of GIs reflect an array of white American identities: the Italian, the Nazi-despising Jew, the Brooklyn loner, the Bible-quoting Tennessean, the compassionate medic, the untested bookish corporal, the hard-headed sergeant, and their dutiful and honourable leader.

who was thought to have lost five sons during the Civil War.[123] The letter reinforces the significance of saving Ryan by appealing to the icon of American exceptionalism. Noting that the decision-making is reduced to a matter of 'filial piety', Catherine Kodat concludes that worthiness is confirmed by the knowledge that this action is one the 'national Fathers themselves would have taken.'[124] In Boston's Symphony Hall, as Williams was recording the score, the very same letter was read to the orchestra by Tom Hanks (appropriately described as 'the lanky Lincolnesque actor' in *The Boston Globe*'s report of the occasion).[125] In the film, Hanks's character, Capt. Miller, embodies those traditional ideas of America that Lincoln, similarly, might connote — Miller is the film's uncommon common man, a high-school English teacher and baseball coach whose sole desire ('the time-tested wish of the average American GI') is to return home.[126] Hanks's almost ceremonial act of scriptural recitation affected the orchestra and chorus 'enormously', according to Williams.[127] Events such as this are generally uncommon in the recording process, but a film as sincere and nationally high-minded as *Saving Private Ryan*, and the lionised words of Lincoln, are evidently a worthy exception. This '[founding] father would approve' mentality, which Kodat notes, might similarly endow the score (and scoring) with a sense of worthiness or nationalistic validation.[128] These injections of patriotic sentiment are indicative of the reverential ethos suffused throughout production; perhaps to the filmmakers, patriotic rituals almost seem mandated, given the status of the subject matter in US history. (This attitude is discussed in more detail with regards to *Lincoln* on pg. 130.)

This relationship to the past, indicated by the two readings of the Bixby letter, exemplify a deeply reverential attitude to history and to those who died in service of their country. Kodat rightly characterises this attitude as an indication of the 'neoconservative values of the Reagan-Bush era [being] transmitted, with remarkably little modification, into the neoliberal Clinton years.'[129] Yet more than that, this pastness is symptomatic of a lingering generational and traditionalist attitude of reverence towards WWII veterans on the part of the director and composer, both of whom are commonly noted as sentimentalists (a critique levelled again specifically with regard to the epilogue of the film) and who have both reflected on this history at length in interviews.[130] Williams treats the narrative letter-reading in a manner akin to Copland's

[123] Lincoln's words are repeated (as narration) at the end of the film by the same General, now writing to Ryan's mother to tell her he is coming home.
[124] Catherine Kodat, 'Saving Private Property: Steven Spielberg's American Dream Works', *Representations*, 71 (Summer 2000), 77–105: 79. Kodat also compares the scene to *Amistad*, when John Quincy Adams makes a similar reference to his father, John Adams.
[125] Richard Dyer, 'Spielberg, Williams still scoring', *The Boston Globe*, 24 February 1998, C6.
[126] Albert Auster, '*Saving Private Ryan* and American Triumphalism', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 30/2 (2002), 98–104: 102.
[127] 'John Williams scoring "Saving Private Ryan"', farma2006 (pseud.), 21 August 2007, behind the scenes featurette of John Williams conducting the music to *Saving Private Ryan*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDq1gETo18w> [14 July 2021].
[128] Kodat, 'Saving Private Property', 88.
[129] Ibid., 79.
[130] Tomasulo notes that the film's 'contemporary moral and political [agenda] effectively seems clear: to hark back to those "days of yesteryear" in order to renew and revivify America's mythic rightness as a nation'. See Tomasulo, 'Empire of the Gun', 127.

Lincoln Portrait and his own *American Journey*. Not only are these works akin via their recollection of Lincoln through his own words, but also in how the invoked icon is underscored: antiphonal horn soli, restrained string lines, and evocative diatonic melodic lines of rising perfect fourths or fifths.[131] This comparison betrays the type of patriotic attitude (the 'religious aura') with which Lincoln is associated and which he is seen to deserve.[132] The ultimate summoning of this spiritual patriotism is in the end credit piece, 'Hymn to the Fallen' (discussed in greater detail on pg. 157); however, a central scene brings these issues to the surface.

After the team have taken some small steps towards completing the titular mission, and with renewed sense of purpose, the medic, Wade (Giovanni Ribisi), is killed. Due to his role and his continued virtuousness — demonstrated when rewriting the letter home of a dead squad member so that it is not covered in blood, and when reminding his group (who mock funny names on ownerless dog tags) of the costliness of war — Wade was seen as 'the good one' of Miller's band. His demise is designed to hit the audience hard and demoralise the GIs following his lengthy bleeding-out, emphasising the team's helplessness and the irony and futility of a medic being unable to save himself.[133] The death occurs just after the film's midpoint; having reached some tacit narrative point of acceptability, the loss seems earned, allowing Williams the chance to offer some sense of commemoration, and giving the audience the opportunity to reflect.[134]

In a style redolent of the opening scene, a trumpet duet is followed by a horn duet (both feature lengthy pauses on open fourths, fifths, and ninths) as Miller makes his way to bury Wade; descending strings accompany him as he moves Wade's body; trumpets again sound as his team come to assist him (Image 1); and lastly a minor-mode trumpet solo (a plain, rising inverted minor triad answered by descending quartal passages) underlines Miller's quiet moment of contemplation (Figure 8).[135]

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[131] In *American Journey*, Lincoln's words, spoken by President Clinton, introduce the melodrama. The visuals revealed a portrait of the martyred icon through a dissolving shot of America from space.
[132] Auster, '*Saving Private Ryan* and American Triumphalism', 104.
[133] The strategy of the screenplay is to kill off the GIs after they have each revealed personal details about their homelives; this both maximises and personalises the sense of loss.
[134] Ben Winters has discussed the resonances of what he calls the 'intra-diegetic' music of the film, noting that it is Capt. Miller's emotional crisis that 'triggers the presence of music in the narrative space of the film and is, in turn, fed by it in a kind of self-destructive feedback loop'. He observes that, in the film, 'decency/femineity leads to/is caused by intra-diegetic/diegetic music and, ultimately, results in death'. See Winters, 'The Non-Diegetic Fallacy', 241–42.
[135] In Winters's view, the preceding passages of low winds and strings, which accompany Miller's emotional break and the team's decision to bury Wade, connote 'a more feminine musical "voice"' that is drawn out by Miller's heightened emotional state. See ibid., 241. I would also add that the woodwind textures, in particular, resonate with Miller's desire to return home, as Williams draws upon such timbres to connote the pastoral elsewhere in the film (see pg. 72).

Image 1: *Saving Private Ryan*, Reiben (centre) comes to help Miller (left) bury Wade.

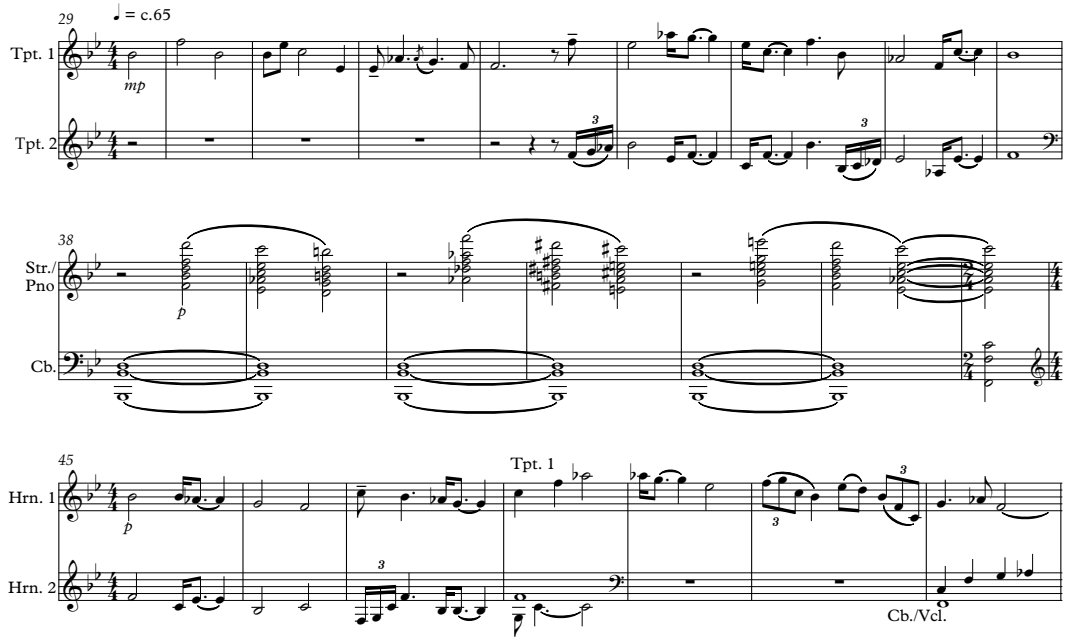

Figure 8: *Saving Private Ryan*, 'High School Teacher', trumpet calls (bars 29–37), falling string lines (38–44), horn duet (45–47), and trumpet solo (48–51). Adapted from *Saving Private Ryan: Piano Solo* (New York, NY: Cherry Lane Music, 1998).

A lack of dialogue and the silhouetted staging create a moving simplicity. It is here that Williams's score is perhaps at its most potent, given the much-needed respite and reflective mood. The affective power of the music is not solely due to the composer's craft and narrative context but to the real-world resonances of the cue. The deceased is commemorated at two levels: we might interpret this music as the team's memorialisation of Wade, replete with (their own, interiorised) musical elegy; or alternatively, one could read it as Williams playing into a meta-narrative of remembrance, with the music commemorating those like Wade who were buried in the battlefield.[136] These liminal, meta spaces — perhaps between diegetic and non-

[136] Robynn Stilwell, 'The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic', in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, eds. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard D. Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 184–202: 196.

diegetic, and simultaneously beyond them — draw the audience inside the GIs' subjectivity, and echo the societal functions of this type of music. A culture, tradition, and ritual of military remembrance and commemoration are thus evoked both in the text and in the score.[137] The open spacings between instruments, minor mode inflections, and angular melodic lines recall the elegiac brass pieces often used for military funerals like 'Taps' or 'The Last Post'. In this sense, the score offers the deceased medic the ceremonial funeral he is denied by his burial in the war-torn French countryside. Williams's brass writing here provides the audience, as much as the characters, a moment of reflection and an opportunity for veneration of the military.

While such traditionalism might be expected of a film torn from the pages of the 'American bible' (to borrow Robert Burgoyne's description) and from a director as broadly appealing (across the political spectrum) as Spielberg, it might be less expected from a director who has been as controversial and consistently critical of American society as Oliver Stone.[138] Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July* is less outwardly reverent towards America than *Saving Private Ryan* (*SPR* hereafter).[139] The 1989 film focusses on Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise), his increasing cynicism toward his homeland, and his disillusionment following his tour in Vietnam; the tagline, 'a story of innocence lost and courage found', exemplifies the general trajectory of Kovic from an all-American teenage idealogue, to disillusioned marine, to embittered paraplegic veteran, and revitalised anti-war activist. Music plays a more prominent role here than in *SPR*, with Williams providing themes for both military duty and home (in addition, diegetic music plays a significant role in establishing the 50s, 60s, and 70s settings). The most prominent theme, which I dub 'Elegy', recalls the familiar militaristic bugle call *topos*, and reflects broader cultural traditions and notions of duty in a manner akin to *SPR*.

Parallels to real-world military funerals are evident, again, in a graveside scene. Near the end of the film, and after returning from Vietnam and once re-adjusted to the disaffected America, Kovic visits the grave of Pvt. Wilson, a nineteen-year-old marine whom he had accidentally shot and killed (after promising that Wilson would make it out of battle safely). As Kovic contemplates and mourns, 'Elegy' takes centre stage and sounds on the funereal solo trumpet; the theme comprises restrained ascents and plummeting descents and a characteristic

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[137] Ibid., 194.

[138] Robert Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 61. Stone's depiction of America is often more condemnatory than that of Spielberg. His films sermonise on the trappings of success and ideology and detail the fight against 'the Beast' (as Nixon, in *Nixon*, calls it), a signifier of an elusive, all-consuming, body politic represented, in his trilogy with Williams (*Born on the Fourth of July*, *JFK*, and *Nixon*) by the Vietnam War, the JFK assassination, and that resulting culture and environment that morphed Nixon into a modern-day Macbeth. It is this more moralistic battle between the common man and 'the Beast' which Stone addresses when depicting the destruction of 'the promise of the Kennedy years'. See Oliver Stone and Peter Kuznick, *The Untold History of the United States* (London: Ebury Press, 2012), 323.

[139] This case study has been informed by feedback received following the presentation of my paper "'Not a Military Trumpet, but an American Trumpet": The Two Americas of John Williams's Score to *Born on the Fourth of July*' at the *British Audio-Visual Research Network Colloquia Series* (2021).

double-semiquaver upbeat, sounds over a tonic string drone (Figure 9). Like *SPR*, the score gives an insight into the character's interiority and provides a moment of calm and a space for meta-reflection. Beyond eulogising the young Private, the trumpet also seems to mourn the death of an idealism once held by Kovic, a loss that Wilson's needless death also signified. Wilson served a symbolic narrative function: in life, he was like the young Kovic and enlisted for the promise of glory and to honour a nationally imperative duty (following, as we later learn, the 'proud tradition' of three generations, and preceding a potential fifth); in death, he represents not only the false promises of Vietnam but the disillusionment that fuelled enlistment during that futile war. The trumpet rendition of 'Elegy' by the graveside, more than simply memorialising the deceased, mourns the America lost with him.

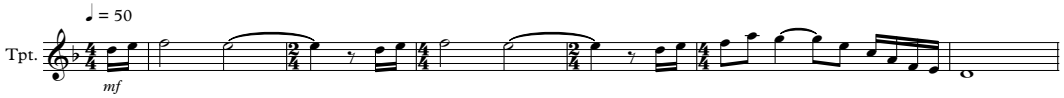

Figure 9: *Born on the Fourth of July*, 'Born on the Fourth of July', the 'Elegy' theme repeatedly sounds on solo trumpet.

This association is similarly identified in an earlier statement of 'Elegy', where the trumpet emerges through the sounds of a diegetic band at a July Fourth parade. Here, the theme indicates trauma as Kovic (wheelchair-bound following his tour of duty) is triggered into an emotional reaction by the sounds of crying babies and exploding firecrackers.[140] This 1969 parade sharply juxtaposes the parade of Kovic's youth (1956): an all-American picturesque celebration with nostalgic narration and Rockwellian imagery of children playing soldiers in the woods, a baseball game, and a first kiss underneath fireworks. In light of these paralleled settings and sequences, the trumpet appearance in Kovic's 1969 homecoming seems to mourn all that his early childhood signified: a fantastical suburban idyll. These mythologising tendencies were noted by Pauline Kael, film critic for *The New Yorker*, who implicated Williams's music in the prologue when stating that the score 'is like a tidal wave. It comes beating down on you while you're trying to duck [the] frenzied camera angles. So much rapture, so soon. I was suffering from pastoral overload before the credits were finished.'[141] This heightened and imagined homeland of the fifties-set prologue that Kael found overbearing is musically differentiated — both by theme and by absence of score — from the fractured America to which Kovic later returns. The 'tidal wave' of evocative imagery, tropes, and score subsides as the earlier, familiar America becomes all the more illusory and Kovic finds a new patriotic purpose, one removed from militarism.

[140] Here, the sound editors layer cries of the abandoned Vietnamese baby into the mix, sonically identifying Kovic's traumatic recollection.
[141] Pauline Kael, 'Born on the Fourth of July: Potency — Review by Pauline Kael', *The New Yorker*, 22 January 1990, <https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/movies/born-on-the-fourth-of-july-potency-review-by-pauline-kael/> [3 March 2023].

The realisation and acceptance of the societal and cultural changes are solidified by Kovic's mourning of Wilson and his visit to the private's family. From this moment he shifts from passivism to pacifism, becoming an anti-war demonstrator. Kovic's new-found, less traditional, form of patriotism is, crucially, not musically constructed by American-coded tropes in the score but by diegetic song. Firstly, the whistling of 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home' accompanies his first rally, segueing the transition through a shot of the American flag.[142] And, ultimately (to introduce the credits), a band performance of 'You're a Grand Old Flag' sounds as he prepares to speak at a Democratic Convention.[143] Kael's assessment that this final scene was like a 'Resurrection', with Kovic moving into heavenly white lights 'and John Williams lay[ing] on the trumpets', indicates her awareness of the patriotic potency of the martial *topos*. Kael seems to be under the impression that the score constructs this final characterisation, yet she was mistaken; Williams did not 'lay on the trumpets'. The band tune was a pre-existing track, with its diegetic position established via mix and narrative setting. The reviewer's misapprehension betrays the connotations of the brass band *topos* and its connections to ideals of duty and nationalism. As I have indicated, the score is mostly associated with Kovic's mourning of a past America. (The final twenty minutes of the film, the period of activism and of an emerging national attitude, excludes score altogether). Yet, while the 'Elegy' trumpet marks his increasingly cynical outlook, a secondary theme continues to romanticise that lost utopia, 'recall[ing] the happy youth of this boy', as Williams detailed, 'not [with] a military trumpet, but [with] an American trumpet'.[144]

It is interesting that Williams sees a distinction between the American and militaristic resonances of the trumpet call in this context. Williams clearly had performers on his mind when making this comment, explicitly linking the 'American' sound to his preferred Boston-based trumpeter Tim Morrison — who performed many of the lyrical Americana passages discussed in this thesis including in *Born on the Fourth of July* — rather than the 'military', more athletic, style of Maurice Murphy — Williams's principal at the LSO since the original *Star Wars*.[145] Yet, while their idiosyncratic or even nation-specific playing styles might offer a means of delineating the 'military' from the 'American', in narrative terms these are not so easily separated. In the case of 'Elegy', so associated is it with Kovic's early journey to becoming a soldier that neither he nor the theme seem to distinguish Americanism from militarism. This understanding is a symptom

[142] This Civil War-era folksong composed by Patrick Gilmore is performed collectively by protestors. The performers and the song seem to coalesce ideas of grassroots action with the folksong tradition, a device by the filmmakers to connect their modern action with an emblem of US culture.
[143] The same diegetic tune is played at both July Fourth parades earlier in the narrative.
[144] Williams quoted in Richard Dyer, 'You'll Be Hearing From Him', *The Boston Globe*, 31 August 1989, 77, 84.
[145] Indeed, after distinguishing the trumpet sounds, Williams said, 'And I knew I wanted Tim — he has an American sound and his playing is very touching, very beautiful. There is real serenity in his playing.' Ibid.

of Kovic's naive patriotic ideology, itself defined by conventional notions of masculinity — evident in the first narrative appearance of the 'Elegy' as Kovic gazes at a 'god[-like]' Marine recruiter with 'virginal high-mindedness'.[146] If Kovic's adolescence so profoundly conforms to notions of mid-century American patriotism and masculinity, it is somewhat bewildering that, when interviewed, Williams actively delineates the American trumpet and the military trumpet.

The non-militaristic 'American trumpet' to which Williams refers may be the few distinct variations on the string-centred pastoral theme, 'Massapequa… The Early Days'.[147] This multi-faceted theme pervades most chapters of Kovic's life and has two halves: both are distinctly nostalgic; however, while the prayerful string section is melancholic, the answering trumpet solo comes across as innocent and sentimental. There are three notable instances where the trumpet states this innocent pastoral theme: in the prologue as young Kovic runs home to hear Kennedy's inauguration speech ('ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country'), during his homecoming from Vietnam, and when he returns to America with renewed purpose after living with other wounded (and jaded) veterans in Mexico. Given these contextual associations, I take this theme to be a 'Homecoming' theme (Figure 10).[148] Ideas of a return — to family, to home, to country — are marked by these trumpet cues, making 'Homecoming' a natural fit with the 'American trumpet' sound that Williams describes. However, rather than the theme merely recalling 'the happy youth of the boy', it seems rather to attempt to revive that idealised America (embodied by that Fourth of July of 1956).[149]

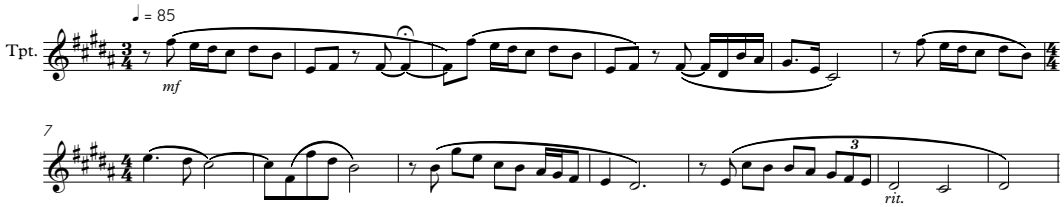

Figure 10: *Born on the Fourth of July*, the 'Homecoming' trumpet call, derived from the pastoral theme and related to the prominent 'Elegy' theme via the characteristic semiquaver step movement.[150]

This 'American trumpet' takes on a grander function. As the composer stated, this pastoral-associated theme was designed 'to sing in opposition to the realism', an aesthetic purpose that would make this 'Homecoming' trumpet a theme of fantasy, heightening Kovic's

[146] Kael, 'Born on the Fourth of July'.
[147] Timothy Scheurer described the theme as 'redolent of the lyrical opening theme of Barber's Violin Concerto'. The concerto may well have been a model or temp track, given Stone's fondness for *Adagio for Strings* in *Platoon* (1986). See Timothy Scheurer, 'John Williams and Film Music Since 1971', *Popular Music & Society*, 21/2 (1997), 59–72: 67.
[148] This title is taken from its final arrangement during the return from Mexico montage in the cue 'Homecoming'. Here, it is distinctly pop-inflected with synths and a recurring drumbeat; the trumpet performance sounds increasingly free given its more expansive range and less rigidly structured phrases.
[149] For an overview of the narrative cueing of both 'Elegy' and 'Homecoming' themes see Appendix A.
[150] The transcription here is based on its arrangement in 'Massapequa… The Early Days'.

mythicised reminiscences of 50s and early 60s domesticity and suburbia.[151] Given that this optimistic trumpet so associates with a nostalgic fantasy, the more prominent 'Elegy' trumpet, by contrast, would seem to signify the disillusioned America to which Kovic has returned, the bleak reality. Through its distinctively associative *topos*, 'Elegy' offers a military funeral for that utopic past that is wistfully recalled elsewhere. Consequently, while Williams may have sought to distinguish the 'military trumpet' from the 'American trumpet' in the case of the youthful 'Homecoming' theme, the 'Elegy' trumpet makes no such distinction, betraying the pervasive militaristic resonances of the bugle-redolent *topos* and further entwining Americanism with militarism by offering that lost nation a military funeral through this ceremonial elegy. If 'Homecoming' recalls Kovic's happy youth, 'Elegy' mourns it.

While Stone's thematic concerns and political inquiries are far more critical than those of the steadfastly sentimental Spielberg, Williams's idiomatic consistency across both directors' war films indicates that historically cemented patriotic beliefs are difficult to shake. Both narratives feature the longing for a return, an honouring of sacrifice, and a sense of national(ist) obligation, all of which are, to varying degrees, musically signified through brass calls. The meta-narratives of *Born on the Fourth of July* (hereafter *Born*) demonstrate not only Stone's 'mythologist's commitment to the existence of grand narratives' (in Lehman's words) but also the role that funereal brass soli play in facilitating the cultural-cinematic rituals of reflection in the war epic.[152] The meta-resonances of the idiom continued into the next Stone-Williams collaboration three years later, moving from the war epic into the political thriller/drama.

Memorialising Martyrs

The recollective and myth-making qualities of Williams's 1991 score for *JFK* have been detailed extensively by Lehman in 'Scoring the President: Myth and Politics in John Williams's *JFK* and *Nixon*'.[153] Lehman brands the eponymous 'Theme from *JFK*' as rather a "'theme for'" JFK, a classification motivated by awareness of Williams's personally reflective composition process (the score was written after Williams's set-visit to Dealey Plaza in Dallas, inspired by Williams's own feelings about Kennedy, and was largely and atypically completed before the final cut of the film).[154] Lehman also notes the 'absence, fragility, or ephemerality' of the theme, which brings attention to the nationalistic void left by the martyred president.[155] Given that Lehman focusses on the mythopoeia of Williams's score as consistent with, and also independent from, Stone's

[151] Dyer, 'You'll Be Hearing From Him', 77, 84.
[152] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 415.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 423, 425.
[155] Ibid., 431.

aesthetic practices, an opportunity remains to consider the idiomatic resonances and meta-reflective nature of this 'requiem' for Kennedy (as Stone dubbed the titular theme).[156]

The reflective solo trumpet theme (Figure 11) draws upon American-associated codes via multiple means: a wide-open spaced melody, a largely diatonic modality with some folk modal inflections, and the 'cowboy half-cadence' (♭VII–V) of the second phrase.[157] Schneller and Lehman both assess the miscellany of American codes as elevating Kennedy to the status of hero (both 'of the noble heights of Camelot' and of the frontier), making a musical monument of the man 'whose life has always been imbued with a mythical dimension, no less powerful today than [when] he was alive', as Williams observed.[158] Rather than outlining the various identity-complexes that surround the mythology associated with the revered president, I am interested in what thematic instrumentation and style might imply. The solo trumpet (or occasionally horn) appears — like the image of the president — as a 'lone voice of dignity' in its own right, a beacon in contrast to the denser, dissonant cues linked to the assassination plot.[159] As the centrepiece of the score, it submits itself as a musical mirror of the stalwart district attorney Jim Garrison (Kevin Costner), whose investigation puts him at the centre of a conspiratorial whirlwind. Yet additionally, like *SPR* and *Born*, the evocative theme, register, and timbre also effect a marked ceremoniousness.

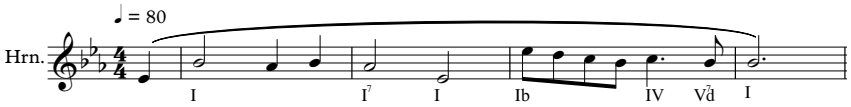

Figure 11: *JFK*, 'Theme from *JFK*'.

The dedicative nature of the elegiac theme heightens evocations of a state funeral. Beyond the solo trumpet, the funereal *topos* is established via a snare tattoo motif and bagpipes that evoke the memory of the Black Watch at Kennedy's funeral.[160] These associated timbres and effects enhance the memorial qualities of Stone's film, itself his own reflection on legacy, historiography, and nationally accepted truths. Yet, while the film doggedly probes and critiques the government and military-industrial complex, the music takes time to mourn.

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156 Stone cited in ibid., 424.
157 Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 55; Lehman, 'Hollywood Cadences', 4.11.
158 Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 55; Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 425–6; Williams, liner notes for *Suite from J.F.K.* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1992).
159 Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 412.
160 Lehman also observes the recall of the snare tattoo — 'The Drummer's Salute' — as a brief allusion to both Kennedy and *JFK* in Williams's *Nixon* score. See Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 422. Additionally, Williams's desire to 'portray something of the young president's character, including a reference to his Irish ancestry', is evident by the presence of the Celtic-associated bagpipes, but more obvious in the jovial, lilting contrasting B section when flutes and piano introduce a theme in uneven and alternating compound metres. See John Williams, liner notes for *Suite from J.F.K.* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1992). Laura Anderson observes Williams invoking a sense of Irishness via similarly lilting and alternating compound metres in *Angela's Ashes* (Alan Parker, 1999). See Laura Anderson, 'Sounding an Irish Childhood: John Williams's Score for *Angela's Ashes*', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 277–92: 288–89.

Just as the film mourns Kennedy's loss, it (like *Born*) also mourns the loss of an older America. Stone, like his protagonist, is not just sceptical of history and the Kennedy assassination, but also takes opportunities to treat the past as 'the object of idealization', as Burgoyne has detailed and as the music reveals.[161] Under Stone's control, specific pre-written cues function to memorialise America's past and ennoble Garrison (the keeper of this past and its associated values and beliefs). Following its 'baptismal' association with Kennedy, the central theme accompanies Garrison as he begins his investigation, when he says he will fight for 'real justice', and also after the conclusion of the case (among other narrative situations).[162] These thematically signified actions link him musically with Kennedy, uniting them under a single thematic code of romanticised honour and steadfastness. Despite Garrison's ultimate loss at court (his three-assassin scenario and suggestion of conspiracy proving unconvincing to the jury), the theme continues to valorise his actions even in failure, reinforcing the impression that his efforts were not in vain but given in the service of something greater — something of which Kennedy himself, and, indeed, America of old, might have approved.[163]

The thematic relation of Garrison's actions to Kennedy serves as a means of justification. It permits the questioning of governmentally recognised facts by positioning the investigation as a continuation of the martyr's patriotic legacy and his promise of the prospect of a better future. With Garrison's probing of conflicting historiographies, he questions (again, like Kovic in *Born*) the nature of the America in which he has found himself, a process that leads ultimately to a scene of reflection. Spurred on by his search for truth, the audience too is invited to reflect, question, and doubt. According to Stone, this was one of the film's purposes: 'In hindsight, the film is about more than the murder of a president. It asks the audience to think for itself and begin the process of deconstructing the meaning of its own history.'[164] While Williams's more dissonant cues might accompany Garrison's deconstructions (and encourage our own), the trumpet theme is not so readily critical.

The trumpet call, more than merely perpetuating the assimilated American identity, encourages familiar rituals of reflection and a return to tradition. In some of the (few) quieter moments in the narrative, a ceremonial *topos* invites contemplation. This process might appear contradictory to the 'metahistorical' film, an aesthetic that Burgoyne notes as 'questioning the

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[161] Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film*, 145. Burgoyne observes this relationship to history with specific reference to the addressing of the Zapruder film and the Warren Commission Report in the narrative.
[162] Justin London, 'Leitmotifs and Musical Reference in the Classical Film Score', *Music and Cinema*, eds. James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer (London: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 85–98: 87.
[163] A quote from *Nixon* is illustrative of this notion of Kennedy as an ideal. The soon-to-resign President Nixon addresses the portrait of his former rival saying, 'when they look at you, they see what they want to be. When they look at me, they see what they are.'
[164] Stone quoted in Robert Brent Toplin, 'Introduction', in *Oliver Stone's USA: Film, History, and Controversy*, ed. Robert Brent Toplin (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 3–25: 15.

dominant understanding of a particular event, and that challenges the way the history of that event has been written and disseminated.'[165] In spite of the anti-establishment and critical aesthetic of *JFK*, the rituals of the score facilitate a return to a supposedly lost America. In this regard, and antithetically to the jarring aesthetic and critical tone of the narrative, Stone is 'exceedingly traditional' — as Robert Rosenstone observed of the director's insistence on revealing the truths and learning the 'moral lessons of history'.[166]

This traditionalism is most apparent in the musical treatment of two scenes that take place at national memorials. The first is a short transition between settings: as Garrison goes to meet the whistle-blower 'X' at the National Mall, a solo horn marks the establishing shot of the Lincoln Memorial. The second, some ten minutes later, is a cue called 'Arlington', which features a string elegy as Garrison reflects at Kennedy's cenotaph, the Eternal Flame. Both assassinated presidents (Lincoln and Kennedy) are invoked through their commemorative visual icons and Williams's funereal *topoi*, which act as an aural compliment to their monuments and, moreover, to their legacies. Williams may have intended a more concrete sense of musical unity between the two presidents, given that the 'Arlington' cue, in its concert arrangement and on the soundtrack, begins with a horn statement of the principal 'Theme from *JFK*'. However, the horn solo does not appear in the Arlington scene in the film — likely cut by Stone or re-written by Williams. In place of a potential thematic connection proffered by the titular theme, the affect-related *topoi* provide a ritualistic connection between the scenes, and encourage contemplation on sacrifice, duty, and the distance between past and present. Undeterred by narrative contestation of dominant ideologies, the soundtrack supports that 'assimilating identification' of America through codified *topoi* in these ritualised narrative sequences. Perhaps this is less of an 'assimilating identification' and more of a musically endorsed acculturation?[167] Despite the critical surface of the film narrative, its score (directly manipulated by Stone in post-production) consistently appeals to those same traditions and troped musical norms as did scores for less (national-)self-scrutinising films like *SPR*.

The mourning for presidents and their pasts in the National Mall and Arlington sequences does not expediate grieving; instead, it offers a parallel between the martyrs, and concretises the desires of Stone and Garrison to preserve, or return to, the Lincolnian ideal that Kennedy had promised. In evoking through related musical means 'the mythical fallen King[s]' (a sobriquet Lehman bestows upon Kennedy, which is similarly applicable to Lincoln), Williams

[165] Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film*, 125.
[166] Robert Rosenstone, 'Oliver Stone as Historian', in *Oliver Stone's USA: Film, History, and Controversy*, ed. Robert Brent Toplin (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 26–40: 38.
[167] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.

reveals how simple these *topoi* ultimately are.[168] The musical rituals that often invoke these martyrs cannot resurrect them but can only resummon their idealism; such ideological recollection endows Garrison and his pursuits with a nationalistic importance, and continually reminds us of the significance of these myths. In so doing, the music seems to suggest not that America is 'always already lost' (as Lehman says of Kennedy) but that Garrison's heroic duty, and ritualised remembrance, may preserve it.[169]

1.4: In Memoriam

The brass-call examples from the films I have considered above implicate Williams's scores in a wider meta-narrative of reflection and remembrance. As I suggested when Ryan and his team bury Wade, when Kovic visits Wilson's grave, and when Garrison reflects at Arlington's Eternal Flame, the audience, by way of context and the connotative *topos*, are invited to meditate. Of course, the filmic audience might not necessarily be moved; they are, however, encouraged to share in the quiet moment of reflection with the characters; more than simply marking contemplation, the music invites us to participate. It is these quiet scenes in which the non-diegetic score is often at its most conspicuous: music here takes over from dialogue and almost subsumes diegetic sound.[170] With consistent static camerawork and simple shot compositions, the non-diegetic eulogy becomes the most active (invisible) agent in accentuating the emotional narrative.

What I identify is not a deliberate strategy of any one composer, director, or screenwriter, nor something specific to America alone or to films with an American perspective. Rather, I consider these films to be implicated in a wider cultural practice of, and attitude to, national remembrance. The United States has a unique remove from the physical destruction of WWI, WWII, Vietnam, Korea, and other battlegrounds of the twentieth century, which manifests a particular attitude toward commemoration.[171] Memorialisation in America often takes the physical form of commemorative monuments that serve as embodiments of fights, not *on* US soil, but *for* US soil. So central are these ideas to the national culture that in the centre of the nation's capital, around the National Mall, monuments to historic battles are placed in proximity to those for Founding Fathers (Jefferson) and Presidents (Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Lincoln).[172] More than monuments for sacrifice, honour, and duty, these war memorials — and

[168] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 431.
[169] Ibid.
[170] In a parodic take on such scenes, one could easily imagine a slow pan to the side revealing Williams conducting the cue live (as in similar parodies in *Blazing Saddles* with Count Basie and His Orchestra or *Family Guy*'s 'Blue Harvest' with an animated version of Williams himself).
[171] My thanks, again, to Martin Knust for his helpful correspondence regarding this issue.
[172] The National Park Service's website even introduces Washington D.C. with the words 'this is where the nation comes to remember and where history is made.' See 'Icons in the Nation's Capital', *National Park Service*, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/index.htm> [8 March 2023].

these 'popular history' films — are shrines which facilitate active reflection upon what the American fight is for, and consequently what it might mean to be American.

In this regard, Williams's funereal brass calls (or the related 'elegiac register' of a Samuel Barber-esque string cue like 'Arlington') are most pertinent.[173] As Matessino writes on the subject of *SPR*, the score

> compel[s] the listener to ponder the thousands of names etched on far too many monuments across our lands, the loss that war inevitably brings and the scars it leaves on the souls of nations, families, and individuals of immeasurable bravery.[174]

(Note that Matessino's metonym for the dead is names on monuments, not headstones, flag-draped coffins, nor empty chairs at empty tables.) In 'compelling the listener to ponder', Williams's music adopts an active role in enabling ritualistic memorialisation. Taking the lead from pieces like 'Taps' or 'The Last Post', and following the regular band performances at Memorial and Veterans Day, Williams brings the musical makeup of the veritable remembrance industry into these Hollywood films. The resulting process of acculturation appears to be an in-built convention of genre, an ideologically coded and culturally pertinent narrative trope that bespeaks a similar and related musical trope. Williams, as one who came of age in the forties (giving him a specific perspective) and being more musically involved in military activities than most other film composers (with his Air Force experience and patriotic commissions), might not only be personally inclined on some level towards this particular *topos* but also be in a unique position to endorse these musical codes. Through these film scores, Williams has perpetuated these reflective, ideologically marked musical gestures and helped condition contemporary audiences to unwittingly participate in their ceremonies.[175]

In the United States, these rituals go beyond honouring the past by placing historical burdens and beliefs on the present. The wars of America's past, both the nation-forming Revolutionary War and Civil War, and the culture-shaping wars of the twentieth century, place an imperative on (and serve as a model for) the twenty-first century, encouraging the maintenance of that traditional mode of patriotism.[176] Many Veterans or Memorial Day speeches exemplify this received attitude. Take, for example, President Bill Clinton's 1995 Veterans Day speech at Arlington National Cemetery:

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[173] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 218–20.
[174] Matessino, liner notes for *Saving Private Ryan*, 13.
[175] Martin Knust, 'March and Fanfare: Military Topoi in the Works of John Williams', paper presented at *John Williams, dernier des symphonistes?* (University of Évry, December 2022).
[176] In its most extreme form, the burst of patriotic fervour following WWI took the form of '100% Americanism', an exclusionary racist slogan that charged fascistic activities into the twentieth century. See David Reynolds, *America: Empire of Liberty* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 321–27; for a broader investigation of the history related slogans see Sarah Churchwell, *Behold America: A History of America First and the American Dream* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

> Let me urge all of us to summon the spirit that joined that generation, that stood together and cared for one another. The ideas they fought for are *ours* to sustain. The dreams they defended are now *ours* to guarantee.[177] (emphasis mine)

As this extract exemplifies, the attitude of remembrance is not solely to mourn but to empower (the proverbial) us. Musically, this might be reflected in the ritualistic calls of the films discussed above, where the *topos* dignifies the victims (Wade, Wilson, Kennedy) while also ennobling the heroes (Miller, Kovic, Garrison). These cues in these moments are not only dedicative but also comprise something of a civics lesson, a legacy, from which the survivors, or later generations, can learn. These meaningful duty-driven deaths are not only honoured and remembered but signify patriotic dedication: '*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*', as can be read above the entrance to the Arlington Memorial Amphitheatre, or 'Honour. Duty. Sacrifice' as (a character credited as) Legion Commander says by way of introducing Kovic's Fourth of July homecoming speech.

In addition to reinforcing tradition and remembrance through context and music, such films, as Barbra Biesecker notes, are 'predicated on retooling the [modern] category of citizenship' to reinvigorate a sense of nationhood.[178] Biesecker aptly names these films 'memory texts' (citing *SPR* specifically), given that their rhetoric is enforced through a sense of reflection and that they are set in mythic moments of national history; as is exemplified, in *SPR*, by the theme of sacrifice and the commemorative framing scenes of the veteran Ryan at Normandy. Where the key themes of these texts come most to the surface is in the musically empowered ceremonial scenes. The patriotically charged soli seem to be saying 'Earn this!' (Miller's final words to Ryan) to the film's protagonists, invigorating or retooling them by appealing to ideals embodied by the past and the principle of sacrifice *pro patria*. These brass-centred paeans are central agents in these 'memory texts' and unify ideas of sacrifice and renewed purpose.[179]

As rhetorical agents, these *topoi* are inherently political, colouring the reimagined pasts of these films to influence reflections on the present, and relying on musical 'paramnesias' to uphold and sustain American virtues, ideologies, and traditions.[180] Lauren Berlant defines this phenomenon as using devices that

> organize consciousness, not by way of explicit propaganda, but by replacing and simplifying memories people actually have with image [or aural] traces of political experience about which people can have political feelings that link them to other citizens and to patriotism.[181]

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[177] Bill Clinton quoted in Biesecker, 'Remembering World War II', 394.
[178] Ibid., 395.
[179] The dialogic trumpet soli, by Tim Morrison and Thomas Rolfs (both specifically thanked by Spielberg in liner notes), were performed from the balconies of Boston's Symphony Hall, so contributing a distant and airy sound to the score. See Matessino, liner notes for *Saving Private Ryan*, 16.
[180] Biesecker, 'Remembering World War II', 397.
[181] Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 57.

While the *topoi* discussed in this chapter often seem to have straightforward functions, they each operate as sonic paramnesias that facilitate the reimagining of America: the march of *The Patriot* might help to sanitise the depictions of violence by reminding us of an ultimate patriotic purpose; 'Midway March' actively seems to try and make us forget the casualties of war and instead celebrate victory; and 'The March from "1941"' is made political through prestigious performances, thus reshaping original associations of the bombastic parody. Williams might not explicitly draw from a specific Sousa march or cite 'The Last Post', but by tracing these politicised and nationalised *topoi* in historically appropriate, culturally charged, and ideologically conforming scenes (individual 'memory texts' in and of themselves), he encourages unified responses that map on to the received image, the 'assimilating identification', of America.[182]

[182] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.

Chapter Two: Crossing Copland's West

As a signifier of the American landscape, Copland-influenced pastoralism has become an ingrained component of the vocabulary of Hollywood film scores. For Williams, the sound seems to be a mandatory accompaniment to visual representations of "traditional", quasi-mythicised images of America, or narrative contexts where idealised cultures and values surface. An early scene in *SPR* reveals the ideological potency of the idiom; this most obvious manifestation accompanies Mrs Ryan's walk to her front door, after spotting a military car approaching (Image 2). The preceding moment of calm, of simple domesticity, is one of the film's few scenes entirely removed from the war.[1] As she crosses from her kitchen sink to the porch, a short *andante* pastoral woodwind passage grounds the moment in stillness, as if to say, 'this is America' (Figure 12). This citation of Copland and his pastoral style seems almost prompted by the Rockwellian image and doorway frame, a common device of the Hollywood western made most famous by John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956). Here, the Coplandesque is a means of according with convention, balancing the depiction of a simple and traditional American life with an evocative musical code.

Image 2: *Saving Private Ryan*, doorway shot of Mrs Ryan waiting on her porch, portending bad news.

[1] Other scenes removed from the combat in France are always about the war: the operations of the war office at home, or Ryan's visit to the Normandy Cemetery. In this moment, Mrs Ryan (at least textually) is carrying out quotidian tasks; it is only the audience's expectations that bring the war to this interstitial moment.

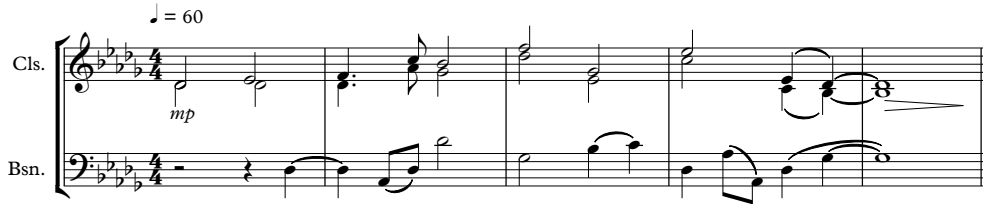

Figure 12: Williams, *Saving Private Ryan*, 'Omaha Beach', clarinet and bassoon trio. Transcribed from *Saving Private Ryan: Piano Solo* (New York: NY, Cherry Lane Music, 1998).

As with homages in other Williams scores, the Copland reference seems to be done knowingly; such pastoral passages invite comparison to the source of inspiration. Obvious references and vague allusions to this sound often recall (and reinforce) the value-system or culture with which Copland's popular works have become intertwined, by virtue of their cultural dissemination and context. This is the case in Williams's score to *Amistad*, where recurring Coplandesque gestures do not imply a pastoral setting (as is the case in *SPR*), but rather endow the actions of the American protagonists with a sense of nationalistic purpose. As the film extolls American virtues, with President John Quincy Adams preaching on morality and the lessons to be learned from history, this manifest idealism also echoes through a planing woodwind passage (Figure 13) redolent of 'The Open Prairie' from Copland's first ballet, *Billy the Kid*. As Riley and Smith note, these allusions to national-associated musics might 'activate the symbolism of the nation', broadly signifying a particular image-type that is taken to be representative of American identity as a whole.[2]

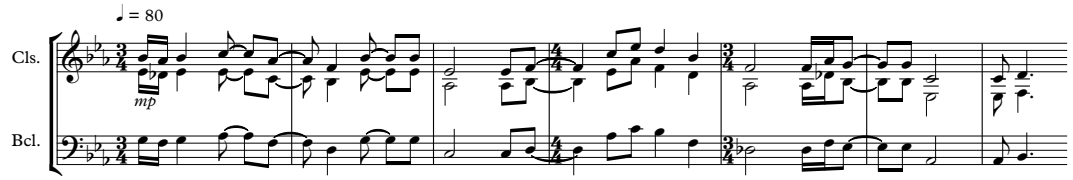

Figure 13: Williams, *Amistad*, 'What is Their Story?', a typically Coplandesque planing wind passage. Transcribed from *Amistad: Piano/Vocal Selections* (New York, NY: Cherry Lane Music, 1998).

These two Coplandesque examples draw upon that established pastoral soundworld via the most obvious of musical markers. Often accompanying thoroughly unsurprising imagery — establishing shots of open landscapes, nostalgic depictions of suburban idylls, montages of domestic life, tableaus of familial bliss — this Copland-inflected *topos* has become a clearly identifiable trope. As Neil Lerner has argued in his article 'Copland's Music of Wide-Open Spaces', the idiom has become a conventionalised code for nostalgia, traditionalism, and longing — each drawing on interrelated concepts of memory and an imagined past.[3] For this reason, the pastoral trope has found a particular currency in westerns, where such ideological and cultural

[2] Riley and Smith, *Nation and Classical Music*, 216.
[3] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 483.

associations, and their related affects, repeatedly come to the fore. Ubiquitous in Hollywood more generally, this coded sound is a fundamental component of Williams's filmic vocabulary.[4]

This chapter highlights these romanticised connotations of the pastoral, while offering a more in-depth examination of the ways Williams either quotes or alludes to related *topoi*. With a focus on Williams's westerns specifically, I pinpoint how ingrained the idiom was before he wrote his most celebrated scores, and thus how it has come to be varied, and assimilated into his sound, as his career progressed. The history of American pastoralism in art music and cinema is too extensive to cover in a single chapter alone; instead, I outline the trajectory of the Coplandesque, from (and preceding) Copland's popular ballets of the late thirties and early forties to its popularisation in westerns of the late fifties. This historical overview will demonstrate the role of Williams's music in developing a sound so often linked solely to Copland, but one which has evolved far beyond him.

Central to Williams's Americana, and to all those composers who influenced and were influenced by Copland's pastoralism, is the assimilation of a folk sound. Accordingly, I begin by examining the adaptation of familiar tunes and the composition of new ones, an overview that facilitates comparisons between the folk-inspired tunes of both Williams and Copland. This brief analysis also argues for a broadening of the pastoral trope identified by Lerner, and shows the value of a more fluid understanding of what the term 'Coplandesque' might mean. I accomplish this by establishing the processes of folk interpolation that are borrowed from Copland and those that are more characteristic of Williams. Following this, I take a step back from melody specifically, and briefly overview Copland's 'Street on a Frontier Town' from *Billy the Kid*. The work presents a concise catalogue of western-associated features, and, additionally, serves as an essential, and highly influential, stepping-stone to two landmark westerns — *The Big Country* and *The Magnificent Seven* — in which the Copland sound flourished and its filmic associations concretised.

While this chronological overview culminates with Williams's westerns and a case study of *The Cowboys*, it is not intended to position the score as some inevitable point of arrival nor an apex of the Copland sound in Williams's oeuvre. Although this early period of Williams's career

[4] The English pastoral style evident in *Jane Eyre* (Delbert Mann, 1970) and *War Horse* appears to be a Williams favourite. The composer wrote in relation to the latter film that, 'Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frederick Delius, George Butterworth, the Australian Percy Grainger, among others, all contributed to a rich literature that I've loved and admired for a long time. In a very real sense, 'Dartmoor, 1912' [a cue that became a concert work] was written as an homage to these great men.' See Williams, liner notes for *Dartmoor, 1912 (From the Motion Picture War Horse)* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2011). Elsewhere, in an interview for *The Telegraph*, he revealed that, 'I admire the great musical tradition in this country, so I suppose you could say I'm an Anglophile.' See Adam Sweeting, 'Lights, camera… baton', *The Telegraph*, 14 March 2005 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3638737/Lights-camera-baton.html#> [01 May 2023]. In addition to English pastoralism, William has also demonstrated a command over an Austro-Germanic style, with *Heidi* (Delbert Mann, 1968) adopting Mahler-inspired horn calls for images of the Swiss Alps. Williams's Anglophilia is probed in more detail in Samantha Tripp, *Villainy with a British Accent: The 'Imperial March' as Imperial(ist) March* (MA Thesis, Tufts University, 2023).

does represent his pastoral writing at its most concentrated, it is by no means confined to his pre-*Jaws* filmography alone. Variations of the *topos* recur throughout his career, numerous examples of which are mentioned in this chapter.[5] Coloured by contextualisation with *The Cowboys*, this stylistic pervasiveness is further illustrated by my close reading of a scene from *Superman*, which embraces a broader understanding of Williams's Americana and establishes the mythopoetic role of this *topos*. By studying the pastoral idiom in films such as *The Cowboys* and *Superman*, I establish how the nexus of references that shapes Williams's American pastoral sound is broader than previous academic literature would have us believe. Recognising the composer's pastoralism as an assimilation of an American vernacular rather than a citation of a troped idiom, I argue that it is Williams who most fully cultivates the pastoral *topoi* that are typically labelled Coplandesque.

2.1: Overviewing the Coplandesque

While discussions of an American sound often begin with Copland, Virgil Thomson was among the first American composers to associate that now-familiar style with imagery of American landscapes. Following his *Symphony on a Hymn Tune* (1928), Thomson realised that hymns and folk songs 'opened up a gold mine of nostalgic feelings'.[6] He would go on to take advantage of the idiomatic associations and accessibility of familiar melodies — 'the musical terminology of the man on the street' (as P. Glanville-Hicks characterised it) — in his two scores for documentaries on agrarian American life, *The Plow That Broke The Plains* (Pare Lorentz, 1936) and *The River* (Pare Lorentz, 1937).[7] The pairing of the sparse folk sound with rural imagery in these documentaries could be regarded as the beginning of a trend that continues in Hollywood to this day. While this idiom-image combination has come to be associated with Copland, the younger composer was not loath to acknowledge Thomson's influence, noting that his predecessor's 'midwestern style', with its 'simple tunes and square rhythms and Sunday school harmonies', offered 'a lesson in how to treat musical Americana'.[8] For *The Plow That Broke The Plains*, he praised the 'earthy and rather American quality' deriving from Thomson's 'thin' orchestration, especially its resulting 'openness of feeling'.[9] The style possessed an ability to conjure what he

[5] Some of Williams's pastoral works go unexplored in this process; this is for brevity's sake rather than an implied comment on their quality and importance. They include *Tom Sawyer* (Don Taylor, 1973) (omitted more for reasons of Williams's more prominent role as an adaptor and orchestrator of songs), *The River*, *Stanley & Iris*, *Rosewood*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *The Patriot*.
[6] Thomson quoted in Achter, *Americanism and American Art Music*, 288. He would continue this processes of quotation throughout his career, including in his opera *The Mother of Us All* (1947) and later in *Pilgrims and Pioneers* (1964).
[7] P. Glanville-Hicks, 'Virgil Thomson', *The Musical Quarterly*, 35/2 (April 1949), 209–25: 215.
[8] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 94; Thomson quoting Copland in Achter, *Americanism and American Art Music*, 512. In his thesis on American documentary scores, Lerner notes that Copland adopted a selection of traits from Thomson: 'the use of documentary as a way to write music for a broad public; the use of a simpler harmonic idiom; the use of borrowed folk melodies; and the use of fugues in a documentary score'. See Lerner, *The Classical Documentary Score in American Films of Persuasion: Contexts and Case Studies, 1936–1945* (PhD Thesis, Duke University, 1997), 272.
[9] Copland quoted in Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 485.

called the 'homely virtues of rural America', an assessment that may help to explain Copland's subsequent adaptation of it in programmatic works concerned with the American West.[10]

The constituent gestures of the *topos* have been overviewed by many, yet Lerner's summary can be taken as sufficiently representative: melodies are often disjunct (set against conjunct basslines) with wide ranges, and contain repeated motives that are marked by fourths and fifths; harmonies are frequently diatonic and widely spaced with parallel movement, featuring pedal points, and a slow or almost static sense of progression; in terms of instrumentation, wind and brass are often favoured, particularly the higher and lighter timbres; textures are predominantly homophonic.[11] (Figures 12 and 13 have already highlighted many of these features.) As informative as Lerner's article is, it addresses Copland's folk-influenced melodies only briefly. Given that folk tunes could effectively ground images of the West with a semblance of verisimilitude, with tunes lending their contextual associations and a sense of the authentic to re-imagined pasts, it seems prudent, then, to assess Copland's folk melodies alongside those of Williams.[12] Often taken to be emblematic of the canon of American art music, Copland's ballets — *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring* — each used folk tunes as a basis and as a means for Copland to give his new sounds nationalistic roots. (While 'Simple Gifts' from *Appalachian Spring* is perhaps the most famous of his folk quotations, it will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.) The cowboy tunes and their variations in ballets like *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo* allowed the music to signify the West and — more importantly — all it was seen to stand for: liberty, Manifest Destiny, American exceptionalism.[13] The abundance of folk tunes employed by Copland in 'Street on a Frontier Town' (the second movement of *Billy the Kid*) and the legacy of the ballet, make it a useful starting point.

'Street on a Frontier Town' begins with the tune 'Great Grandad', which Copland supposedly took from the transcription of John White and George Shackley (Figure 14.1).[14] Copland preserves much of its melodic character, with its predominant step movement and

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[10] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 94.
[11] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 482–83.
[12] Of course, neither Copland nor Thomson was the first to think of using native folk sources for nationalistic purposes; other folk sources influenced many American composers who preceded them. Broadly speaking, in the nineteenth century, some American composers (such as Anthony Philip Heinrich and Edward McDowell) took inspiration from the melodies of Native American cultures. Subsequently, Dvořák encouraged an assimilation of African American traditions (inspiring Henry F. Gilbert and Daniel Gregory Mason). In the early twentieth century, Charles Ives quoted disparate traditions, including patriotic songs, hymn tunes, and popular songs. Around the 1920s, attention turned to jazz, the generation of composers studying with Nadia Boulanger in France becoming inspired by the potential of the idiom, as demonstrated in the music of Darius Milhaud, among others. Around a decade later, Anglo-American folksong tapped into multiple facets of American identity for composers of Copland's generation and reflected the background of a large portion of the population. At this time, folk quotation acted as a part of the left's idealisation of the common man, which in turn led to a romanticisation of the countryside (an American frontier, distinct from European landscapes). See Achter, *Americanism and American Art Music*, 272–3.
[13] Gayle Murchison has discussed the origins of this tradition, noting that many cowboy songs are British-American ballad contrafacts, and blend together Anglo-American balladry with Mexican, Cajun, African American, German, and Czech traditions. See Gayle Murchison, *The American Stravinsky: The Style and Aesthetics of Copland's New American Music, the Early Works, 1921–1938* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 223.
[14] Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 320.

thirds effecting a lyrical nature and its triadic contour helping to bridge tonal centres through repeated common pitch classes (for example using E♭ in octaves as mediant and then dominant, to link the modal C introduction to the statement of 'Great Grandad' in A♭ major).[15] Similarly, the rhythm of the original is varied only slightly by the removal of quick semiquaver passages and the addition of dotted figures, whose upbeat quality effects a sense of momentum. Repeated pitches are removed, lending a smoother and more sedate sound that is particularly evident in the light piccolo introduction (Figure 14.2). As though to enhance the folkish and modal feel, pentatonic outliers (like D♭) are treated as non-harmony notes (auxiliary notes, passing notes, and échappées) and, thus, de-emphasised. The goal of this type of adaptation, according to Copland, was to avoid 'spoiling [the] naturalness' of borrowed tunes; maintaining identifiability and character was always a central concern.[16]

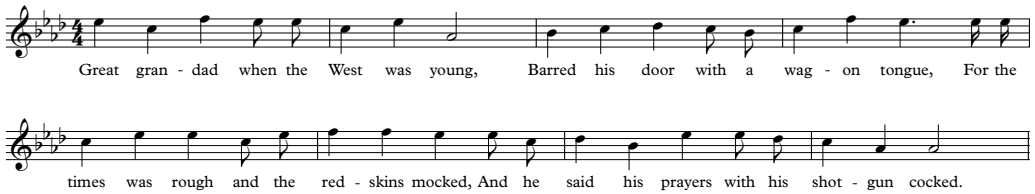

Figure 14.1: *The Lonesome Cowboy*, 'Great Grandad', transposed by author from F to A♭ for ease of comparison. Transcribed from John White and George Shackley, *The Lonesome Cowboy: Songs of the Plains and Hills* (New York: G. T. Worth, 1930).

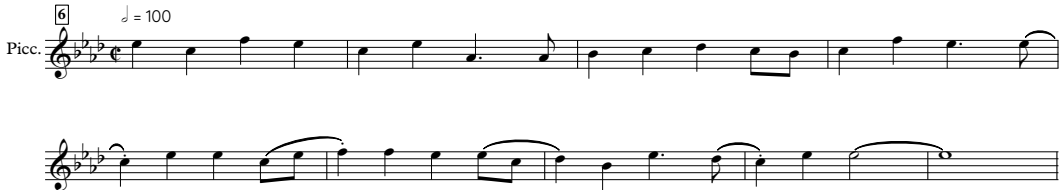

Figure 14.2: Copland, *Billy the Kid*, 'Street on a Frontier Town' (RM 6), the initial piccolo statement of 'Great Grandad'. Transcribed from for *Aaron Copland: Ballet Music* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1999).

Retaining the recognisability of a tune seems important also to Williams, as is evident in his adaptation of 'Strawberry Roan' in the score for *1941*. While citations are less common in Williams's later scores, they occurred more regularly in his early career, particularly in comedies where such references were almost a genre staple. In *1941*, the non-diegetic tune (Figure 15.1) accompanies a drunken diegetic recitation with seemingly improvised lyrics by Slim Pickens's character, Hollis P. Wood (Figure 15.2).[17] (No recorded information exists on Williams's source for the tune; for this reason, I have made a rough transcription of the song as presented in the film rather than copying an official transcription from a tunebook.) Williams's quotation matches

[15] As Stephen Creighton observes, 'Copland's motivic and thematic designs are set up to project continuously one or more emphasised [pitch classes], instead of creating linear progressions as in more traditional tonal music.' See Stephen Daniel Creighton, *A Study of Tonality in Selected Works of Aaron Copland* (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994), 70.
[16] Copland quoted in Murchison, *The American Stravinsky*, 215.
[17] For more on the tune's complex history, see John I. White, 'The Strange Career of "The Strawberry Roan"', *Arizona and the West*, 11/4 (Winter, 1969), 359–66.

the general contour and rhythms of other performances of the song; however, where the drunken recitation might suggest a rhythm of its own Williams instead endeavours to imitate pre-existing versions of the song by maintaining the characteristic anacrusis, for example. Williams vaguely simplifies the tune, replacing (what would be) a repeated note upbeat (A♭, A♭) with a rising, passing note pattern (A♭, B♭), which smoothens the melodic motion; he similarly straightens the syncopations that mark the diegetic performance (again, making it in-keeping with pre-existing arrangements).[18] Additionally, the slow-moving pedal harmonies recall the simple textures and sparseness occasionally present in the Copland ballets.[19] What is most markedly Coplandesque about this brief passage, however, is Williams's open-fourth harmonisation between the cor anglais and clarinet.

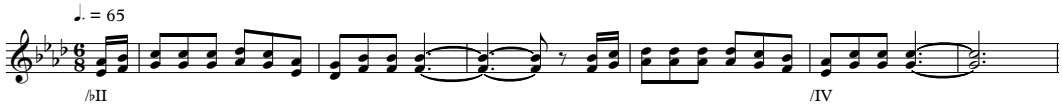

Figure 15.1: Williams, *1941*, 'Capture of Hollis', Williams's setting of 'Strawberry Roan' for cor anglais and clarinet planed in fourths. His adaptation is more characteristic of pre-existing versions than of the tune's diegetic performance (below).

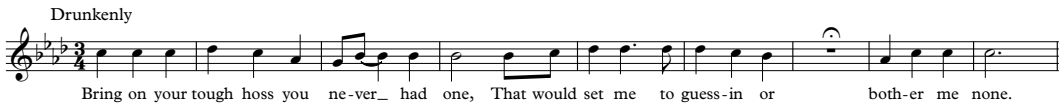

Figure 15.2: *1941*, 'Strawberry Roan', drunkenly sung by Hollis P. Wood (Slim Pickens) with improvised lyrics, a brief pause for drinking, and syncopations in bar 3 and 5.

A trait altogether distinct from altering rhythm and emphasising folkish characteristics through harmonisations and modality — and one that has come to be associated with Copland's pastoral vocabulary — is the practice of tonicising through pitch-class assertion.[20] Copland's adaptation of 'The Old Chisolm Trail' in 'Street on a Frontier Town' exemplifies this tendency. As Stephen Creighton has observed, the section in which 'Chisolm Trail' is introduced (RM 15) is largely tonally ambiguous; the tonic (F) is not confirmed through harmonic progressions or the mediant-avoiding melody but through the salience of the implied dominant (C) and the pitch-class collection (Figure 16.1).[21] Tonal status is only confirmed by establishing the dominant-tonic (C-F) relationship in the final bars. *An Outdoor Overture* (1938), named for its 'open-air quality', also makes use of this practice, albeit for a western-inspired tune of Copland's own devising.[22]

[18] To support this statement, comparisons were made to numerous (strikingly similar) facsimiles available in online music stores.
[19] For example, the almost ambivalent melody and accompaniment of 'The Open Prairie' from *Billy the Kid*.
[20] Creighton, *A Study of Tonality*, 70.
[21] Ibid., 135.
[22] Aaron Copland, *An Outdoor Overture: Orchestral Score* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, (date unknown)), 1. The work was written at a time when Copland was obliged to, in his own words, 'interrupt the orchestration' of *Billy the Kid*.

Like the ballet, a 'theme characterized by repeated notes' suddenly establishes a new tonic — with repeated Fs swiftly marking a move from a C tonal centre (Figure 16.2).[23]

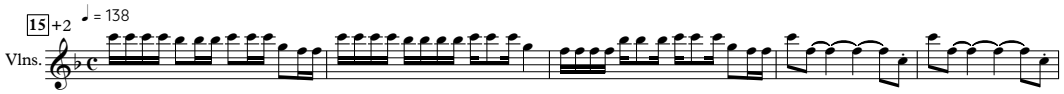

Figure 16.1: Copland, *Billy the Kid*, 'Street in a Frontier Town' (RM 15 +2), 'The Old Chisolm Trail', opening statement in violins. Transcribed from *Aaron Copland: Ballet Music* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1999).

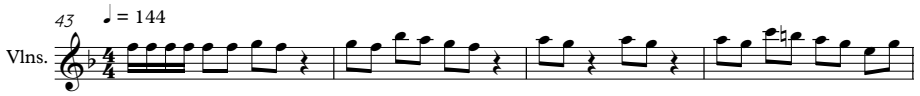

Figure 16.2: Copland, *An Outdoor Overture*, secondary theme (bars 43–46). Transcribed from *An Outdoor Overture: Orchestral Score* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, date unknown).

Perhaps some of the repeated-note patterns and tonicisation practices in these evocative pieces served as a basis for Williams's 'Training' theme in his traditional western score for *The Cowboys* (Figure 17.1). Like the aforementioned examples, Williams marks tonal centre through vigorously repeated notes to establish the tonic of the joyous pentatonic tune. (Tonal ambiguity is addressed in a more detailed analysis of the theme on pg. 99). Similarly, Williams's monophonic introduction to *The Reivers* establishes tonality through repetition of the mediant as part of a sextuplet figure (Figure 17.2). This folkish quality is emphasised by its blues ornamentations and presentation by solo guitar.

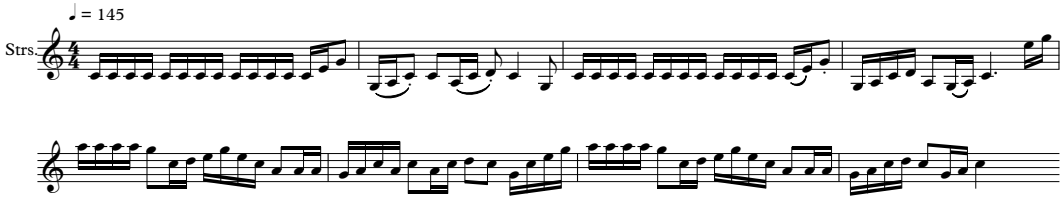

Figure 17.1: Williams, *The Cowboys Overture*, 'Training' theme emphasises C. Transcribed from *The John Williams Piano Anthology* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2016).

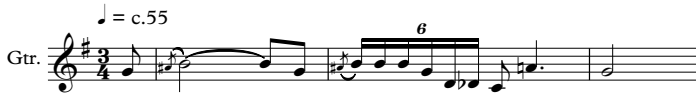

Figure 17.2: Williams, *The Reivers*, 'Main Title' introduction emphasises the mediant (B).

Along with repeated notes, repetition of a simple figure is a common Copland device that often serves as transitional (evident in the final bars of Figure 16.1).[24] Williams recalls this procedure at the conclusion of *The Reivers*, where a two-note repeated pattern facilitates a segue from 'Camptown Races' to the main theme (Figure 18.1); he cites the famous tune as non-

[23] Copland, *An Outdoor Overture*, 1.
[24] This device is also evident following the 'Chisolm Trail' section, acting as a conclusion to a syncopated folk tune of Copland's own devising (RM19).

diegetic accompaniment to diegetic singing, much like 'Strawberry Roan' in *1941*.[25] The borrowed and original tunes are bridged via a quick succession of repeated notes that continue the rhythmic character of 'Camptown Races'. The segue also facilitates a broader dominant-tonic transition ('Camptown Races' sounding in D and the original theme in G), emphasising the start of the end-credit suite, with the aid of a harp glissando. The famous folk tune is also echoed in the pentatonic secondary theme for adventure and the stolen Winton Flyer (a car that kickstarts the eponymous reivers' escapades), whose rhythm appears to be derived from 'Camptown Races' (Figure 18.2). The syncopated *short-long* phrase endings of Williams's theme (bars 2 and 4) are also a notably Copland-style figuration, evident in the aforementioned transition out of 'Chisolm Trail'.[26] 'Camptown Races' may also have served as a similar rhythmic inspiration for Copland, as is evident in his secondary theme from *The Red Pony* (Lewis Milestone, 1949) (Figure 18.3), which appears even more closely modelled on the folk tune than is Williams's theme.[27]

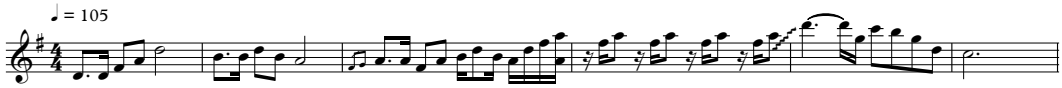

Figure 18.1: Williams, *The Reivers*, 'Finale', segue from 'Camptown Races' (bars 1–3) into the titular theme (bar 5) via a repeated note pattern.

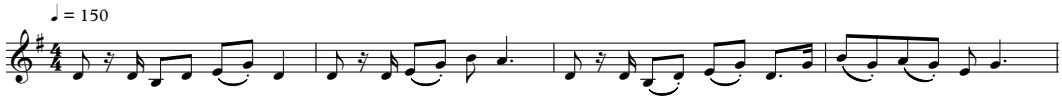

Figure 18.2: Williams, *The Reivers*, 'The Road to Memphis' opens with a theme for the Winton Flyer and adventure, which owes a rhythmic debt to 'Camptown Races'.

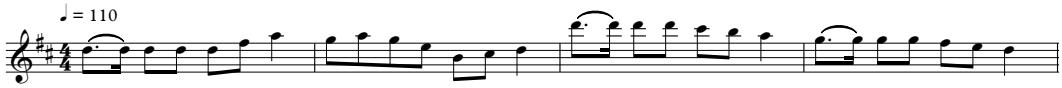

Figure 18.3: Copland, *The Red Pony*, 'Tom's Friends' (bars 1–4) owes a debt to the rhythm of 'Camptown Races'. Transcribed from *The Red Pony: Film Suite for Orchestra* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1951).

As these latter two examples establish, Copland and Williams frequently devise folk tunes of their own to imbue their works with an appropriately American flavour. In placing their own original tunes alongside familiar ones, both composers position their melodies in dialogue with the American folk canon. Richard Taruskin noted as much, praising the original Copland tune from 'Corral Nocturne' in *Rodeo*, which demonstrated how he 'had absorbed the folk idiom into his own increasingly distinctive and influential Americanist style.'[28] A comparable claim can be made for Williams's themes in *The Reivers*, which blend seamlessly with the traditional imagery

[25] In *The Reivers*, the tune reappears as a call-back to the start of the adventure.
[26] The *short-long* phrase endings similarly feature in some of Copland's songs, like 'There Came a Wind Like a Bugle' and 'Going to Heaven' from his *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*, and, of course, many of his *Old American Songs* like 'The Boatmen's Dance', 'Long Time Ago', and 'Zion's Walls'.
[27] Copland also quoted the tune in *Lincoln Portrait*.
[28] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century: The Oxford History of Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 664. Its thin textures, Mixolydian-inflected modality, chordal superimpositions, and bright, third-topped, major chords aid in crafting its distinctive western-associated sound.

and settings, as do his quotations of 'Camptown Races'. But melodic characteristics alone are not the only features necessary to allude to, and effect associations related to, American pastoralism. A short overview of 'Street in a Frontier Town' will, again, help establish pervasive features of the influential Coplandesque style.

Copland's programme note effectively sets the scene:

> The action begins and closes on the open prairie. The central portion of the ballet concerns itself with significant moments in the life of Billy the Kid. The first scene is a street in a frontier town. Familiar figures amble by. Cowboys saunter into town, some on horseback, others with their lassos. Some Mexican women do a jarabe which is interrupted by a fight between two drunks. Attracted by the gathering crowd, Billy is seen for the first time as a boy of twelve with his mother.[29]

The pictorialism of 'Street in a Frontier Town' would provide numerous musical gestures and nationalistic associations for subsequent composers. This movement is preceded by the 'The Open Prairie' tableau, a more restrained (yet, nonetheless vivid) musical representation of the landscape through accessible figures like planing fifths, sparse textures, and a triadic theme in brass and wind.[30] What follows is a series of folk-influenced melodies often played as soli or in small groups, beginning with the pentatonic 'Great Grandad', played 'nonchalantly' on piccolo.[31] The most prominent recurring traits and features of 'Street on a Frontier Town' are summarised in Table 2.

[29] Aaron Copland, 'Notes on a Frontier Ballet', programme notes for *Aaron Copland: Ballet Music* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1999), viii.
[30] Kleppinger categorises this under 'Plodding Progress'. Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[31] Copland, *Ballet Music.*

Melody	- Pentatonic or triadic tunes based on folk song. - Octave doubling. - Rhythms of tunes varied when repeated. - Clearly distinct lines. - Successive melodies delineated by modulation.
Harmony	- Primary triads (occasionally incomplete or superimposed). - (Implied) tonic and dominant pedals. - Repeated patterns rather than traditional progressions. - Pandiatonicism. - Unresolved dissonances. - Slow-moving.
Orchestration	- Thin. - Tuttis avoided. - Successive soli. - Wind sonorities most prominent.
Rhythm	- 4/4 regularity. - Marked polymetre and polyrhythms. - Marked syncopated passages.
Modality	- Mixolydian inflections. - Third- and fifth-related modulations. - Clashing blues thirds. - Pentatonic tunes. - Tonal centres enforced via pitch reiteration and pedal notes. - Bitonal passages.
Texture	- Mostly homophonic. - Dialogic melodies. - Clearly delineated voice ranges.[32] - Interlocking ostinati.

Table 2: Overview of Copland's musical tendencies in 'Street on a Frontier Town' from *Billy the Kid*.

Billy the Kid held a reputation few other American works could rival. Undoubtedly, then, these features would exert an influence on subsequent musical conceptions of western settings, as contemporaries, successors, and scholars of Copland have noted:

> A perfect example of scenic or pastoral descriptive music is the opening of Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*. — Hugo Friedhofer.[33]

> Copland's influence on film music is immeasurable. His ballets […] have left an ineradicable impression on a whole generation of composers and, I doubt whether any film composer faced with pictures of the Great American Outdoors, or any western story, has been able to withstand the lure of trying to imitate some aspects of Copland's peculiar and personal harmony. — André Previn.[34]

> As a whole, "Street in a Frontier Town" quickly established itself as a quintessential musical portrayal of the Old West; and in the decades ahead, many composers ransacked its trove of ideas and techniques for their own westerns. — Howard Pollack.[35]

As well as demonstrating the significance of Copland's ballet, these comments also reveal the importance placed on Copland as an iconic figure of American music, a status that frequently side-lines other American composers. While Copland was not solely responsible for the mass

[32] On this delineation, Copland said 'orchestral know-how consists in keeping the instruments out of each other's way', quoted in Hugo Cole, 'Aaron Copland', *Tempo*, 76 (Spring 1966), 2–6: 2.
[33] Hugo Friedhofer quoted in Marlin Skiles, *Music Scoring for TV and Motion Pictures* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Tab, 1976), 80.
[34] André Previn quoted in Fred Karlin, *Listening to Movies: The Film Lover's Guide to Film Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1994), 123–4.
[35] Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 322.

absorption of his sound, his music provides a useful — and historically appropriate — starting point and has offered a convenient and appropriate precedent to which the music of others can be compared. Given the complex interweaving of style and influence in American art and film music, there is often a pervasive view that certain American sounds are purely derivative of Copland.[36] Lerner has addressed this, suggesting that the Coplandesque label stuck thanks to the subsequent popularity of the composer's works, and that — despite other composers of Americana, including Ferde Grofé (1892–1972), Roy Harris, and William Grant Still (each specifically named by Lerner) — Copland's enduring reputation led to his identification as an 'important progenitor of this idiom.'[37] In other words, this wave of what Taruskin dubs 'prairie neonationalism' is almost inseparably tied to Copland.[38] Accordingly, it will be wise to bear in mind as this chapter progresses that my use of the term Coplandesque is mostly for convenience. While in no way intending to diminish the status of Copland, this chapter will show that Williams's Americana has been influenced by more than one composer. In fact, the proliferation of this idiom associated so much with Copland is largely due to the work of film composers, whose music (thanks to the increasing popularity of film) has reached further than Copland's concert music ever could.

2.2: American Pastoralism Beyond Copland

The values with which the Coplandesque are associated were established long before the composer's ballets. In the preceding century, the West, the Great Plains, and almost any land beyond Appalachia represented idealised sites of endless opportunity — a physical, natural embodiment of American Manifest Destiny.[39] The rich history of the numerous ideals and beliefs that the West embodied were acknowledged by historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who, when speaking in 1893 about the closure of the frontier, summarised that,

> American social development has been continually beginning over and over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West.[40]

It was this attitude and belief in the 'Great West', its place in the cultural consciousness and national self-identity, that made it an important touchstone for numerous American composers

[36] Ibid., 22.
[37] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 495.
[38] Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, 662.
[39] An appropriate Williams-related example of this phenomenon would be *Far and Away*, in which a fleeing Irish couple join the Oklahoma Land Rush in an attempt to claim and settle their own land, and to be freed of the classist shackles of 1890s' Irish society in the process.
[40] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), 2–3.

seeking to nationalise their music.[41] While the sound of folk tunes would ultimately come to shape and define numerous representations of America in art and film music, their enduring popularity was mostly dependent not on how the tunes sounded, but on what they represented by way of their connections to the mythicised land: nostalgia, freedom, opportunity, utopia.

In Hollywood the Coplandesque characteristic would come to be consolidated, as Kleppinger suggests, into distinct codes, each with their own idiosyncrasies and loose associations that tie back to this idealism associated with the West. Kleppinger has categorised three pastoral-related 'Copland sounds': 'exuberant country dance', 'plodding progress', and 'idyllic nature'.[42] Copland's influence on film scoring was piecemeal and drawn out, with the codification of these sounds and their associations not becoming readily apparent until the 1960s and 1970s (discussed in greater detail shortly). The films in which Kleppinger has observed the absorption of pastoral-associated sounds into a broader American vernacular are largely from the end of the twentieth century: Randy Newman's *The Natural* (Barry Levinson, 1984); James Horner's *Field of Dreams* (Phil Alden Robinson, 1989) and *Courage Under Fire* (Edward Zwick, 1996); and John Barry's *Dances With Wolves* (Kevin Costner, 1990).[43] Often, these composers refer to Coplandesque *topoi* to signify the American — in the case of these films, mostly through themes and images related to sport, politics, militarism, and, most often, landscape. Notably, three of these four films are not westerns, indicating how American pastoralism eventually transcended the geographic connotations of the Copland ballets and became a broader cultural and ideological signifier. This process of what Matthew Bribitzer-Stull calls 'ascription' — of the potential of a language to signify more than one thing at one time (often at both a specific and a broad level) — could have arrived only after topical codification had solidified.[44] According to this mode, once assimilated idiomatic meanings were understood, their connotative gestures were re-used to such an extent that associations began to loosen, giving film scores the opportunity to intertextually cite each other (much as they had already cited art music), and expanding the boundaries of topical associations. This process of relaxed signification has meant that pastoral themes are informed by more 'cultural-generic associations' of the *topos*, rather than rooted in the 'piece-specific' associations of a Copland ballet for example (of course, this is not entirely unique to late-twentieth-century film scores).[45] In other words, labelling these *topoi*

[41] Biographical accounts of Roy Harris — many detailing how he was born in a log cabin on Lincoln's birthday — entrench his associations with western culture, landscape, and ideals in an attempt to make the composer's Americanness undoubtable. See Beth E Levy's chapter 'How Roy Harris Became Western' from *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 227–45.
[42] Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[43] Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'. Kleppinger gives other examples, however those included here are emblematic of the pastoral style in question.
[44] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 111.
[45] Ibid., 112.

'Coplandesque' risks overlooking the extent to which they have acquired new identities and associations. It also fails to acknowledge the impact of other composers and traditions on the American pastoral.

American pastoralism arrives in Hollywood

Around the same time as Copland was shifting to his popular style, the western was experiencing a Golden Age that resulted in a quasi-standardisation of approaches to scoring. With its Academy Award-winning score 'Based on American Folk Song', John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) — retroactively credited with initiating the Golden Age of the genre — launched a sound that would define the western long before Copland's.[46] Folk-like songs were favoured in many early westerns, and if a score did feature prominently, it was often composed by those European titans of early Hollywood — Max Steiner and, more regularly, Dimitri Tiomkin — who were more interested in their native European traditions than an emerging American one.[47] Even Copland's own Hollywood tenure (1939–49) had little instantaneous effect on the trajectory and style of film scores. While *Of Mice and Men* (Lewis Milestone, 1939) and *The Red Pony* may have played a role in establishing a link between the Copland sound and the big screen, their influence has been overstated in some literature.[48] Additionally, while the score by Hugo Friedhofer (1901–81) to *The Best Years of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946) is commonly credited as popularising the Coplandesque in Hollywood, the associations of the vernacular in this film have little to do with the West and the pastoral.[49] Instead, one of the formative high points of the cinematic associations of American pastoralism was a score not written for the express purposes of a Hollywood film, a score that actually pre-dated Copland's turn toward populism.

Despite opening to mixed reviews — 'there was an impression of relatively few fertile musical ideas' — Ferde Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite* (1931) proved to be a pivotal work, in that it signified the mythological status of the American West using familiar pastoral sounds.[50] The

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[46] Kalinak, 'Introduction', 4.

[47] Jerome Moross criticised Tiomkin's song for *High Noon* (Fred Zinneman, 1952), 'Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin'', saying that it was 'a Russian folk song' and 'became a prototype score. It's been imitated to death.' See Moross quoted in Mariana Whitmer, 'Reinventing the Western Film Score: Jerome Moross and *The Big Country*', in *Music in the Western: Notes from the Frontier*, ed. Kathryn Kalinak (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 51–76: 55. For more on the Russianness of Tiomkin's score see Ildar Khannanov, '*High Noon*: Dimitri Tiomkin's Oscar-Winning Ballad and its Russian Sources', *Journal of Film Music*, 2/2–4 (2009), 225–48. Although Steiner worked with songs in his westerns — such as in *The Searchers* — his vocabulary often remained rooted in a late-Romantic palette, perhaps with the exception of *Dodge City* (Michael Curtiz, 1939), which creates a sense of expansiveness like the work of Thomson and Copland.

[48] *The Red Pony* was the closest of Copland's film projects to a western. Given that status, it, like *The Big Country*, *Billy the Kid*, or *Grand Canyon Suite*, has been cited as initiating the sound of the genre. For instance, composer David Raksin declares that '[Copland] began something […] from which none of us have ever escaped [… he] created a definite style having to do with the Western film. Before [*The Red Pony*] they used to think they were doing alright if they played 'Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie'. And then all of a sudden, we were face to face with this absolutely clear and pure and wonderful style.' David Raksin quoted in Beth E. Levy, 'The Great Crossing: Nostalgia and Manifest Destiny in Aaron Copland's *The Red Pony*', *The Journal of Film Music*, 2/2–4 (Winter 2009), 201–23: 203.

[49] Friedhofer was a former student of Copland's, and also acted as an orchestrator on *Our Town* (Sam Wood, 1940). Friedhofer's description of his 'clarity above all' approach — of triadic harmonies, pedal points, and local tonicisations instead of typical progressions — seems, essentially, modelled on the simple style of Copland's ballets. See Johnson, 'The Best Years of Our Lives', 5.

[50] Francis D Perkins, 'Grofé Presents Modern Music in Pool Benefit', *New York Herald Tribune*, 20 January 1937, 12; Denise Von Glahn, *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape* (Hauppauge, NY: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 263.

signifying potential of the idiom for film was only realised over a quarter of a century after its premiere, when the suite became the score for the Oscar-winning *Grand Canyon* (James Algar, 1958). This translation from art music to film music shows that this pastoral vocabulary is a construct of Hollywood, as much as of the American symphonists. The short documentary used Grofé's programmatic work to magnify and add a vibrancy to the landscape, flora, and fauna — in a manner not dissimilar to Disney's *Fantasia* (James Algar (among others), 1940).[51]

The film built upon Grofé's original programme note, which mythicised the land and equated it with a simple, American-in-essence, idealised life:

> Vast areas of eloquent solitudes, towering heights, silent deserts, rushing rivers, wild animal life; of health-giving ozone, magic dawns and resplendent sunsets, silvery moonshine, iridescent colourings of skies and rocks; and before all else, of a stock of men and women who breathe deeply and freely, live bravely and picturesquely, speak their minds in simplicity and truth, and altogether represent as typical and fine a human flowering as this land of ours has inherited from its pioneering days.[52]

Grofé's music echoes the natural world through a vivid pictorial character, almost akin to Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, Mahler's First Symphony, Strauss's *Eine Alpensinfonie*, or Vaughan-Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica*. Given the vibrant colours of his orchestration (a stylistic quality also evident in his work on *Rhapsody in Blue*), the work would, as Beth Levy noted, 'represent [for generations] the quintessential western soundtrack'.[53] While the popular and familiar nationalistic American *topoi* are not front and centre, Grofé nonetheless presages the spacious orchestrations, shimmering and open textures, and planing harmonies of the Copland ballets. He also provides an early representation of the cowboy and his *burro* with a disjunct, triadic, and expansive solo horn theme; markers that would come to define numerous themes in westerns.[54] This theme features in the third movement, 'On the Trail', which accompanies depictions of animals in the *Grand Canyon* short film (Figure 19).

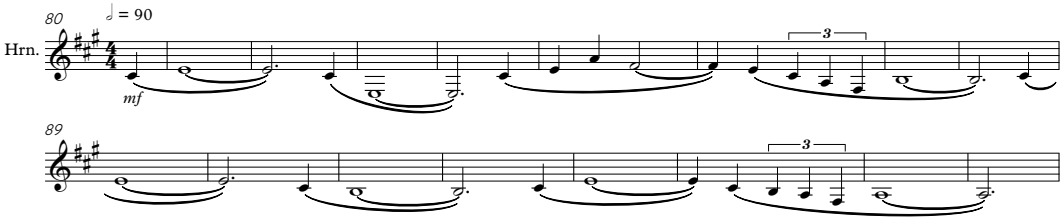

Figure 19: Grofé, *Grand Canyon Suite*, 'On the Trail', cowboy theme (bars 80–96). Transcribed from *Grand Canyon Suite* (New York: Robbins Music, 1932).

[51] Animated representations of Grofé's score introduce each new movement.
[52] Ferde Grofé quoted in Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 371.
[53] Ibid., 370.
[54] Programme of *Grand Canyon Suite* from Brooks Toliver, 'Eco-ing in the Canyon: Ferde Grofé's Grand Canyon Suite and the Transformation of Wilderness', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 57/2 (Summer, 2004), 325–68: 360.

Grofé may have contributed to pioneering this American style for screen, but it was Jerome Moross's (1913–83) score for *The Big Country* in 1958 that cemented the soundscape to the cinematic western.[55] Having orchestrated film scores by Copland and Friedhofer, Moross had the requisite experience to score *The Big Country* (once Copland had declined the job).[56] His music departed from the folk instrumentation and cowboy songs that had defined most westerns of the forties and early fifties, instead favouring a full orchestra with American-influenced rhythms and tunes. This approach, according to Mariana Whitmer, 'led the way for future composers to apply their own unique compositional style toward interpreting [western] narratives'.[57] Moross's characteristic sound took a leaf out of Copland's book: his description of his score as being 'stripped of non-essentials' seems almost modelled on the 'imposed simplicity' of Copland's ballets.[58] Reflecting on his contribution, Moross credited himself with establishing the style of the western score:

> I invented the archetypal western theme, but I didn't realize it was going to become that at the time. I didn't anticipate it would catch on in the way it did. But I certainly did feel that the way they [composers of classic Hollywood] had approached westerns was all wrong, and I certainly was not going to do it in a typical fashion.[59]

This 'archetypal' sound built upon the music of Copland and Friedhofer, but it was Moross who, in Audissino's words, gave 'the American genre par excellence […] a congenial, truly American music.'[60] The familiar sound-and-image combination is evident from the opening of the film, in which the titular driving theme accompanies a dynamic shot of a horse and cart travelling through a sweeping vista.[61] Moross's music appeared to exalt the landscape while establishing the ebullient western tone, accomplishing these effects through various musical means: fanfares, planed triads, a singable triadic melody, pandiatonic and overwhelmingly major accompaniment, longline folklike tunes, Lydian inflections, plagal harmonies, and the associatively-charged ♭VII–V cadence.[62] Many of these traits were ubiquitous in the Coplandesque, others were Moross's own musical idiosyncrasies, in particular the subtonic half cadence — which would come to be known (in academic writing) as the 'cowboy cadence' due to its consolidating ties to western imagery and its status as a 'staple of western themes'.[63]

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[55] A teenage Moross was once a member of the Young Composers' Group, a small band of composers led by Copland in 1932. See Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 185.
[56] Whitmer, 'Reinventing the Western Film Score, 52–4.
[57] Whitmer, *Jerome Moross's The Big Country*, 172–3.
[58] Whitmer, *Jerome Moross's The Big Country*, 33; Copland quoted in Starr, 'Copland's Style', 69.
[59] Jerome Moross quoted in Whitmer, *Jerome Moross's The Big Country*, 69.
[60] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 34.
[61] *Stagecoach* opens in a similar fashion.
[62] If inclined to continue pointing the accusatory finger of influence or imitation, I would suggest the planed second-inversion triads that recall Friedhofer's *Best Years of Our Lives* theme, or the simple triadic melody that evoke Copland's *An Outdoor Overture*, 'The Open Prairie', as well as *Our Town*.
[63] Lehman, 'Hollywood Cadences', 4.4; Lehman, 'Jerome Moross's Harmonic Language'. While the cadence appears in Copland's *The Red Pony* and 'Corral Nocturne' (as well as in Friedhofer's *The Best Years of Our Lives*), Lehman has stressed it as among the most distinctive features of

Shortly after *The Big Country*, Elmer Bernstein's successful score for *The Magnificent Seven* in 1960 firmly embedded those associations between the Coplandesque and big screen westerns.[64] In Williams's own words, the score 'is in the tradition of American populism, Copland and Roy Harris and so forth.'[65] Such was Bernstein's indebtedness to the Copland-inspired tradition that Paula Musegades, exploring the legacy of Copland's film scores, noted that the score 'sound[ed] as if Copland composed [it] himself'.[66] (The Oscar-nominated score's popularity is evident in its numerous citations across film and television, its accompanying of Marlboro cigarette advertisements, and the commercially successful 2016 remake of the film, which alludes to the rhythms of the famous theme in the score.) In Whitmer's words, Moross may have been the inventor of the western theme but it was Bernstein who 'secured the patents and reaped the benefits.'[67] Bernstein made his most marked contribution to the genre sound in the opening scene, *The New York Times* describing the *fortissimo* tutti major triad and swopping acciaccaturas as 'the loudest prairie blast we've heard since *Giant*' (a Tiomkin score that begins with aplomb).[68] While the 'prairie blast' effects a similar excitement as *The Big Country*, it might be compared more appropriately (in this context) to the similar attention-grabbing opening of Williams's *The Cowboys* and *Star Wars* (whose 'Main Title' opening chord is similarly weighted toward the root in the orchestration). Yet it is surely Bernstein's rhythmic energy that is his most idiosyncratic addition to the pastoral sound. Building upon Moross's syncopated harmonic rhythms, *The Magnificent Seven* openly recalls *habanera* or (*clave*-derived) *tresillo* metric patterns (3:3:2), effecting an urgency and propulsion in the memorable ostinato, which 'grab[s] the audience's attention and add[s] intensity to the melody', as Whitmer writes (Figure 20).[69] This unusual rhythmic gait is not without a Copland precedent ('Walk to the Bunkhouse' of *The Red Pony* or the *jarabe* in *Billy the Kid*'s 'Mexican Dance') and Kleppinger has related a similar rhythmic figuration in Copland's writing to his early jazz-inspired works, describing the distinctly American characteristic as a 'tied syncopation' of distant (or 'secondary') ragtime origins (in addition he cites the Piano Concerto (1926), Piano Variations (1930), and briefly *Appalachian Spring*).[70] Yet as with Moross, Bernstein had the advantage of larger cinema-going audiences and clear visual iconography to popularise this type of ear-catching rhythm.

Moross's harmonic idiolect. This contrasts with Mervyn Cooke's earlier claim that Copland 'probably inspired' the repeated use of the lowered subtonic with 'The Walk to the Bunkhouse' in *The Red Pony*. Cooke, *A History of Film Music*, 129.

[64] Bernstein was no stranger to westerns by the time of *The Magnificent Seven*. He had previously scored *Battles of Chief Pontiac* (Felix E. Feist, 1952), *Drango* (Hall Bartlett, 1956), *The Tin Star* (Anthony Mann, 1957) and *Saddle in the Wind* (Robert Parrish, 1958).

[65] Williams quoted in Peter M. Bernstein, *Elmer Bernstein, Film Composer: An Authorized Biography* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024), 199.

[66] Paula Musegades, *Aaron Copland's Hollywood Film Scores* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 149.

[67] Whitmer, *Elmer Bernstein's The Magnificent Seven*, xi.

[68] Howard Thompson, quoted in Ibid., 53.

[69] Ibid., 81. Rhythmic energy is something of a trademark of Bernstein's more popular themes, such as the syncopations in the main theme of *The Great Escape* (John Sturges, 1963). Yet, for *The Magnificent Seven* the Latin-American rhythmic figures may be a musical hint towards the Mexican setting.

[70] Stanley Kleppinger, 'Jazz Rhythm in the Music of Aaron Copland', *American Music*, 21/1 (Spring 2003), 74–111: 74–78.

Figure 20: Harmonic rhythmic of Moross's *The Big Country* (above) and accompanying ostinato of Bernstein's *The Magnificent Seven* (below).

Such syncopations (and polymetric inner voicings) are also a pervasive feature in Williams's writing and, predictably, would feature in his western themes.[71] The ragtime-esque influence is most evident in his theme for 'Mischief' in *The Cowboys* (Figure 21.1), where tied notes in the melody disrupt the regular accompanying pulse — an effect that climaxes in the hemiola-like cadence. Tied syncopations additionally surface in Williams's theme for *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing* (Richard C. Sarafian, 1973), adding rhythmic interest to the jocular repeated note opening, itself another Copland trait, as discussed above (Figure 21.2).

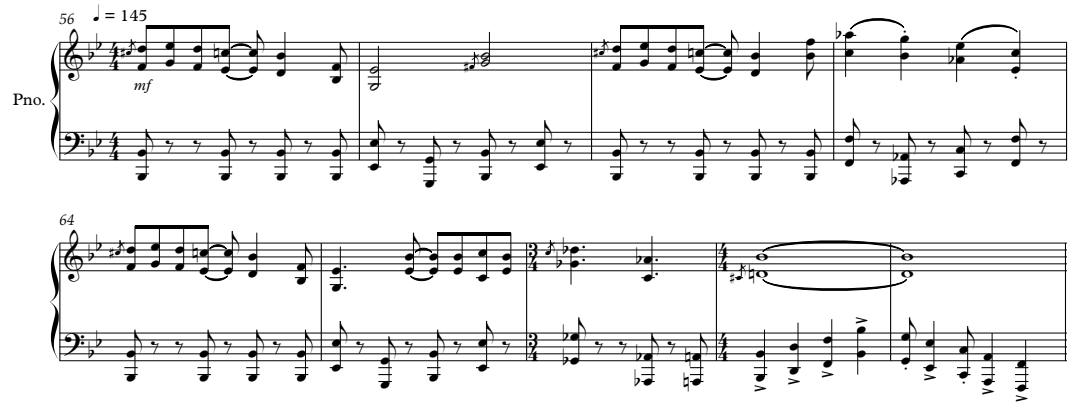

Figure 21.1: Williams, *The Cowboys*, 'Mischief' theme (bars 56–68) features characteristic ragtime syncopations and a hemiola-redolent cadence. Transcribed from *The John Williams Piano Anthology* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2016).

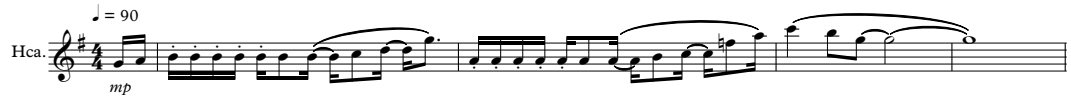

Figure 21.2: Williams, *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*, the central theme includes the characteristic syncopations, repeated note patterns, and triadic figurations common to the western genre.

Given the numerous examples of American pastoralism — from Copland, American art music composers of his generation, westerns that took a lead from him, and early westerns that had established their own tradition — Williams had a wealth of stylistic models from which he could draw. By the time he began writing scores for westerns, the sound of cinematic American pastoralism had been established, and could be referenced and varied to differing extents in different projects. Now Williams could allude to the established traditions of the past and also

[71] As with Copland's tied syncopations, one might indebt Williams's fondness for syncopation to his early jazz writing.

interpret this collective Americana vernacular through his own voice, and adopt or vary established musical gestures and narrative associations.

2.3: Williams in the West

While the American pastoral sound was becoming part of the vernacular of Hollywood film, Williams was working as a studio pianist; it happened that he performed on both *The Big Country* and *The Magnificent Seven*.[72] In addition, he was once employed as an orchestrator for that most celebrated composer of Golden Age westerns, Tiomkin, on *The Guns of Navarone* (J. Lee Thompson, 1961).[73] Such experiences are worth bearing in mind, as they undoubtedly impacted his western films of the late sixties and early seventies. Yet, one of his earliest western scores was not for film at all but for an episode of the anthology series *Alcoa Premiere* (1961–63).[74] The rodeo-centred episode 'Second Chances' (S01E18, 1962) would spin off into its own show, *Wide Country* (1962–63), for which Williams's driving theme was re-arranged.[75] The adapted title theme features identifiably western gestures: a spacious and wide-ranging melody over mostly static harmony (Figure 22.1) and a syncopated Bernsteinian ostinato (Figure 22.2).[76] With these generic markers, the composer was already exhibiting his familiarity with the soundscape four years before his first western film score.[77]

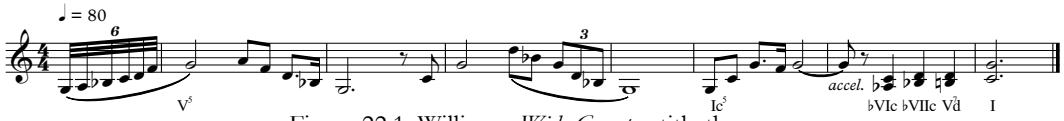

Figure 22.1: Williams, *Wide Country*, title theme.

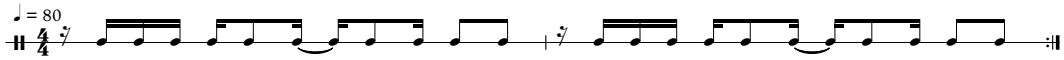

Figure 22.2: Williams, *Wide Country*, ostinato, featuring tied syncopations redolent of *The Magnificent Seven*.

Ironically, just as Williams was demonstrating his potential with the western palette, the sun was setting on the classic western. In post-studio-system Hollywood and following the disestablishment of the Hays Code, revisionist westerns were becoming increasingly prominent.

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[72] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 292. Williams would also go on to occasionally conduct these western themes with the Boston Pops.
[73] Ibid., 100. Tiomkin's westerns include *Duel in the Sun* (King Vidor, 1946), *Red River* (Howard Hawks, 1948), *High Noon*, and *Rio Bravo* (Howard Hawks, 1959), among numerous others. A further point of connection between these American composers is their collaboration with director William Wyler, who partnered with Friedhofer on *The Best Years of Our Lives*, with Copland on *The Heiress* (1949), with Moross on *The Big Country*, and with Williams on *How to Steal a Million* (1966). Additionally, most of Wyler's previous westerns were scored by Tiomkin.
[74] Thor Joachim Haga, 'Celluloid Tunes # 75: The Complete John Williams Television Music Walkthrough, Part 2 (25th International Edition)', *Celluloid Tunes*, 16 December 2022, <http://celluloidtunes.no/celluloid-tunes-75-the-complete-john-williams-television-music-walkthrough-part-2-25th-international-edition/> [25 March 2023]. When working on *Alcoa Premier*, Williams would also collaborate with western-director John Ford who directed the baseball-centric courtroom drama episode, 'Flashing Spikes', starring Jimmy Stewart. See Quentin Turnour, 'Flashing Spikes', *Senses of Cinema*, April 2004, <https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2004/cteq/flashing_spikes/> [26 June 2023].
[75] I have not been able to locate evidence as to whether or not Williams re-worked the theme himself. Potentially earlier still, he composed six episodes of the western series *Wagon Train* (1957–62), on which Moross also worked. See Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 291.
[76] 'Classic TV Theme: Wide Country (John Williams)', David Gideon, 20 March 2021, John Williams theme to *Wide Country*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX-sA51Je58> [19 May 2023].
[77] For more on Williams's television work see Paula Musegades, 'John Williams: Television Composer', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television, and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 27–40.

These were less formulaic in their character archetypes, storytelling conventions, and depictions of American society, and they lacked the Coplandesque pastoral sound.[78] The 'Spaghetti Westerns' of Sergio Leone scored by Ennio Morricone (1928–2020) — including the 'Dollars Trilogy' (1964–66) and *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968) — had radically altered the popular conception of western scores, re-popularising folk instrumentation and employing music more selectively. Early American landmarks in this revisionist period set aside the Coplandesque pastoralism entirely: Jerry Fielding's (1922–80) score to *The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah, 1969) avoided the inherent 'romanticism' of the established tradition; *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill, 1969) deployed Burt Bacharach's (1928–2023) pop-inflected score sparingly; and *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (Robert Altman, 1971) abandoned a traditional score altogether for songs by Leonard Cohen (1934–2016).[79]

Rather than adhering to tradition, Williams would follow these contemporary trends in his own revisionist scores. *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing* is distinctly small-scale, using a folk guitar and piano score with numerous woodwind soli. The intimacy here is also in evidence in *The Missouri Breaks* (Arthur Penn, 1976), which places acoustic guitar front and centre, complemented occasionally by electric bass and drums. Here, the delicate guitar creates a sentimental mood in moments where the score is allowed to sing out; yet, in typically revisionist fashion, it does not exalt the expansiveness of the landscape, instead underscoring the love story. These films — along with *The Sugarland Express* (Spielberg, 1974) — mark the end of a loosely defined 'Americana' period', according to Matessino.[80] This period might be perceived as the forerunner to the start of Williams's run of popular, neoclassical scores, which increasingly relied on the European, post-Romantic models of Hollywood's Golden Age.[81] The more traditional Coplandesque pastoral stylings were more evident in Williams's earlier westerns, which adhered to many classic Hollywood conventions. While Williams would return to the romanticised soundscape for rural and suburban American settings in *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Far and Away*, *Rosewood*, and *The Patriot*, a more concentrated period of this writing occurred at the start of his 'Americana Period' with *The Plainsman* (David Lowell Rich, 1966), *The Rare Breed* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1966), *The Reivers* and *The Cowboys*.[82]

The Plainsman — a made-for-TV remake of the 1936 Cecil B. De Mille picture — is an outlier, in part because of the questionable quality of the film, but also because the limited score

[78] Kalinak, 'Introduction', 5–8.
[79] Ibid., 5.
[80] Matessino also includes non-westerns *Cinderella Liberty* (Mark Rydell, 1974) and *Conrack* (Martin Ritt, 1974), and the adaptation of *Tom Sawyer* (1973) within the period, and notes *The River* (1984) as a delayed coda. See Mike Matessino, liner notes for *The River* (Intrada, 2020), 11–12.
[81] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 139–47.
[82] Matessino, liner notes for *The River*, 11–12.

feels particularly televisual.[83] The basically rendered central theme of the score (a triadic tune, cowboy cadence, and pedal point) is cheapened by a wordless chorus, resulting in one of Williams's more unremarkable themes.[84] Elsewhere, there is an exoticised treatment of the native American characters, a dated cliché of early Hollywood and silent film that largely does not manifest in the other westerns (save for tense moments of *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*).[85] As with much of Williams's work for television, the score provided a training ground (of sorts) for his later pursuits destined for the big screen.

The Rare Breed and *The Reivers* serve as precursors to *The Cowboys*, not merely pre-dating Williams's final classically styled western but building towards it. Neither is typical of the genre, with both hinting toward the decaying traditionalism. *The Rare Breed* almost falls into a comedy/romance genre (Bosley Crowther called it 'as winning at it is conventional'), and *The Reivers* (a Steven McQueen vehicle) is a simple coming-of-age story; these are westerns more in setting than in aesthetic convention.[86] Although both feature the familiar bucolic winds, lush pastoral melodies, *Rodeo*-esque driving passages, and galloping rhythms in a suitably Coplandesque vein, their influences go beyond Copland. Robynn Stilwell has noted the inspiration of Bernstein's 'distinctive style' in *The Rare Breed* through 'the asymmetrical driving rhythms and soaring landscape line [that] come together not in the title sequence but in the birth of the distinctly American calf of a Longhorn cow and Jersey bull.'[87] Its score somewhat subverts expectations by applying romanticised lyrical Americana to the hornless bull as much as to the landscape. Meanwhile *The Reivers* includes more obvious debts to the folk tradition, via the (aforementioned) quotation of 'Camptown Races' and in the instrumentation (harmonica, jaw harp, banjo, cowbell, and woodblocks).[88] The Americanness of the score, and its rustic associations, were observed in the colourful liner notes by Charles Burr, who writes that the music 'sounds so fresh it's as if it were written and conducted with a fishing rod in country air.'[89]

Beyond sharing similar styles, the central themes of both *The Rare Breed* and *The Reivers* seem almost drawn from the same associative-melodic lexicon, due to their related contours and

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[83] The De Mille film is scored by George Antheil (1900–59), an American composer of Copland's generation with firmer footing in Hollywood. His classic-western-styled score drew from folk tunes such as 'Dixie', 'Battle Cry of Freedom', and 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home', among others. See Musegades, *Copland's Hollywood Film Scores*, 97.

[84] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 54–55. Despite the urgency effected by the galloping rhythms and quick tempo, the theme contains little of the vigour and earnest homeliness of *The Reivers* and *The Rare Breed*.

[85] The caricatures (cyclic motives, percussion, unchanging martial pedals) recall the cues compiled in Ernö Rapée's *Motion Picture Moods for Pianist and Organists: A Rapid-Reference Collection of Selected Pieces* (G. Schirmer, 1924).

[86] Bosley Crowther, 'The Screen: Cinerama Brings Frames From Russia: Premiere of Travelogue Aids U.N. Association Stewart and Maureen O'Hara In A Western', *The New York Times*, 14 April 1966, <https://www.nytimes.com/1966/04/14/archives/the-screen-cinerama-brings-scenes-from-russiapremiere-of-travelogue.html> [11 April 2023].

[87] Stilwell, 'The Western', 225.

[88] Burlesque jazz also marks a sequence in a brothel, as noted in the introduction. Williams makes a similar burlesque reference in the cue 'Mrs. Collingswood's Girls' in *The Cowboys*, where a tuba and tack piano create the atmosphere of a sleazy saloon as the boys discover a group of half-dressed women (depicted like nymphs or sirens in the outdoors) and their chef flirts with the Madame. It seems that in Williams's westerns jazz is linked to debauchery.

[89] Charles Burr, liner notes for *The Reivers* (CBS Records, 1969).

quick quaver rhythms. Both feature a similar angular opening followed by a plummeting descent and both are comprised of similar successive intervals (perfect fourth, minor second, major third); as outlined in Figure 23.

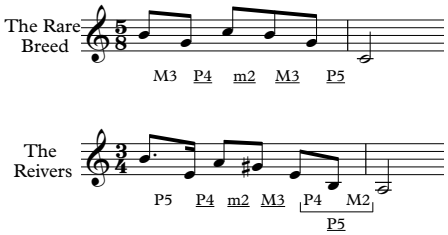


Figure 23: *The Rare Breed* (above) and *The Reivers*, 'Main Title' (below), intervallic and contour comparison. Underlined intervals are shared and in a similar position within the melodic phrase. Although *The Reivers* has an additional note, the combination of its final two intervals (a perfect fourth and major second) correspond to the final interval of *The Rare Breed* (a perfect fifth).

With their limited emotional variety and more light-hearted, naive tone, these western scores clearly belong to an earlier stage of Williams's career. Yet, *The Cowboys* consolidates the potential of these early scores, employing western-associated themes and *topoi* with a more epic sweep and greater emotional complexity. With this larger canvas, the score seems to announce the arrival of Williams's own distinctive American voice, one built upon his numerous forebears in art and film music.[90]

The Cowboys (1972)

Williams's score to *The Cowboys*, alternately propulsive and plaintive, has achieved surprisingly little academic (and even non-academic) attention.[91] A conservative coming-of-age story wrapped in the sights and sounds of a classic western, the film follows Wil Andersen ('quintessential cowboy' John Wayne, in one of his final westerns), a group of young boys, and their cook on a cattle drive from Montana to South Dakota.[92] Pursuing them is a gang of bandits led by 'Long Hair' (Bruce Dern) who wants to poach the herd. After episodes of "maturation" (the boys shoot, drink, and pursue women) and tragedy (a futile death), Long Hair ambushes and murders Andersen, and flees with the stolen cattle. Despite the cook's protests, the boys pursue the bandits, using cunning and no small amount of savagery to avenge the death of their leader and complete the cattle drive. While the film has perhaps not been as long-lasting or influential as Wayne's earlier films with John Ford, *The Cowboys* was largely positively received.[93] However, the

[90] Audissino also contends that *The Reivers* and *The Cowboys* are Williams's 'first two neoclassical scores' and, thus, that they foreshadow Williams's approach to *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. See Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 121.
[91] This case study has been presented in a modified form at *Music and the Moving Image XVIII* (28 May 2022), in a paper entitled 'Williams in the West: American Idioms in *The Cowboys* (1972)'.
[92] Williams, '*The Cowboys* Overture', liner notes for *John Williams & "The President's Own"*, 14–15.
[93] Emmanuel Levy gave the film a B grade, while Roger Ebert granted the films 2.5/4 stars, calling it a 'good-to-fine Western'. Emmanuel Levy, 'Cowboys, The (1972): John Wayne Western, Directed by Mark Rydell', *emmanuellevy.com*, 8 April 2007, <https://emanuellevy.com/review/cowboys-the-1/> [12 October 2021]; Roger Ebert, 'The Cowboys', *RogerEbert.com*, 1 January 1972, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-cowboys-1972> [12 October 2021].

somewhat formulaic and traditionalist perspective may have been underappreciated at a time when the genre was losing favour and being refashioned; the *Los Angeles Times* put forth that the film 're-mythologizes the frontier past at a time when other movies have perhaps gone too far in de-mythologizing that same past.'[94]

Similarly, and fittingly, Williams's expansive orchestral score lingers in the traditionality of the genre, providing appropriately styled accompaniment of grand emotions and vivid thematicism and colour. Despite the popularity of the film paling in comparison to that of his later projects, Williams has frequently conducted its music in concert with the Boston Pops, including several times during his inaugural year as principal conductor.[95] A suite of the themes, *The Cowboys Overture*, was later included in *Pops Around the World* (1982), an album of orchestral overtures in which the 'broadly expansive' and 'almost fantasia[-]like' suite is programmed alongside Kabalevsky, von Suppé, Auber, Glinka, Rossini, and Leonard Bernstein in 'an international assemblage'.[96] Given the theme of voyage or travel (the cover features a cruise ship), the suite appears to be the musical representative of America.[97] Similarly, the reuse of the track in *By Request… John Williams & The Pops* (1987) is a clear indication of its popularity.[98]

In his overview of Williams's stylistic influences, Mervyn Cooke summarised the sound of *The Cowboys* and *The Reivers* as one that 'balances vernacular styles (cowboy and hillbilly tunes, rustic instrumentation, hints of the blues) with fairly formulaic orchestral scoring reminiscent of Copland's cowboy-themed ballets.'[99] Lehman, too, notes the presence of Copland's pastoral style, writing that 'wide intervals and equally wide orchestral voicings suggest the fertile expanses of the West'.[100] These formulaic styles, orchestrations, intervals, and voicings do not mean that Williams's score is a simplistic Copland pastiche; instead, inevitable references to his predecessor occur due to the inherent intertextuality of film genre and the sense of ownership Copland seems to have on the western soundscape ('piece-specific associations can grow to be culturally accepted associations').[101] However, given Williams's ever-chameleonic tendencies, his various pastoral techniques and *topoi* suggest an assimilation of a range of American composers, rather than Copland alone. His American vernacular absorbs the spirits of Elmer Bernstein and Moross

[94] Charles Champlin quoted in Mike Matessino, liner notes for *The Cowboys: The Deluxe Edition* (Varèse Sarabande, 2018), 5.
[95] The Boston Symphony Orchestra Performance History Archive notes an early performance on April 29th, 1980, where it was later followed by the world premiere of what was programmed as 'The Reivers (an old man reminisces)' — an overture of Williams's score for *The Reivers* with narrator Burgess Meredith. See Audissino, *Film Music in Concert*, 32–33.
[96] Liner notes (author unknown) for John Williams and Boston Pops Orchestra, *Pops Around the World* (Boston: Philips, 1981).
[97] Williams admits that he was persuaded to compose *The Cowboys* overture by André Previn: 'Several years slipped by, and each time I saw the indefatigable Previn, he would ask, "Have you made an overture of *Cowboys* yet?"' See Williams, *John Williams & "The President's Own"*, 14.
[98] The work is one of few early film works to have been adapted by Williams for the concert stage, others include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Jane Eyre*, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, and *The Reivers*.
[99] Mervyn Cooke, 'A New Symphonism for a New Hollywood', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television and the Concert Stage*, ed. by Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 3–26: 8.
[100] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 418.
[101] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 113.

by direct influence, and suggests traces of Samuel Barber (1910–81), Grofé, Howard Hanson, Harris, Walter Piston, and William Schuman.[102] In this regard, the score seems something of a rite of passage, a means for Williams to establish his own American voice and build upon those whom he follows.

Numerous themes recur throughout the 'vigorous musical score', as the composer called it.[103] A brief survey of each, their narrative associations, and non-filmic resonances, will serve as a means of investigating both Williams's scoring practices and their relationship to the traditions of American symphonism and the western genre. Seven themes, each possessing various American-associated gestures, have been notated in Table 3. They are named following their description by Matessino in the liner notes to the 2018 Deluxe Edition of the score released by Varèse Sarabande.[104] While the themes are occasionally fragmented, extended, or presented contrapuntally, my transcriptions have attempted to present them in a 'prototypical' form (to borrow a term from Bribitzer-Stull), and are influenced by Williams's own arrangement of them in *The Cowboys Overture*.[105] Williams's deployment of these themes is by no means rigid; he does not follow the mostly fixed motivic approach of *Star Wars*. True, the themes are distinctly connotative, but they often serve more atmospheric ends rather than continually delineating narrative beats in the score.

[102] Noting the influence of *The Magnificent Seven*, Scheurer wrote that '*The Cowboys* hearken[s] in some way to the Bernstein archetype'. Scheurer, *Music and Mythmaking in Film*, 140.
[103] John Williams, liner notes for *John Williams & "The President's Own"*, 14–15.
[104] Matessino, liner notes for *The Cowboys*, 6–8.
[105] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 65; John Williams, *The John Williams Piano Anthology* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2016); John Williams, *The Cowboys Overture* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2013).

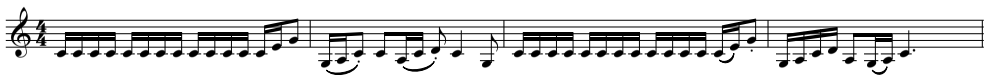
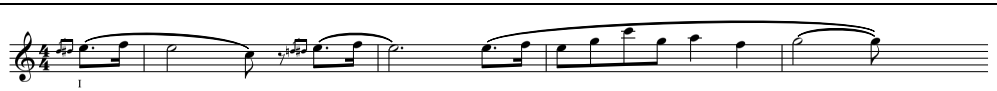
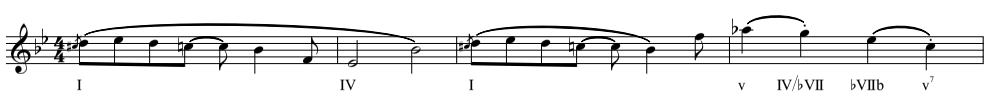
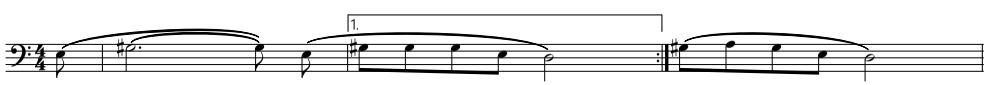
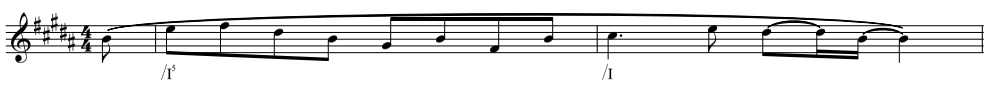
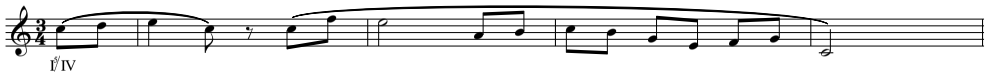
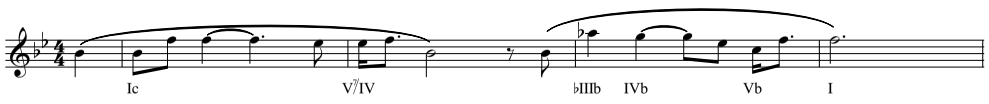
Theme Title	Melodic Incipit	Narrative associations	Americana-associated feature
Training		Hard work, training, triumph.	Pentatonic mode, triadic, Copland-related pitch assertion.
Cowboys		Maturation, adventure, youth.	Folk ornamentation, five-note pitch set, frequent triadic movement.
Mischief		Mischief, naivety.	Modal inflections, folk ornamentation, tied syncopations.
Long Hair		Long Hair, danger, treachery.	Harmonica timbre, bent notes, folk instrumentation.
Wil and Ann		Marriage, domesticity, Ann, peace.	Wind and harmonica timbres, pedal tones, disjunct.
Trail		Landscape, nature, tranquillity, sublime.	Superimposed chords, evolving (or autogenetic) melody.
Paternal		Landscape, Andersen, leadership, mourning, vigour.	Open fifth, flattened seventh, planed progressions, open orchestrations.

Table 3: Themes in *The Cowboys*

Each of the themes seems to adopt various Americanisms as a means of locating the score both in the American setting and in the western genre: 'Cowboys' recalls the triadic movement and folkish inflections common to many westerns, 'Mischief' is enlivened by a rhythmic vitality, 'Long Hair' is defined by the folk-associated harmonica timbre, and 'Wil and Ann' is grounded in triadic and disjunct movement with pastoral drones. Rather than dissecting each theme, I will focus on 'Trail', 'Training', and 'Paternal' — so chosen due to their prominence and their relation to American precedents — to demonstrate that Williams's music is not simply citational but that it alludes to familiar voices through assimilated *topoi*, and that ingrained associations manifest with genre conventions and specific imagery.

'Training'

The brisk energy and quick rhythms of 'Training', the most prominent theme, result in an excitability that suitably captures the young boys' naivety and lend a triumphal affect when its central (typically western) triadic motif sounds as a fanfare.[106] The theme introduces the film, appearing with the title card, and its associations become evident in early scenes where the boys prepare and train for their adventure. As previously mentioned (alongside Figures 16.1 and 17.1), the vigorously repeated notes recall Copland's 'Chisolm Trail' from *Billy the Kid*. However, *An Outdoor Overture*, whose 'youth and freedom and tireless energy' made it 'appeal to the adolescent youth', offers a more compelling comparison due to Williams's similarly spirited theme and the callow young cowhands with which it is associated.[107] The theme's vigorously repeated single-note opening is not a typical Williams trait, but rather is a gesture absorbed from a broader pastoral *topos*. The introduction of 'Training' at the opening of the film and concert overture reveals much about how the composer balances the idiosyncratic with the topical. As a means of comparison, Figure 24 contains a reduction of the opening to *The Cowboys Overture* and Copland's *Rodeo*. Both passages serve a similar formal and semantic function: to introduce their respective western tales with a 'prairie blast' (borrowing that term applied to *The Magnificent Seven*) and to establish the musical vocabulary and style.[108]

[106] Williams's theme from *The Plainsman* offers a model of the triadic trope in western scores.
[107] Cecil Smith quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 325–6; Copland, *An Outdoor Overture*, 1.
[108] Howard Thompson quoted in Whitmer, *Elmer Bernstein's The Magnificent Seven*, 53.

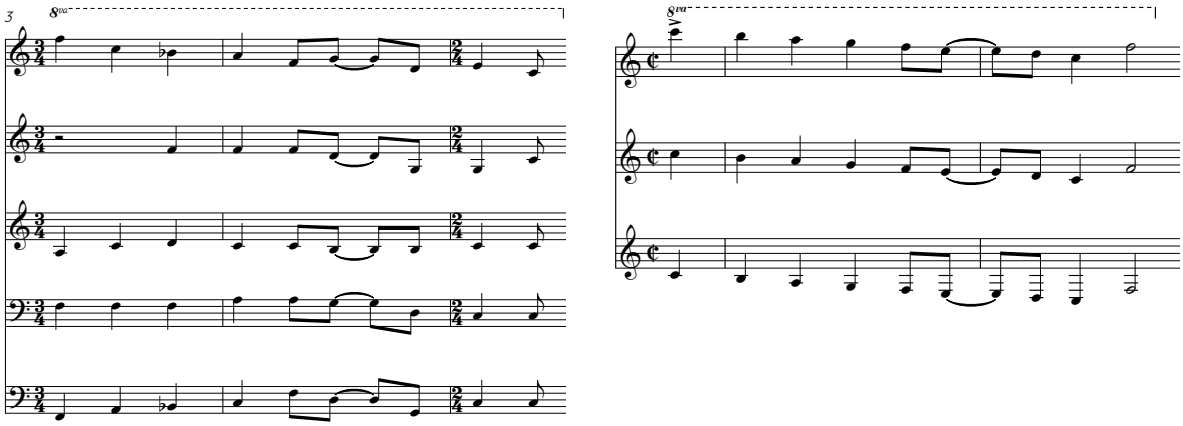


Figure 24: Williams, *The Cowboys Overture*, voice leading in bars 3–5 (left); Copland, *Rodeo*, 'Buckaroo Holiday', voice leading in bars 1–2 (right). Transcribed from *The Cowboys Overture* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2013) and *Aaron Copland: Ballet Music* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1999).

What Pollack dubs the 'rodeo theme' opens the first movement, 'Buckaroo Holiday', with its characteristically 'brittle orchestration' consisting of wind and string monophony across three octaves.[109] Similar bare sounds, the result of incomplete triads, surface in the descending introductions of Copland's 'Morning on the Ranch' from *The Red Pony* (with an additional planed fifth) and in *An Outdoor Overture*. Such introductions are evidence of Copland's favouring 'textures that display tight motivic coherence among all parts', and his penchant for 'distilling closing progressions' by limiting the amount of chords and 'eliminating notes', as observed by David Heetderks.[110] Copland's introductions are often focussed on melody and rhythmic momentum; harmony and texture appear to be of secondary concern.

Williams does not actively quote *Rodeo*; instead facets of the Copland ballet have been absorbed into the wider vernacular of his western score. While both passages are rhythmically identical, featuring the tied syncopation on the sixth note (a quaver), Williams makes the *topos* his own through decidedly richer textures.[111] The opening to *The Cowboys Overture* uses generally full triads, with many doubled roots and fifths; the sparser sound is reserved only for the opening and closing chords of the three-bar introduction, with the former containing just root and third, and the latter highlighting the root alone (a common Coplandesque ending).[112] For the most part, the accompanying voices are busier than the similar-motion introduction of *Rodeo*, with Williams's bass line moving in contrary motion to the melody while the inner voices seem to function purely to complete the implied harmonies; neither follows the melody consistently.

[109] Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 368; Neil Butterworth, *The Music of Aaron Copland* (London: Toccata Press, 1985), 92.
[110] David J. Heetderks, *Transformed Triadic Networks: Hearing Harmonic Closure in Prokofiev, Copland, and Poulenc* (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2011), 140.
[111] Lerner juxtaposes the main title of Friedhofer's *The Best Years of Our Lives* with a primary theme of Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* to make a similar point. He notes that the diatonic harmonies and disjunct melodies are similar, but that 'the gaps in the vertical spacing in the Copland example distinguish it from Friedhofer's more traditional voicing.' See Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 497.
[112] Heetderks, *Transformed Triadic Networks*, 140.

Williams further demonstrates his fluency with this American language through tonal ambiguity. Figure 24 shows the introduction to *The Cowboys Overture* again; this time a lengthier melodic reduction. The repeated semiquaver Fs, F triad, and F scale of the opening establish a clear F tonality, leading to an imperfect cadence (II–V) in bar 5 (the major chord on the supertonic hints at tonal uncertainty). The following phrase (bars 6–10) ends with a similar imperfect cadence, but, rather than resting on the dominant (as before), the 'Training' theme begins in an unambiguous C major in bar 10, and is accompanied by alternating oom-pah C suspensions for the following 20 bars. (The subsequent statement of 'Cowboys' in C major confirms C as the tonic.) Given that this new tonal centre arrives so suddenly after the opening, one wonders whether F major was ever the intended tonic in the first place. Perhaps the imperfect cadence of the answering phrase (bars 9–10) was a perfect cadence (as indicated in the alternate harmonic reading in Figure 25) approached by ♭VII, 'one of the key ingredients' of Williams's Americana.[113] Whatever the case may be, the results are the same: tonal ambiguity.

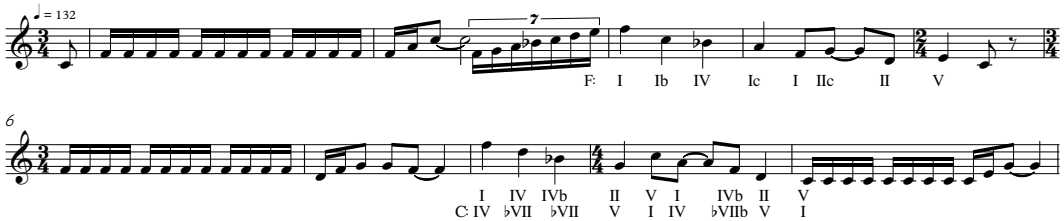


Figure 25: Williams, *The Cowboys Overture*, melodic reduction (bars 1–10). An alternate reading of the concluding harmonic progression in C major (bars 8–10) is provided. Transcribed from *The John Williams Piano Anthology* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2016).

As the *Rodeo* example in Figure 24 indicated, Copland follows a similar tonal feat (albeit in reverse), establishing a C tonal centre through the descending scale but ending firmly in F.[114] (Yet, even this harmonic grounding is offset via the Phrygian fanfare and superimposed triads that follow.) This lack of tonal certainty, and the ambiguous dominant harmonies (or the emphasised subdominant-tonic relationship), are pervasive across Copland's work and they echo strongly in *The Cowboys Overture*. Heetderks observes that Copland's cadences are 'tonally fragile and often point to two possible tonics, each related to the other by a perfect fifth', while Creighton has noted that modulations are felt through the specific function-changes of scale degrees (a C that in one phrase served a dominant functionality has now become a tonic).[115] This tonal instability has narrative meaning for Musegades, who suggested that in *The Red Pony* such

[113] Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 53. The ♭VII is itself approached by IV, lending a hyper-plagal sensibility typical of the western and pastoral.
[114] Heetderks has come to a similar conclusion in his review of tonality in Copland's other works, writing that 'Copland's use of diatonic modes in other compositions renders tenuous the assumption that the tonic can be determined simply from the scale used in a passage.' See David J. Heetderks, 'A Tonal Revolution in Fifths and Semitones: Aaron Copland's Quiet City', *Music Theory Online*, 17/2 (July 2011), 1–9: 2.
[115] Heetderks, *Transformed Triadic Networks*, 133; Creighton, *A Study of Tonality*, 81.

uncertainty hints at 'nature's indifference and unpredictability.'[116] It is doubtful that Williams was implying a similar narrative association through his equally ambiguous tonality in *The Cowboys*, although it might have been pertinent, given the tragedy that befalls one of the boys. However, the composer has clearly absorbed various features of this language, absorbing the intertextual vernacular established in Copland's western-set ballets, films, and shorter orchestral works into his own American pastoral style.

'Trail'

Of all the themes in the film, 'Trail' bears the greatest harmonic similarity to Copland's pastoral balletic language. The theme incorporates a distinctly Copland-associated trait, chordal superimposition (often I/IV or V/I).[117] These harmonic superimpositions have featured in each of Copland's ballets, most famously as bookends of *Appalachian Spring*, and in *Our Town*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and the Clarinet Concerto (1950). Similar polychordal and polytonal effects feature in the works of Barber, Harris, Hanson, Schuman, Thomson, Randall Thompson (1899–1984), and others (although not as regularly related to western programmes). The effect of these superimpositions is not one of conflict; instead, these types of harmonies (also occasionally presented as 'added-note chords or a pair of 'incomplete chords') result in a lightness of feeling that creates the typical Coplandesque open sound.[118] Williams employs similar harmonic operations in 'Trail'.

In the overture, the theme is introduced by a violin melody that suggests a C major tonality, while supporting harmonic patterns outline a progression of rising fifths, F–C–G, resulting in C^5/F^5 (I^5/IV^5).[119] Alternatively, one might read this as a (pastoral-associated) subdominant pedal or drone beneath the C major melody.[120] A distinctive open quality, a vestige of the Coplandesque, is produced by the lingering melodic moments on the third (E) of the upper chord that form a sparse major seventh with the pedal (F). The sense of openness manifests further in the melody, which appears to grow as the range expands either side of the opening pitch, with the theme unfurling from the short first phrase into the broad *legato* conclusion. This melodic *grande ligne* recalls the 'autogenetic' melodies of Roy Harris.[121] Harris often advocated for the naturalness of his own music, purporting that his melodies 'expand and extend the possibilities inherent in the original germ [that is, the distinctive cell that might mark

[116] Musegades, *Copland's Hollywood Film Scores*, 98.
[117] This Copland idiosyncrasy is often suggested as a Stravinsky influence. See his *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* for an example.
[118] Heetderks, *Transformed Triadic Networks*, 138; Creighton, *A Study of Tonality*, 19.
[119] This could also be read as an F^9; however this more jazz-suggestive labelling does not feel appropriate to the sound of the western.
[120] Monelle accredits the pedal of the pastoral *topos* to the bagpipe drone and the siciliana. See Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 209, 215.
[121] Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 247.

the theme]'.[122] This 'natural' quality results in melodies of slowly expanding intervals that suggest evolution, and progressions of successive arching phrases whose hierarchies of pitch replace grand climaxes — described as 'heliotropic' by Nicolas Slonimsky, extending the nature metaphor.[123] In Williams's 'Trail' theme, I recognise these qualities in the broadening of the melodic range from the 'germ' (a four-note phrase progressing to a twelve-note phrase), the succession of broadening pitch highpoints (E5, then F5, then a juxtaposed descent to C4), and the sense of expansion in the cascading descent of the second phrase (see example in Table 3).

My identification of the theme with the 'autogenetic' melodies of Harris is also prompted by the thematic associations with nature. While 'Plains' is one of the less-heard themes of the score, it has the most distinct of signifieds. Its first appearance, as Andersen watches his cattle ride freely into the expansive vista, is almost romantically coded, with a lush, slurred violin melody over mostly static, repeated wind chords and a horn countermelody (Image 3). Later in the film, on a wide shot of the boys riding toward the horizon, it sounds between antiphonal solo harmonica and trumpet and beneath high string pedals. The final appearance continues that same initial grandiose, reverent, and optimistic tone, as swelling strings announce the homeward journey toward a vista of distant mountains. Each of these thematic reprises has a clear visual parallel: the landscape. The expansive, superimposed harmonies seem to reflect these wide-open western spaces, while the lyrical melody almost marvels at the natural splendour.[124] Consequently, the theme is distinctly American not only in its vocabulary but in its associations. Williams marries that familiar sound to familiar imagery, inheriting the traditions and practices of the influential westerns that came before.

[122] Sidney Curber Cox quoted in ibid., 247.
[123] Sidney Curber Cox quoted in ibid., 247; Nicolas Slonimsky quoted in Levy, "The White Hope of American Music'; or, How Roy Harris Became Western', *American Music*, 19/2 (Summer 2001), 131–67: 146. Levy points to Harris's *Farwell to Pioneers* (1935) as a representative example of 'autogenesis' from the composer's oeuvre given its gradually expanding intervals. See Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 252–54.
[124] This link between physical and musical space was identified as part of an 'American idiom' by Wilfrid Mellers in 1943. See Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 481.

Image 3: *The Cowboys*, Andersen looks to the dawning horizon as his cattle roam freely.

Echoes of natural space in musical space are evoked through means other than associative themes. In *The Cowboys Overture* a similar sense of space is created during a highly impressionistic transition between the 'Training' and 'Paternal' themes (Figure 26). The interval of a fifth acts as the musical link in this segue: 'Training' outlines a fifth through its ascending triadic statements each separated by a fifth (bars 118–21), at the same time fifths gradually expand either side of the F tonic in supporting strings (118–22), and 'Paternal' is marked by its opening fifth (126–27). The effect is one of peace and stillness, like a prairie night.[125]

[125] In this case, one has just cause for recalling Annabel Cohen's 'Congruence-Association Model' when observing the synthesis between the 'visual surface' and the 'musical surface', which in tandem generate the particularly affecting quality of the scene through internal (congruent) and external (associative) meanings and which might 'direct specific attention' to the landscape. Cohen, 'Film Music from the Perspective of Cognitive Science', 120–21.

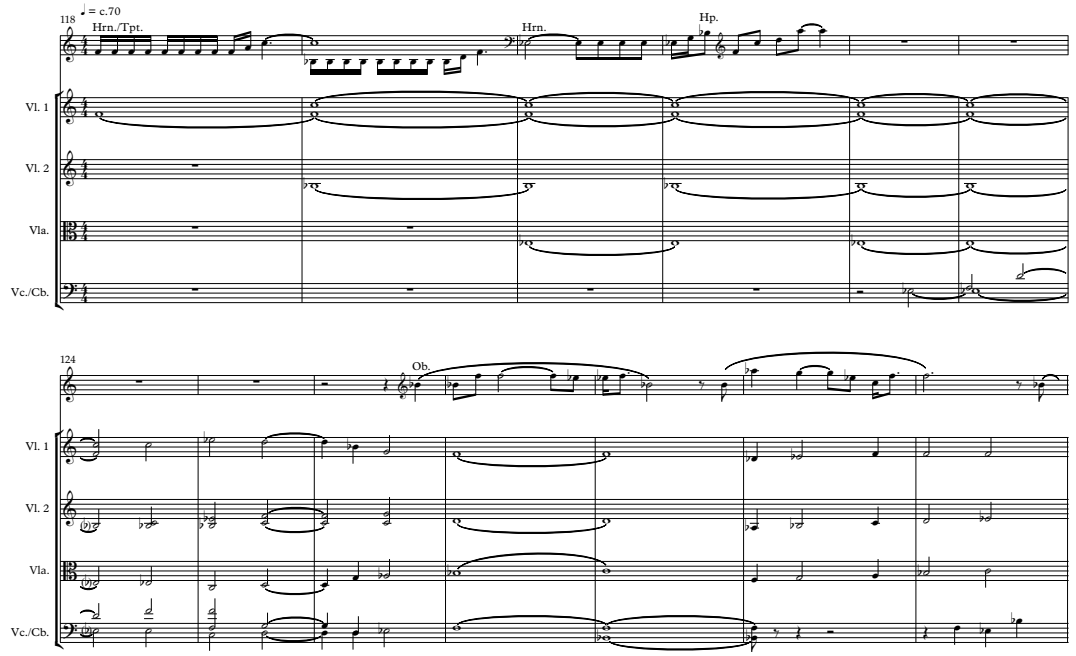


Figure 26: Williams, *The Cowboys Overture*, orchestral reduction of bars 118–30. Expanding strings in fifths (118–21) follow 'Training', and a solo oboe plays 'Paternal' (126–30) accompanied by planing inverted triads in strings during the second phrase (129). Transcribed from *The Cowboys Overture* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2013).

'Paternal'

'Paternal' stands apart from the other themes in the film, as, on its surface, it seems to be less obviously indebted to the western models of Copland, Moross, or Bernstein.[126] The noble melody is one that bears similarities to many themes of Williams's neoclassical scores and would not sound out of place in *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, or *Superman*. The theme might first appear forlorn, given the yearning open fifth — often played by a solo instrument in the film, initially bassoon followed by clarinet, and subsequently in horn or harmonica — and slow-to-moderate tempo; yet the preparatory ♭IIIb–IVb–Vb progression (seen in bar 129 of Figure 26) elicits, according to Ron Sadoff, a sense of 'hope, righteousness and euphoria', which counterbalances the sombre, falling melody.[127] Here, Williams voices this planing progression tightly and in parallel motion, a common jazz practice that Aaron Johnson has noted in the cadential progression (♭III–♭IIb–♭VII–V–I) of the titular theme from *The Best Years of Our Lives*.[128] These building blocks lend the theme a solemnity and quiet nobility befitting its association with the fatherly Andersen; however, thematic signification is not entirely consistent, and 'Paternal' also comes to associate with vast landscapes — occasionally at the expense of a 'Plains' statement.

Associative links to nature are heightened by a convention of orchestration, one that has distinct ties to the western. An example of this occurs in the cue 'Graveyard', which accompanies

[126] Schneller names this theme 'nature'. See Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 61.
[127] Ron Sadoff, 'Composition by Corporate Committee: Recipe for Cliché', *American Music*, 22 (Spring 2004), 64–75: 68.
[128] Johnson, '*The Best Years of Our Lives*', 11. The practice is also pervasive in Williams's scores, including *Saving Private Ryan*, *War Horse*, *Lincoln*, *The BFG*, to name but a sample. Additionally, Roy M. Prendergast suggests that Friedhofer's technique was 'strongly suggestive of much of Aaron Copland's writing'. See Prendergast quoted in Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 498.

Andersen's visit to his sons' graves and his slow walk toward the panoramic horizon. Here, 'Paternal' appears in an isolated solo horn, positioned between high shimmering strings and a (dissonant-feeling) mediant pedal point in the bass.[129] The resulting spacious effect is something of a trope, a specifically western formula often exploited by film composers, as noted by composer-arranger Frank Skinner in *Underscore*, his textbook on scoring film. Skinner described the contrasting of a unison horn melody (potentially doubled on celli) with 'shaking' upper wind and string timbres as painting 'an outdoor picture' and conveying 'the sound of open spaces'.[130] Its troped status was no doubt later solidified by Moross, who used a solo trumpet amidst high planing chords in strings and celeste with deeper, quiet woodwind to an evocative effect in 'Night in Blanco Canyon' from *The Big Country*, as the lone protagonist gazes out into the horizon from a porch. This is a rather different, modernised form of Americana, and not as typically associated with Copland as his other pastoral tropes — although 'Corral Nocturne' from *Rodeo* and 'Prairie Night (Card Game at Night)' from *Billy the Kid* may have served as potential models.[131]

The trope creates a musical sense of vastness, conjured here not by the typical tight planing passages or chordal superimpositions of Copland, but by musically realising the image of a lone cowboy (solo horn melody) foregrounded against an endless landscape (accompanying high strings and low pedal). Such imagery evokes an idea of 'purity', as Michael Beckerman and William Rosar have noted, a naturalised notion or image of a western landscape that 'modif[ies] our actual perception' of it.[132] Most often, it effects the idea of an 'idyllic sublime', becoming a central musical device in mythicising the landscape (as is the case in *The Big Country*).[133] Perhaps with this same status and effect in mind, Kleppinger dubbed a related *topos* 'idyllic nature', noting it among his other 'Copland sounds'.[134] However, this trend (like many others in Williams's output), was deep-rooted before Copland (and ran further afield, geographically). Brooks Toliver noted the *topos* in the first movement ('Sunrise') of Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*, and remarked that

[129] Sounding on a shot over Andersen's grave, the final appearance of the theme ('Summer's Over') is cast in a similar light: a horn set against a high violin pedal. To a listener familiar with the film's themes, the repeated opening fifth could sound like Andersen's theme trying and failing to start. Simultaneously, however, it could be read as a reference to the successive opening fifths of *The Last Post* — a fitting allusion given the funereal setting, and a link that likely would not be lost on Williams. Whether intentional or not, the similarity speaks to the commonalities between his noble and forlorn heroic sound and the established associations between solo brass, the heroic, and the funereal in musical culture (explored in Chapter One).

[130] Frank Skinner, *Underscore* (Los Angeles: Skinner Music Co., 1950), 200–08.

[131] 'Corral Nocturne' captures the vastness via planing and widely spaced diatonic triads, solo triadic melodies, and simple textures, while 'Prairie Night' effects a similar mood through flute and trumpet soli contrasting glittering string textures.

[132] Michael Beckerman and William H. Rosar, 'The Idyllic Sublime: A Dialog on the Pastoral in Westerns', *The Journal of Film Music*, 2/2–4 (2009), 251–62: 254.

[133] Ibid., 252.

[134] Among the list of features in 'idyllic nature', Kleppinger includes 'wide consonant voicings and open textures, slow tempo, softer dynamics, slow harmonic rhythm, diatonic monophonic melodies that leap unpredictably, bird calls.' See Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.

this effect of musical stasis has 'extend[ed] at least as far back as the madrigals and Parisian chansons of the sixteenth century.'[135]

A brief survey of the numerous American models is most pertinent to understanding the legacies on which Williams builds when adapting this common pastoral gesture. As it happens, one of Copland's most marked uses of such formulaic orchestration was to connote not the prairie but urban loneliness in *Quiet City* (1939), with solo cor anglais and trumpet against strings. Elsewhere, and with greater connections to nature, is Walter Piston's 'Mountains' from *Three New England Sketches* (1959), in which a sense of space is created through orchestration as well as loud dynamics and thunderous percussion, conjuring an appropriate sense of enormity; Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000) accomplished a similar effect in his Symphony No. 2, 'Mysterious Mountain'. For their contemporary William Schuman, the *topos* was a firmly established component of his characteristic orchestration and open sound — one derived from 'separate blocks of color', which lend a 'fresh and sharp, bold and clear' effect (according to Nathan Broder).[136] Of the preceding generation, Carl Ruggles (1876–1971) uses ascending passages in the introduction, and notably in the conclusion of *Sun-treader* (1932) for a comparable sense of vastness. But, perhaps the most pertinent example in the canon of American art music is *The Unanswered Question* (first written in 1908 but revised in the early 1930s) by Charles Ives (1874–1954), in which widely spaced, slow, diatonic string chords (representing 'The Silences of the Druids') stand apart from the unchanging solo trumpet (repeatedly asking 'The Perennial Question of Existence').[137] Rather than referencing prairies or cowboys, Ives often depicted East Coast life, as in *Central Park in the Dark* (1906), *A Symphony: New England Holidays* (completed, 1913), and *Three Places in New England* (completed, 1929); however, *The Unanswered Question* seems to suggest ideas of nature, sublimity, and the eternal which also have found currency in music for western films. Of course, Ives's music is not a pronounced reference for Williams's film scores, nor do I wish to make a case that it is; however, the shared musical images and emotional resonances of these two works make for an interesting comparison.[138] For both, the lone melody and the wide intervals (fifths for Williams, sevenths and octaves for Ives) conjure a sense of

[135] Toliver, 'Eco-ing in the Canyon', 354.
[136] Nathan Broder, 'The Music of William Schuman', *The Musical Quarterly*, 25/1 (January 1945), 17–28: 22. In particular, much of Schuman's heterophonic — often chromatic — string progressions (notable in the 'Chorale' of his Third Symphony) are evident in scores like *The Patriot* and *Amistad*.
[137] Charles E. Ives, programme note for *The Unanswered Question* (New York, NY: Southern Music Publishing Co., 1953), 2.
[138] Once again, I will recall Cohen's idea of 'congruence' to not only underline the 'structural' bonds between Ives's music and its programme and Williams's cue and its associated scene but also to reinforce how the two pieces could generate similar emotions. Additionally, Cohen's Congruence-Association Model might offer an effective means of connecting the abovementioned examples of Skinner's formula, or other similar film music clichés in future studies. Annabel Cohen, 'Congruence-Association Model of Music and Multimedia: Origin and Evolution' in *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, ed. Siu-Lan Tan, Annabel J. Cohen, Scott D. Lipscomb, Roger A. Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17–47: 21–25.

openness, and the more distant-sounding and slow-moving accompaniment provides the sonic backdrop, like the far horizon of a prairie night (for Williams) or an infinite sublime (for Ives).

By linking together physical and musical space, these evocative formulae parallel the pastoral trope; additionally, as with the trope, a continued transference between settings broadens associative possibilities. Such transferability could be argued to demonstrate the tenuousness of programmatic associations. However, the varied applications of this open spaces *topos* might instead reveal a more all-purpose emotional function. Instead of evoking a single image type, the trope is more often used to suggest a contemplative affect, which itself frequently finds a home in musical meditations on nature — not least in westerns. The *topos* seems to have a reliable emotive power; for instance, Pollack considered *The Unanswered Question* one of 'America's most introspective musical ruminations' (alongside *Quiet City* and Barber's *Adagio for Strings* (1938)).[139] Thus, programmatic associations are not so much tenuous as they are flexible, and, as a multi-purpose and multi-faceted musical code, this *topos* might be just as effective at encouraging contemplation as it is at conjuring an epic sense of space.

For Williams, these multifarious associations often operate in conjunction, as demonstrated in 'Paternal'. The more rigid connections of Williams's 'idyllic nature' *topos* are with specifically American spaces (and less often used in his English pastorals, like those of *Jane Eyre*, *War Horse*, and *The BFG*).[140] For example, in 'Oklahoma Territory', from his Irish-American score for *Far and Away*, a Mixolydian solo horn line plays beneath shimmering fourths and fifths in piano, and high string pedals in fourths, accompanying a sun rising over a distant horizon (the lack of pedal here lends the cue a more heavenly, optimistic quality).[141] Similarly, *The Eiger Sanction* (Clint Eastwood, 1975) features this Williams gesture in a more triumphal setting in 'Top of the World', where resplendent hurried strings and electric harpsichord contrast a horn figure that accompanies a solo climber reaching the peak of the Totem Pole in Monument Valley.[142] In 'Among the Clouds' and 'Dorinda Solo Flight' from *Always* (Spielberg, 1989), an extended lofty horn solo plays under glittering strings during a flight over moonlit woodland and lakes.[143] The prologue of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Spielberg, 1989) uses high clustered strings and a slow-moving octave bass-line (à la Grofé) for the establishing shots of the desert in 'Utah, 1912'

[139] Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 332.
[140] Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[141] Although two versions of this cue have been released, the spacious horn and string introduction is similar in both the film version and the alternate.
[142] The location has achieved something of an iconic status due its natural beauty and its famous association with the westerns of John Ford. A review of the film observed the pictorial qualities of the score, stating that the film 'gets a big assist from John Williams' dramatic score that is rich in the imagery of the chilled world of mountain climbing.' Unknown author quoted in Jon Burlingame, liner notes for *The Eiger Sanction (Expanded Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)* (Intrada, 2021), 15.
[143] Portions of the cues from *Always* and *The Eiger Sanction* were victims of editing, which cut some of these evocative moments during the films.

(as a title card reveals).[144] Most of these examples adjust the trope to suit distinctly American landscapes — the Great Plains, the Colorado Plateau, the neighbouring woodland of the Rocky Mountains, and the Utah desertscape — extending the connotations of the *topos* beyond its western origins.

2.4: Williams Beyond the Western

Given the simultaneous connotations of the pastoral and the contemplative, the *topos* has found currency in a variety of scores by Williams. Even in scores that do not so consistently dwell in Americana, the *topos* manifests itself; as in the case of *Superman*, where the potent American associations of this pastoralism become evident in a central scene, revealing its mythopoetic qualities. In the cue 'Death of Jonathan Kent', those same aesthetics so often linked to Williams's European- and Hollywood-influenced approaches provide a significant identity-forming function. Here, Williams broadens the associations of the *topos* by encompassing this Americanised style into a mythic heroic journey, positioning his American roots alongside more commonly acknowledged influences, like Bruckner, Strauss, and Wagner.[145]

American-associated pastoralism has become as distinctive a feature of Williams's entire oeuvre and filmic style as Tchaikovskian love themes, Korngoldian leitmotifs, Prokofiev-inspired balletic cues, and the Sousa-esque or Elgarian march. However, given that pastoralism is less prevalent in his most popular work, it has been less frequently remarked upon. Nevertheless, it has been a consistent feature of numerous scores, thus widening its possible associations and opening it up to 'ascription'.[146] The most marked instance of ascription is in the central pastoral sequence of *Superman* (1978), set in Smallville, Kansas (Image 4). Yet, rather than expanding the associations of the *topos* by subtly alluding to discrete topical gestures within the context of a relatively new (at time of release) film genre, instead, Williams essentially re-appropriates familiar thematic make-up.

[144] One might also be tempted to cite the memorable 'Binary Sunset' from *Star Wars*. Although the horn solo statement is not accompanied by a high string pedal, the quivering tremolo beneath it creates a sense of space appropriate to the desert landscape of Tatooine. The hero's white costume and the expansive, barren landscape make the film's status as a space western seem all the more appropriate in this context.
[145] For more on the Bruckner links, see Ben Winters, '*Superman* as Mythic Narrative: Music Romanticism and the "Oneiric Climate"', in *Music in Fantasy Cinema*, ed. Janet Halfyard (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 111–31.
[146] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 111.

Image 4: *Superman*, young Clark speaks with his father at the Kent family farm in Smallville, Kansas.

Williams appears to have recycled material or unconsciously imitated himself to an unusually high degree in the 'Smallville' theme. This pastoral, Mixolydian-inflected theme for Clark Kent's home obviously stems from 'Paternal' from *The Cowboys*, inheriting numerous aspects of its predecessor's melody — an opening perfect fifth, the 4̂-4̂-5̂-1̂ concluding of the first phrase, the Mixolydian seventh, the closing repeated pitches — and its rhythm — an upbeat, mid-phrase moments of stasis on the second beat, and dotted or tied-note passages (Figure 27). This recycling is remarkable due to the striking melodic similarity, yet it is not an entirely unique instance, for Williams has reused gestures at numerous points throughout his career: scores have been written at the same time and their soundworlds have overlapped (combat sequences of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones* or *The Adventures of Tintin* and *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*); as mentioned in Chapter One, similarly styled melodies have denoted related concepts (Figure 1 of *The Patriot*, *American Journey*, and *Amistad*); and shared ideas are repeated in different styles (mournful chromatic descents in *Attack of the Clones* and *Catch Me If You Can*).[147] Despite numerous cases of reuse, two distinct themes, with such closely related signifieds, have never been so interchangeable as 'Paternal' in *The Cowboys* and 'Smallville' in *Superman*.

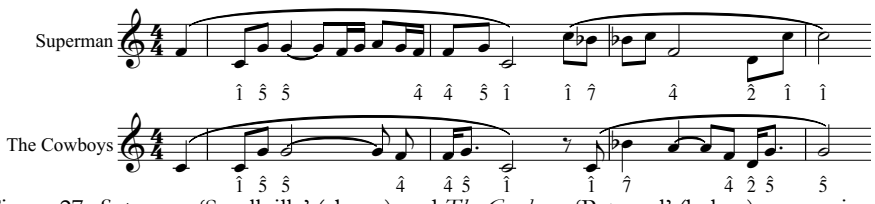


Figure 27: *Superman*, 'Smallville' (above) and *The Cowboys*, 'Paternal' (below) comparison.

[147] Lehman has called attention to what has been dubbed the 'Ludlow Motif', a recurring ostinato-style figure in numerous action scenes scored by Williams since *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1997). See Frank Lehman, 'John Williams's Action Music in the Twenty-First Century', in *Music in Action Film: Sound Like Action!*, eds. James Buhler and Mark Durand (New York: Routledge, 2021), 116–48: 126.

The shared visual referent of both themes is American landscape: early appearances of 'Paternal' are synchronised with wide shots of the Montana horizon, and 'Smallville' is cued alongside establishing shots of the Kansas prairie. Clearly conscious of connecting the idyllic setting of *Superman* to familiar open sounds, Williams noted that 'in the Rockwellian eras there is a more open texture of the harmonies and in the melodic structuring.'[148] In addition, troped orchestration is also a significant point of comparison, the *Superman* cue directly invoking Skinner's open spaces formula through the positioning of solo horn between a bass pedal and high-octave violins (again, not unlike 'Graveyard' in *The Cowboys*). The open harmonies to which Williams refers are evident in the high, fifth-related violin polychords moving in octave-displaced parallel fourths and fifths, which sound as Jonathan Kent (Clark's father) collapses to the ground. This 'mannerism' is evocative of Schuman's *Symphony for Strings* (1943): a comparison warranted by both composers' attainment of what Broder calls a 'feeling of finality' through the resolution to a single consonant triad (here C♯, on the cut to the wide shot as Clark runs to his collapsed father).[149] The sense of melodic expansiveness is clearest at the end of the *Superman* cue, when the horn theme takes centre stage between bass chords, grounded by a tonic pedal, as the string countermelody continually reaches higher and higher in conjunction with the upward crane shot (Figure 28 and Image 5). The satisfying resolution of the final suspension (violins C–B♭ in the final bars) coincides with the revelation of the full vista, as if to celebrate or consecrate the natural beauty.

Image 5: *Superman*, the Kansas landscape is revealed as Clark and his mother leave the graveyard following the burial of his father.

[148] Williams, quoted by Mike Matessino, liner notes for *Superman: The Movie (40th Anniversary Remastered Edition)* (La-La Land Records, 2019), 21.
[149] Broder, 'The Music of William Schuman', 19–20. With thanks to Noah Horowitz for pointing me towards the work of Schuman and for sharing 'An Eclectic Analysis of John Williams' Score for the Scene *The Death of Jonathan Kent* From *Superman* (1978)', paper presented at *Music and the Moving Image XV* (NYU Steinhardt, 1 June 2019).

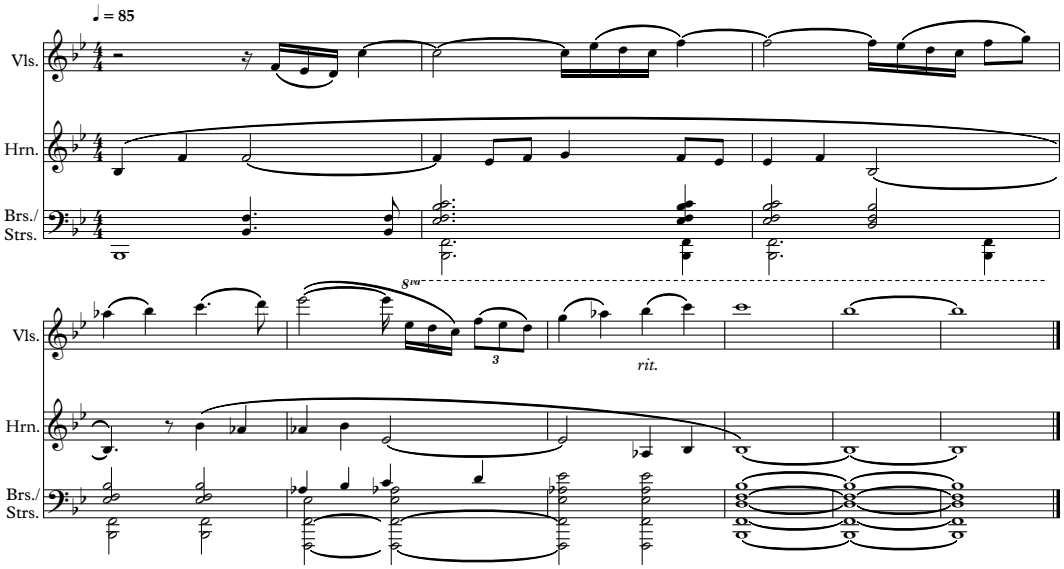


Figure 28: *Superman*, 'Death of Jonathan Kent', orchestral reduction of concluding passage. Basses ground the cue with a tonic pedal under I, V, and suspended harmonies, as the horn plays 'Smallville', and the violins continually rise until the final suspension at the cadence.

Superman draws extensively upon *The Cowboys* theme, not only its melodic material, but also through narrative context and thematic associativity. The climax of the *Superman* cue accompanies the budding hero's burial of his adoptive father, recalling Andersen's visit to his sons' graves in *The Cowboys*. In these sequences, Williams uses the *topos* to signify a vast landscape and to generate a sense of melancholy, artfully capitalising on the dual capacity of the troped orchestration and pastoral theme. Furthermore, both cues underline the significance of these first steps in the characters' journeys.[150] For Andersen, the father is saying (an unknowing final) goodbye to his sons before (in essence) gaining new ones; for Kent, the loss of his father spurs him on to become the eponymous superhero. More than simply denoting domesticity, these pastoral themes mark the leaving of home.[151] Despite Kent's alien origins and his eventual urban existence, his formative years — and thus the source of his character (more significant than the source of his superpowers) — are rooted in the sound and imagery of the American West, the 'bucolic heartland', as Lerner called it.[152] Equally, the core of Superman's musical identity is based in the 'Smallville' theme; as Audissino writes, the shared perfect fifth is 'the aural counterpart' of the iconic 'S' emblem, musically uniting the planet Krypton, Kent's rural upbringing, the heroic fanfare, and the march theme.[153] Consequently, Williams's Americana is

[150] In Joseph Campbell's heroic monomyth, this might be 'The Crossing of the First Threshold' stage. See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), 64.
[151] The cue 'Leaving Home' shortly follows 'Death of Jonathan Kent', where the 'Smallville' theme similarly anoints the landscape with mythic purpose. Here again, Williams revels in the open spaces *topos*.
[152] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 505–6.
[153] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 281. Winters makes a similar observation to Audissino, writing that 'the pastoral theme that surrounds Superman in the rural idyll of his life in Smallville has clear roots [particularly the perfect fifth] in the character's more bombastic, heroic music, first heard in the titles.' See Winters, '*Superman* as Mythic Narrative', 131. Similarly, the fifth is a central component of Hans Zimmer's theme for Superman in *Man of Steel* (Zack Snyder, 2013). Yet, interestingly, it is Williams's theme, not Zimmer's, that returns with a fleeting cameo of the character in *Shazam!* (David F. Sandberg, 2019), a strange choice as *Shazam!* composer Benjamin Wallfisch has collaborated

required not only to establish setting but also the fundamental American-ness of the hero's identity.[154]

The combined Americana associations of the rural idyll and pastoral theme allow the archetypal mythic narrative to assert its status as an essentially American legend.[155] The *topos* then reveals its semiotic porousness, attaining associations beyond the typical codified meanings of the trope. Thematic polysemy here is a boon for musical storytelling: 'Smallville' can denote the rural setting and traditional home — marking teenage Kent as 'one of us' (an American) — while simultaneously presaging the superhero he is to become, an ideal to which the proverbial 'we' can strive. "The American way" that Superman later fights to uphold is one grounded in his rural upbringing, and solidified through a *topos* which is thoroughly integrated in musical conceptions of the nation. In short, Williams has broadened the associative potentiality of American pastoralism. Rather than disguising these roots of the *topos* to focus on the heroic traits of the emergent superhero, Williams reinforces the bucolic sensibility, encompassing typical associations of the mythicised American West within the newer identity and idealism of a more contemporary American legend.

2.5: Williams's American Pastoralism

The multifaceted variations and associations of Williams's pastoral American writing demonstrate how the Coplandesque has grown well beyond the popular ballets of the 1930s and 1940s. While pastorals of mid-century westerns cemented familiar associations, non-genre manifestations broadened how and what these sounds can signify. In many Williams scores, the Coplandesque is not cited by mimicking harmonic or rhythmic practices of the 'imposed simplicity' style, but instead by channelling the vernacular in a more idiosyncratic manner.[156] As Bribitzer-Stull has observed, 'what starts out as quotation relaxes into allusion, and eventually becomes topical.'[157] He gives the example of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), noting that it created links between the brass fanfare *topos* and sci-fi-specific associations like space and 'the idea of *epic, filmic beginning*' (emphasis in original text), which later franchises like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* (as well as *Superman*) assimilated in their titular

with Zimmer and both *Shazam!* and *Man of Steel* take place in the same cinematic universe, with the character being played by the same actor. Similarly, Danny Elfman chose Williams over Zimmer to accompany the character's revival in *Justice League* (Zack Snyder, 2017). Perhaps for Wallfisch and Elfman, it is Williams's theme that is the most definitive musical representation of the character.

[154] Grace Edgar has effectively discussed the nature of this heroic identity through a camp lens, particularly in relation to the film's love interest (Lois Lane) in 'Queers of Steel: Camp in John Williams's *Superman* (1978) and Jerry Goldsmith's *Supergirl* (1984)', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 15/3 (2021), 321–44.

[155] Winters, '*Superman* as Mythic Narrative', 111.

[156] Copland quoted in Starr, 'Copland's Style', 69.

[157] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 123–24.

themes.[158] This trajectory from the aforementioned 'piece-specific' associations to 'cultural-generic' associations can also be observed in relation to American pastoralism.[159]

For example, 'The Open Prairie' from *Billy the Kid* established connections between vast landscapes and planing woodwind. The associations of this opening passage — clarinets, oboes, and bassoons playing in tight planed fifths (with thirds) and in triple metre — are consolidated with its triumphal brass recall in the final section, 'The Open Prairie Again'. Across his later work, Copland employs planing winds to connote expansiveness, isolation, and simplicity: in 'Corral Nocturne' (*Rodeo*), oboe and bassoon play a duet of fifths, sixths, and sevenths; and, for the *pas de deux* (*moderato*) in *Appalachian Spring*, clarinet and bassoon passages frequently act as short interludes. Subsequently, film composers could reference these models and their connotations in their own planed woodwind passages. In *The Big Country*, for instance, planed fifths in oboe and bassoon evoke isolation during 'McKay Alone'; Moross also built upon the gesture, regularly using planed strings (often in alternating fourths and fifths) in cues like 'The Welcoming', 'Night at Ladder Ranch', and 'Cattle at the River'.[160] Similarly, Williams alludes to the gesture in *The Cowboys*, implying a tranquillity via planed winds and electric organ in 'The First Night' (as the boys exhaustedly settle down at a makeshift camp), and suggesting excitement and nature in a dance-like planed string countermelody during 'Burning Daylight' (when Andersen leads the boys across a river).[161] This 'collective re-usage' solidified these related gestures as a general *topos*.[162] Now possessing a degree of fluidity, planed woodwind figures can function with stable associations in various settings, as in *Amistad* where triple-metre fifths in clarinet and bassoon (shown in Figure 13 at the start of this chapter) generate broader 'cultural-generic' associations related to perseverance.[163] Here, Williams can vary the *topos*, with a melody marked more by step than triadic movement and with more syncopated and diverse rhythms, without losing — but not actively citing — those once 'piece-specific' associations.[164]

The path from quotation to allusion to topicalisation has softened denotations, allowing this *topos* to connote ideas and concepts less bound to Copland's ballets and the West. Lerner has hinted at this phenomenon, noting that 'as with any reified musical code, constant and repetitive

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[158] Ibid. Of course, the associative resonances of the fanfare *topos* were already well established but Kubrick helped relate them to the new science-fiction context specifically. Additionally, Lerner has also connected the theme of *Star Trek: The Original Series* to Copland's vernacular, observing that the 'infinite space horizon seen during each episode's opening credits' is accompanied by Copland-associated figures, such as successive perfect fourths. See Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 502–03.

[159] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 121.

[160] The wind figure of 'McKay Alone', which went unused in the film, also seems to recall Stravinsky, a relevant comparison given that the Russian composer was a significant influence on Copland. Elmer Bernstein similarly adopts woodwind duets in his westerns, for example in cues likes 'An Ex-Sheriff' and 'New Patient' from *The Tin Star*.

[161] The planed and open strings of 'Burning Daylight', and particularly the *long-short* rhythmic pattern, suggests the similarly styled opening of *The Red Pony*, a score which also extends those associative gestures of Copland's ballets.

[162] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 124.

[163] An intimate clarinet and bassoon passage also marks a fleeting moment of pastoral calm before the end of 'Hymn to the Fallen' from *SPR*.

[164] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 124.

use […] will, over time, both strip it of its original meaning and open it up to signifying potential.'[165] While Lerner did not (given the brevity of his study) assess the possible variations on the pastoral trope and its associations, he did point to examples of Williams scores like *Superman*, *SPR*, and *Amistad* as an indication of the evolving nature of this pastoral style.[166] As addressed in the chapter introduction, *SPR* and *Amistad* have demonstrated when and why Williams utilises pastoral *topoi* outside of their original home in the western genre. In these instances Williams clearly pays homage to the generic pastoral style to foreground national-associated ideas. In *SPR*, the *topos* explicitly accents ideas of agrarian life and family, markedly deploying this associated shorthand to intensify the inherent "Americanness" of the farmyard home in the Iowa prairie, while in *Amistad*, the vernacular loosely links a lawyer's actions to a more significant purpose tied up with a supposedly intrinsic Americanness. Rather than simply revealing how pastoral *topoi* have become distanced from the western, these more obvious homages and allusions to the original Copland models also continue to reinforce, via 'reciprocal semiotic pressure' (to borrow Lawrence Kramer's phrase), that which the style is commonly understood to represent, and have resulted in the selective filtering, or even purification, of certain associative gestures.[167]

The development of American pastoralism beyond the confines of Copland is all the more evident in those aforementioned Williams scores that allude to the familiar and generate associations in a more obviously idiolectic manner. Landscape and affect depart from cliché, particularly in *Always* and *Far and Away*, while *The Cowboys* indicates the expressive potential of interrelated American idioms by varying the familiar through voice-leading, harmony, and orchestration. Most significantly, *Superman* has demonstrated how and what these interrelated *topoi* can suggest beyond the pastoral, with the 'Smallville' theme establishing a heroic identity through predetermined associations. Here, Williams evinces the broader narratological and mythological purposes that pastoral *topoi* can serve, in addition to their generic landscape-signifying function. Given their acclaim, the score and film have arguably contributed to the assimilation of these relaxed connotations and denotations of this American vernacular.

I do not want to overstate the impact of any one scene from any one film; rather this evolution has been the result of an associative layering and ascription, which encompasses non-Williams examples too extensive to include here.[168] However, an example like *Superman* helps make the case to consider a re-hearing of the Coplandesque, or at least a re-assessment of what it

[165] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 505.
[166] Ibid., 505–06.
[167] Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 97.
[168] In Bribitzer-Stull's words, there has been 'a move from a specific musical statement, with a specific association and context, to a more generalised musical quality than can function in variety of settings.' See *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 123–24.

constitutes. To define the multi-influenced and mythologically potent *Superman* cue solely in terms of the Coplandesque or through Lerner's pastoral trope is unnecessarily delimiting. Appropriations of the Copland style have not elicited a singular, neatly defined musical code, but have rather created multiple 'sounds' that are by no means rigid but loosely defined.[169] While a Copland frame has been an effective means of establishing Williams's writing in this vein, and of examining those traditions from which this sound has originated and developed, it has also become clear that the prescriptive ideas of pastoral tropes and Copland sounds are unduly restrictive.

Furthermore, scholarship alluding to this aspect of Williams's output has often overstated the Copland influence, with the name acting as a tokenistic catch-all for American art music. When this pastoral sound is discussed, it is occasionally addressed as citational (Williams 'doing Copland' or 'Copland filtered through Williams', with unusually little credit given to the composer himself). This is particularly the case in online discourse and in film and soundtrack journalism.[170] Of his other American influences, Audissino and Schneller have cited Bernstein and Moross; Lehman has explored the Moross harmonic influence on Williams (and others); Orosz has noted Hanson with specific reference to *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*; and, of course, many authors have identified other American film composers — Bernard Herrmann, Alex North (1910–91), Henry Mancini — and jazz musicians, although not in relation to pastoralism specifically.[171] These influences have rarely attracted considerable attention, and it has become clear that Williams's constellation of American models extends beyond these composers — also including Barber, Harris, Ives, Piston, Schuman, and Sousa, and by extension Thomson, Friedhofer, and Grofé, as well as others.

There may be merit in widening our view of the range of composers from which Williams potentially draws, but this still positions his brand of Americana as citation, pastiche, or homage; undue emphasis on such inspiration risks overlooking those individualistic examples — like the open spaces tropes of *The Cowboys* and *Superman* or the rhythmic distinctiveness of his folk melodies — which point to the Williams-esque elements of his Americana. While we might consider the interval of a fifth in the abovementioned scores as synonymous with the

[169] Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[170] James Southall describes *The Cowboys* as providing 'the chance for Williams to put his Copland hat on with all the justification in the world', while Jonathan Broxton observes Williams's numerous references in *Lincoln* as being 'filtered through the American sensibilities of Aaron Copland'. James Southall, 'The Cowboys', *movie-wave.net*, <http://www.movie-wave.net/titles/cowboys.html> [04 May 2023]; Jonathan Broxton, 'LINCOLN – John Williams', *Movie Music UK*, 23 October 2012, <https://moviemusicuk.us/2012/10/23/lincoln-john-williams/> [04 May 2023].
[171] Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 24, 103; Schneller, 'Modal Interchange and Semantic Resonance', 53–4; Lehman, 'Hollywood Cadences', 4.1; Orosz, 'Paraphraser or Plagiarist?', 304.

Coplandesque, it is just as much a veritable and pervasive Williams trademark.[172] Similarly, slow-moving pandiatonic harmonies and pedals, considered cliché components of pastoralism, are ingrained across Williams's scores, with Williams demonstrating variety from cliché through quicker rates of harmonic change (aided by syncopation) and a more complex approach to dissonances via held suspensions and extensions (often colouring otherwise open fifth dyads with added seconds or fourths, for example).[173] Moreover, while Williams does employ the bare orchestrations outlined in Skinner's prescriptive formula, his soundscapes are rarely as stark — with those examples of *Far and Away* and *Always* having a greater degree of momentum in the melody and an undulating energy in the pedals. In essence, the markers of Williams's Americana are arguably more subtle than Copland's, and might often be encompassed within the all-consuming stylistic categorisations linked to his predecessor; however, this does not mean that there is nothing unique about Williams's pastoralism. Rather, it demonstrates the shrewdness of his references. Williams has captured key markers of the associative style, giving it some semblance to the iconic while manipulating and developing it from within.

Instrumentation is perhaps the most overtly Williams-esque contribution to American pastoralism in film, and the least indebted to Copland or American symphonists. Williams's fondness for wind scoring might be seen as a patent evocation of Copland, yet it is also a ubiquitous component of his familial-themed or lighter scores (*The Accidental Tourist*, *Stanley & Iris*, *Stepmom*, *The Terminal*, *The BFG*); and he favours brass and strings to a greater degree than his forebear. Above all, however, it is the use of non-orchestral instruments that sets Williams's writing apart from others' (including that of contemporary film composers with distinctive Americana styles, such as James Horner, Randy Newman, and Thomas Newman). The majority of Williams's scores from his Americana period, with the exception of *The Plainsman* and *The Rare Breed*, rely to some degree on folk instrumentation and styles, occasionally integrating them into otherwise orchestral scores: in *The Cowboys*, the bass harmonica (with Brazilian cuíca) acts as an associative timbre for 'Long Hair', and marks landscape; *The Reivers* centres around banjo, guitar, and harmonica; *The Missouri Breaks* and *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing* rely on smaller folk ensembles; *The River* (Mark Rydell, 1984) gives guitars a soloistic role; and *The Sugarland Express* highlights the harmonica (similarly, *Rosewood*, discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, foregrounds various folk instruments).[174] Examples such as these indicate Williams's debt to the pre-Coplandesque western traditions of Tiomkin and Steiner — where folk timbres and song

[172] Fifths mark the 'Main Title' of *Star Wars*, numerous interrelated motifs in *E.T.*, the friendship theme of *Harry Potter*, *Jurassic Park* ('Journey to the Island'), *JFK*, *Midway*, *The Eiger Sanction*, *Schindler's List*, and others.
[173] See the supporting harmonies in Figure 28.
[174] Matessino, liner notes for *The Cowboys*, 5.

marked the genre with regularity — and also to the Morricone-influenced aesthetic of revisionist westerns (evident in the work of Jerry Fielding). Much like the neoclassical tendencies of his scores for blockbusters, there is frequently a blending of old and new in Williams's pastoral soundscapes, an indebtedness to the past with an often-overlooked touch of the modern or experimental.

With contemporary film-viewing audiences having assimilated American pastoralism, and in contexts where the *topoi* have been varied or new associations have been established, one need not identify the precise Copland-related signifiers to comprehend this evolved American pastoralism. This vernacular has likely been assimilated in the media to such a point that many are not aware of specific idioms' origins. We do not need to make the semantic link to *Billy the Kid* or *The Big Country* to understand how *topoi* relate to, at some level, the American; to return again to Bribitzer-Stull, 'as long as listener familiarity remains, context can change.'[175] As a vehicle for the assimilation of codes and tropes, Williams's musical Americana has arguably been the most significant means through which film-going audiences have come to understand this vocabulary and its associative potential.[176] Williams has certainly cultivated this pastoral soundscape that was first settled by Copland to the point where these signifiers have become distinct sonic entities. With his network of variously inherited, invented, and idiosyncratic gestures, Williams's Americana does not point to any one lived tradition, or to a single source in American art music or in Hollywood — instead indicating only a mythic space in the American imaginary. Consequently, Williams's means of evoking the pastoral go beyond mere pastiche, and instead have become almost as vast and expansive as that land of endless opportunity the *topoi* once exclusively connoted.

[175] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 121.
[176] Advertising has also been largely responsible for the disseminations and assimilation of these *topoi*, for example the theme *The Magnificent Seven* being used in Marlboro cigarette ads (see Whitmer, *Elmer Bernstein's The Magnificent Seven*, 60), or political campaign advertisements such as those by Rick Perry. See Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.

Chapter Three: Williams's Simple Gifts

> 'Appalachian Spring' is shining and joyous. On its surface it fits obviously into the category of early Americana, but underneath it belongs to a much broader and dateless category. It is, indeed, a kind of testimony to the simple fineness of the human spirit. — John Martin.[1]
>
> Mr. Copeland's [*sic*] music is sincere and unadorned by superficial musical eccentricities. — Harriet Johnson.[2]
>
> It has breadth and power. It is big and vigorous. It is full of rich vitality in the treatment of a beautiful, New Englandish hymn tune, and in the rhythmic development of its simple, folk-like, country dance tune. Copland has gone well beyond the obvious in his homage to Spring. He has given us [a] feeling of exuberance and drive. This music is America. — Horace Grenell.[3]

Early reviews of *Appalachian Spring* highlight themes central to Americanness in music. The qualities of timelessness, sincerity, and simplicity prompted by Martha Graham's ballet on pioneer life are no less represented in Copland's music, which has since become one of America's best-known works. Reviewers often claim they can see Appalachia in the music (this despite the composer's claim that the region played no part in the conception of the ballet) and the work has been something of an immovable influence on depictions of the rural and pastoral in Hollywood music.[4] While Grenell refers to Copland's quotation of a 'New Englandish' hymn, this Shaker tune, 'Simple Gifts', tended to go unmentioned in contemporary reviews.[5] This neglect, however, is no indication of the tune's standing — or that of hymns more generally — in American music. I will argue, in fact, that American hymnody has played a decisive role in the formation of musical Americana in Hollywood film, even as it has continued to be overlooked in scholarship and commentary in favour of a focus on the pastoral trope I examined in Chapter Two.

While the hymnal idiom has been adopted in Hollywood, it has not achieved the same clichéd status as march or pastoral *topoi*. Even so, Kleppinger has categorised an American-specific hymn-related 'Copland sound' as 'protaganistic introspection', a classification that indicates its appropriation in various contexts and, thus, a somewhat stable associativity.[6]

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[1] John Martin, 'The Dance: Washington Festival', *New York Times*, 5 November 1944, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200153479.0?st=image> [11 July 2023].
[2] Harriet Johnson, 'Words and Music: Copland's 'Appalachian Spring' Danced by Graham's Company', *New York Post*, 15 May 1945, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200153538.0> [11 July 2023].
[3] Horace Grenell, 'Copland's Appalachian Spring Danced by Martha Graham, *New York Daily Worker*, 19 May 1945, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200153563.0> [11 July 2023].
[4] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 479. When Copland was composing the ballet, he had titled it *Ballet for Martha.* During the writing, he was thinking of Martha Graham, whom he described as 'unquestionably American: there's something prim and restrained, simple yet strong, about her which one tends to think of as American.' Yet, following the ballet's success and audiences' professed fondness of the imagery in the title, the composer said, 'nowadays people come up to me and say, "Mr. Copland, when I see that ballet and when I hear your music I can just *see* the Appalachians and just *feel* spring." I've begun to see the Appalachians myself a little bit.' See Copland quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 388, 402.
[5] Annegret Fauser, *Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 87.
[6] Kleppinger, 'The "Copland Sound"'. Kleppinger explores the untethering of this 'sound' from pioneer introversion in *Appalachian Spring* and the making of a broader marker of 'American rumination' through the example of Marc Shaiman's score to *The American President*, specifically the cue 'Decisions'.

However, hymn associations are not so much rigid as promiscuous; rather than the immediate suggestions of military or landscape that the march and pastoral respectively evince, hymnody often connotes ideas of contemplation, reverence, and nostalgia, and not any one specific image-type. These broad affects lend hymnody an elusiveness, even despite its appropriation in a variety of genres.[7] Yet when a hymn is modelled on the Copland/Shaker style, these emotional connotations become bound up with an America that is quiet and intimate, removed from the nation depicted in the war films and westerns of the preceding chapters.[8] In consequence, hymnody also underscores characters who reflect and represent America in a different way than do soldiers and cowboys.

Composers like Copland, Harris, and Thomson have incorporated hymnody in many works, occasionally alongside those cowboy tunes that have influenced the pastoral idiom. Whether re-arranged, quoted directly, or used as a basis for new compositions, hymns appear to have been a significant component in the construction of an American musical identity, and have served as a connection to America's 'usable past' for many composers (to borrow an expression of critic-*cum*-historian Van Wyck Brooks).[9] According to Copland, hymns had the ability to represent 'a certain order of feeling: simplicity, plainness, sincerity, directness' — each of which has been used to draw upon some American eidolon.[10] Any religious concerns are often secondary to their nationalistic or nostalgic qualities and effects. For instance, interpretations of Copland's use of 'Simple Gifts' in *Appalachian Spring* rarely reflect on the hymn as a religious artefact. Rather, it has come to represent Shaker life as a sort of folkloristic token embodying a distinctly American culture and history.[11] The hymn thus entwines with an imagined, idealised, and sentimentalised vision of a Rockwellian America.

Given the prominence of Copland's ballet, it comes as no surprise that Williams adopted that same Shaker tune in perhaps his *prima* patriotic composition: *Air and Simple Gifts*, a short quartet for violin, cello, piano, and clarinet.[12] Composed for President Obama's inauguration in 2009, the work draws upon those same all-encompassing and all-American values Copland's ballet has been seen to represent, and in a style reminiscent of his characteristic open idiom. The work was designed to 'express, in a very simple and not ostentatious way, the solemnity and the

[7] The idiom pervades multiples genres including westerns (Carter Burwell's *True Grit* (2010)), war films (James Horner's *Courage Under Fire* (1996), Hans Zimmer's *The Thin Red Line* (1998)), horror (The Newton Brothers' *Midnight Mass* (2021)), family dramas (Lesley Barber's *Manchester By The Sea* (2016)), and historical epics (Nicholas Britell's *The King* (2019)).
[8] Kleppinger, 'The "Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[9] Van Wyck Brooks quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 107. Copland quoted Shaker hymns; Thomson, Baptist hymns; William Schuman, the tunes of William Billings; Ives, a plethora of hymn, folk and march tunes; Daniel Gregory Mason, spirituals. This is just to name a small sample.
[10] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 104.
[11] William Brooks, 'Simple Gifts and Complex Accretions', in *Copland Connotations: Studies and Interviews*, ed. Peter Dickinson (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2002), 103–18: 106; Fauser, *Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring*, 9–10.
[12] Williams had previously conducted 'Simple Gifts from Appalachian Spring' with the Boston Pops. It was released on the American-themed *The Green Album* (1992) alongside Copland's 'The Promise of Living from The Tender Land', Grofé's 'On the Trail' and 'Sunrise', Leonard Bernstein's 'Make Our Garden Grow (From "Candide")', among other traditional folk tunes and arrangements.

beauty of the moment and the promise of the moment', as Williams disclosed in an interview, referencing those same qualities Copland attributed to the hymnal style.[13] Given the 'Simple Gifts' quotation (partly selected in response to Obama's fondness for Copland's music), its distinctive Americana tone may not be among Williams's most original nationalistic compositions. Yet the Coplandesque essence, while potentially viewed as unimaginative, is nonetheless deliberate. This par-for-the-course appearance on such an important ceremonial occasion signifies the standing of the idiom in the national consciousness, demonstrates its paramount patriotic spirit, and above all, exhibits Williams's awareness of its potential.

Hymnody, while not as consistent in Williams's writing for film when compared to fanfares or pastorals, has impressed itself upon certain scores. Perhaps most notably, hymn-redolent instrumental chorales have appeared in a variety of films across his oeuvre: the titular themes to *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (J. J. Abrams, 2019) and *Jurassic Park*, the finale of *War Horse*, 'Meeting the Queen' in *The BFG* (Spielberg, 2016), and, perhaps the most distinctly religious-sounding, the Holy Grail theme from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Additionally, vocal religious music has often taken on a significant role in certain films: 'Saying the Rosary' from *Sleepers* and 'Gloria' from *Monsignor* (Frank Perry, 1982) have the most obviously ecclesiastic associations; while the Christmas carols of the *Home Alone* films and 'Exultate Justi' from *Empire of the Sun* (Spielberg, 1987) both relate to ideas of childhood and innocence; the angelic wordless chorus of *Family Plot* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1976) hints at the supernatural; and, in the *Star Wars* prequels a repeated elegiac choral theme accompanies funerals, while the epic is connoted by chorus in 'Duel of the Fates' in *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999), a piece which, for Williams, created the feeling of being 'in a big temple' or of 'taking part in a ritual' — 'so it becomes almost a Mass'.[14] As some of these examples show, while hymnody can suggest the religious (via associations with artefacts, settings, or the sacramental) this is not always a guaranteed outcome; it is rather the case that the idiom lends itself to broader associations.

Of more obvious concern to this chapter is a relatively distinctive American-associated idiom that has influenced numerous patriotic compositions, including those outside of Williams's Hollywood output: movements of *American Journey*, 'Hymn to New England' (written for travelogue *New England Time Capsule* (1987)), the airs of *Liberty Fanfare*, *A Timeless Call* (a short Spielberg-directed tribute to US veterans made for the 2008 Democratic National Convention),

[13] John Williams, 'Transcript of conversation with John Williams', *NEA Art Works Podcast*, 03 March 2011, <https://www.arts.gov/stories/podcast/john-williams#audio-file> [04 July 2023]. The quartet featured many typical American signifiers besides the hymn tune: planing passages in octaves and fifths, widely spaced chords, rhythmic vitality, folk-inflected soli, disjunct and triadic movement, and an almost always diatonic major mode.

[14] John Williams, 'John Williams on the Phantom Menace', *Soundtrack! The CinemaScore & Soundtrack Archives* 30 July 2015, <https://cnmsarchive.wordpress.com/2015/07/30/john-williams-on-the-phantom-menace/> [23 February 2024] [reproduction of interview in *Soundtrack!* 18/70 (1999)]

the aforementioned *Air and Simple Gifts*, and the lyrical passages of *Dear Basketball* (Glen Keane, 2017) and *Of Grit and Glory*.[15] The absorption of the idiom into some of this *Gebrauchsmusik* is revelatory of the specific American-associations that hymnody holds for Williams, associations which clearly manifest in his scores for American-themed Hollywood features like *Nixon*, *Rosewood*, *Amistad*, *SPR*, *The Patriot*, *Lincoln*, and *The Post*.[16] Although hymnody appears to different extents in these film scores, its pervasiveness and recurring stylistic features would indicate that, for Williams, this idiom has become a veritable *topos* with its own specific connotations.

Case studies of a selection of these films will demonstrate how Williams draws upon a familiar hymn style and capitalises on its established associative heritage. While previous chapters have identified Williams's assimilation of the style of composers like Sousa and Copland as a means of channelling a nationalistic spirit, here I argue that Williams looked for his own vernacular in America's 'usable' past. In search of the distinct national tongue, the composer digs into the folk-influenced hymn roots of the nineteenth century. This aesthetic venture puts Williams on a path parallel to Copland and his contemporaries, as well as those late-nineteenth-century American composers who were spurred on by Antonín Dvořák's encouragement to utilise American folk music, and, later, to those who were influenced by Charles Seeger (1886–1979).[17] Unlike his predecessors, however, Williams rarely directly quotes from pre-existing tunes.[18] This lack of quotation obfuscates a clear source of inspiration and necessitates an overview of redolent hymn styles. By understanding the origins of these idioms, one can better recognise and assess Williams's hymnal vocabulary; this will offer a window into what this *topos* communicates in film, and a comprehension of its functionality in the context of the genre of the films that Williams scores.

By focussing on the way hymn themes are presented within film narratives, I clarify the semantic resonances of this *topos*. Williams's employment of the vernacular will be examined through case studies structured from the narrow to the broad, from the specific to the abstract. I begin with *Rosewood*, an overlooked but significant and unique film within the composer's output, which demonstrates the potentials of stylistic citation and how the salient deployment of spirituals can shape narrative interpretation. Yet, it is *Lincoln* that is central to this chapter. A

[15] Many of these American tributes combine the hymnal mode with fanfares, militaristic brass, and elegiac *topoi*.
[16] An uplifting and lyrical American-styled hymn is used in the finale of *Angela's Ashes*, in a cue called 'Back to America'.
[17] Achter, *Americanism and American Art Music*, 45. Some of America's earliest composers were mostly concerned with religious works.
[18] While the composer has occasionally been criticised for veering too close to established works, instances of acknowledged and direct quotation are less common. *La Marseillaise* is quoted, à la Steiner in *Casablanca*, in *How to Steal a Million*; similarly connotative is 'La Vie en Rose' in *Sabrina* (Sydney Pollack, 1995), which also includes a medley of popular songs during 'The Party Sequence' cue; as mentioned 'Camptown Races 'is used transdiegetically in *The Reivers*; 'When You Wish Upon a Star' was included at the behest of Spielberg in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*; 'Rakes of Mallow' and 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' are in *1941*; 'Anything Goes' crosses the diegetic line in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Spielberg, 1984); 'Garryowen' and 'When Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' appear in *Always*; 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame' in *Hook* (Spielberg, 1991); Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* in *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (Spielberg, 2001); a brief phrase of Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture* in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (Spielberg, 2008); 'Je veux vivre' from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* in *The Adventures of Tintin* (Spielberg, 2011), among others.

more "traditional" presidential portrait compared to Oliver Stone's *JFK* and *Nixon*, the film illustrates how a more semiotically indeterminate soundworld can impart an emotionally and associatively flexible effect. Here, I put forward the case that this is perhaps Williams's most unique and original American score given its style, its relationship to the narrative, and its distinction from most other films discussed in this thesis. The study of *Lincoln* is followed by a brief examination of *The Post*, which demonstrates some of the negative consequences of the less considered incorporation of the hymnal idiom. And finally, a brief study of *Saving Private Ryan* indicates the paradoxical results of stylistic allusion. By displaying the functional, referential, and associative properties of the hymn-styled themes within these films, I not only uncover another colour within Williams's expansive palette but scrutinise the specific view of America that this writing seems to suggest. Due to the influence of genre on these varied approaches to subject matter, these scores must be discussed in parallel to a filmic concern with US history: as truth, as artefact, as fable. Examining the role of music in relation to these histories will reveal the patriotic power of this hymn idiom, and its potential to influence.

Evident in Williams's attitude to hymnody is a quasi-spiritual dimension, with interview quotations suggesting his belief in an almost transcendental process of composition. While this patriotic spirituality is underlined in the central case study and appears of secondary concern to the establishment of Williams's hymnal vernacular, this religious connection between the composer and hymnody forms the basis of the chapter conclusion. Taken in light of Copland's own writing on the emotional content of hymns and of tenets of Shaker craftsmanship, I show that this vernacular facilitates both a reverent approach to scoring the nation's history and, more significantly, a pious allegiance to American music itself.

3.1: Spirituals in *Rosewood* (1997)

In his score for John Singleton's (1968–2019) *Rosewood*, Williams foregrounded solo and choral voices to depict Black trauma, just as he had done for *Amistad*, released that same year. Yet unlike *Amistad*, *Rosewood* was more narratively and thematically committed to depicting race relations and the consequences of racism. Besides presenting Williams the opportunity to write in a style for which he was little known, Singleton's historical drama marked only the second time — following *I Passed for White* (Fred M. Wilcox, 1960), his second feature-film score — that Williams would endeavour to represent a Black perspective through music.[19] The centrepieces of

[19] *I Passed for White*, a best-forgotten drama which seems to linger only in the mind for scholars of Williams's music, deals with an inter-racial relationship and a white-passing Black woman's anxieties of having a Black child with a white father. The themes are melodramatically dealt with in an expectedly unnuanced manner, befitting of the times, and are a far cry from Singleton's considered treatment of the Rosewood massacre. Like *I Passed for White*, *Diamond Head* (Guy Green, 1963) is also an early Williams-scored picture similarly concerned with inter-racial relations: this time American-Asian and Hawaiian.

the *Rosewood* score demonstrate Williams's capability with a different vernacular; he penned three original spirituals and, atypically, wrote the lyrics himself.[20] Two of the spirituals feature prominently in the film — 'Look Down, Lord', 'Light My Way' — and one went unused — 'The Freedom Train'.[21] Their arrangements and cueing demonstrate his sensitivity to the historical events depicted in the narrative, and also an awareness of the history behind this African-American musical tradition (an education likely begun in his early career, 1960–62, as an arranger and performer for gospel singer Mahalia Jackson (1911–1972)).[22]

Williams largely avoids the expected Copland-inspired pastoral trope — which has perhaps found more stable connections to the plains, west, and traditional suburbia rather than to the southern wetlands — instead drawing more heavily on folk elements to depict the 1923 Floridian setting.[23] The presence of twelve-string guitar, banjo, harmonica, and jaw harp provide a colour reminiscent of his early westerns. By juxtaposing these timbres with other forces and styles, Williams distinguishes between the settings. The town of Rosewood is scored with spirituals, blues, and familiar orchestral Americana, separating it from the rougher folk and occasionally atonal sounds linked to Sumner, the poorer, neighbouring white town whose mob initiates the central massacre of the plot. These idioms reflect the period appropriately and provide the illusion of sonic authenticity to the depiction of a horrific massacre inflamed by members of the Ku Klux Klan.[24] Furthermore, contrast is established by diegetic music which indicates class: Sylvester Carrier (Don Cheadle), a piano teacher, plays a rag in the introduction. The instrument indicates the relative wealth of the Black community in Rosewood, a source of resentment for the mob from Sumner.[25] Thus music can be seen as grounding this mostly forgotten history, giving a 'texture to the time period', as was Singleton's intention.[26]

A similar 'texture' is endowed by Williams's spirituals, which generate an appropriate sense of verisimilitude, given that spirituals were performed in certain Black communities in the

[20] Williams worked alongside lyricists Leslie Bricusse (*Home Alone* 1 and 2, *Hook*, and *Superman* among others) and Alan and Marilyn Bergman (*Sabrina* and *America, the Dream Goes On*) quite frequently, and the Sherman Brothers, Johnny Mercer, Rod McKuen, Dory Previn, Don Wolf, Cynthia Weil, and Paul Williams less often. The composer rarely writes his own lyrics — *Rosewood* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (whose songs are little featured within the film) being among those rare occasions — preferring to use poetry mostly (*Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, *Amistad*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*).

[21] The film's original composer, Wynton Marsalis, composed something in a similar vein as Williams's 'Light My Way', the gospel-choir-centred track, 'To Higher Ground'. Marsalis's jettisoned score was subsequently released as *Reeltime* (1999).

[22] The storied composer had already demonstrated his ability to capture the emotions and tragedies of the more troubling moments of history, as evidenced by his Oscar-winning work for *Schindler's List*. For links between Mahalia Jackson and early American folk music see William H. Tallmadge, 'Dr. Watts and Mahalia Jackson – The Development, Decline, and Survival of a folk style in America', *Ethnomusicology*, 5/2 (May 1961), 95–99.

[23] Marsalis had done much the same, even relying on folk, and especially jazz, instrumentation to a greater degree than Williams. In instances of the score, Williams's lush strings cannot but romanticise the setting.

[24] The post-titles of the film reveal that reparations were not granted to the families of the survivors by the Florida House of Representatives until seventy years after the massacre, in 1993. Additionally, the coda observes that the official death toll, according to the state of Florida, was eight (six black people and two white people) but that the survivors place the number between 40 and 150, almost all of them African American.

[25] Frank Lehman, 'Race, Class, and the Responsibilities of Representation in *Rosewood*', paper presented at *Society for American Music 47th Annual Conference* (Tacoma, WA, 10 June 2021). With thanks to Frank Lehman for sharing this paper.

[26] John Singleton quoted in Jeff Bond, liner notes for *Rosewood* (La-La Land Records, 2013), 7.

early twentieth century and that the tradition was rooted in Methodism (the denomination of the Rosewood community in the film). While the most prominent spiritual, 'Look Down, Lord', does not appear in the opening act of the film, it appears repeatedly in the tragic central act — after the white mob has begun its racist rampage. They have been fooled into believing a Black stranger has assaulted a white woman, when the woman was actually beaten by her white lover. Afraid to reveal her affair, she lies about knowing the identity of her attacker, fuelling the prejudiced ire of Sumner's destitute rabble. After the start of the mob's rampage, the spiritual theme immediately establishes a connection to the suffering of the Black community, appearing on solo cello as Mann, the protagonist (Ving Rhames), brings Sylvester to cut down the body of a lynched man from a tree. Soon after, lyrics are attached to the elegiac tune when the theme follows the distant sounds of 'Amazing Grace' breezing out of Rosewood's 'First A.M.E. Church'. 'Look Down, Lord', 'the score's emotional, redemptive centrepiece' (in Matessino's view), faintly emerges like the previous diegetic hymn, but as it amplifies in the sound mix it becomes evident that the chorus is non-diegetic:[27]

Look down, Lord, look down,
This time I'm comin' home.
It's late now, sweet Jesus, take me now,
This time I'm coming home.

In this context it might pass as authentic: here Williams effectively captures an idiomatic essence with appropriate bass tags, dialogic passages, syncopations, and melodic repetition (given the AABA form). The lyrics of this *a capella* setting evoke the traditional sorrowful tone of the spiritual, appropriate to the residents of Rosewood, who are unsure whether they should flee or fight. Given the heritage of the spiritual form — the tradition was one which developed from the music-making traditions of enslaved African Americans — Williams's spiritual seems not only to connote the suffering of the Rosewood community but also to recall the historic struggles of similar communities in the United States.[28] These meta resonances are made explicit during a monologue from the Carrier family matriarch, Aunt Sarah (Esther Rolle), one of the few aware of the scandalous lies.

Sarah tells her granddaughter that revealing the truth to the mob is fruitless, that her own father was 'whipped half to death' due to white men's lies, and that in the mob's eyes being Black is the same as being guilty. Her wisdom, experiences, and awareness are reflected too by the spiritual theme, which sounds in guitar when accompanying her monologue. Even in instances

[27] Mike Matessino, liner notes for *Rosewood* (La-La Land Records, 2013), 8.
[28] 'Spiritual', *The Grove Dictionary of American Music* (Second Edition), Volume 7, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 642. The now-recognisable spiritual sound emerged in camp meetings as a combination Anglo-American hymnody and the music-making practices of African and American slaves.

where the spiritual has been 'moderately "classicized"' (as Lehman notes of other idioms in the score), its thematic, lyrical, and historical connections are never distant.[29] Consequently, the spiritual signifies beyond the sense of loss and danger the Rosewood community immediately face; it resonates more deeply, reflecting historical and generational trauma. Its subsequent two appearances in the film continue to build upon the heritage of the idiom and serve as reminders that historic struggles are not confined to the past. The first, a solo from gospel singer Shirley Caesar, mourns the cold-blooded murder of Aunt Sarah after she had revealed the truth to the white horde.[30] The second occurs in the fallout of the murder in a cue named 'Healing'.[31] This particularly powerful solo horn elegy (with bass drone followed by warm string chords) plays over wide shots of her burning home (Image 6), and close-ups of the piano, a birthday cake, the family portrait, and sign of the family name: Carrier.

Image 6: *Rosewood*, Aunt Sarah's family home burns as the mob who murdered her carry her to the graveyard (at the behest of a regretful sheriff).

The final appearance extends the theme, lending a sense of climax that is augmented by the dramatic performance and narrative context. As Mann sprints to the train to save fleeing children and their schoolteacher from their contemptible pursuers, the theme is mournfully sung by Caesar again, albeit here with a new text. Bass drum hits lend a dramatic weight as they accent each of the soloist's lines.

Oh, I've been weary,
And feeling tired, oh lord.
It's dark now,
And I've lost my way.
Sweet Jesus, Lord, won't you guide me now.
Look down, Lord, look down.

[29] Lehman, 'Race, Class, and the Responsibilities of Representation in *Rosewood*'.
[30] Caesar similarly appears in Marsalis's score.
[31] This title is from the original Sony Classical release, an alternate is 'The Fire/Fanny's Guilt' from La-La Land Record's 2013 edition.

I'm comin' home now.
I'm comin' home now.
I'm comin' home now.
Look down, Lord.

This appeal to God marks a culmination, indicating the desperate longing for release after the days of fear and distress. The voice of the elder gospel singer may well stand in for Aunt Sarah herself (after all Caesar's first cue accompanied her death), and thus, like Sarah's monologue, may signify prejudice and disempowerment and frame this senseless slaughter as part of a historical struggle. Singleton and Williams do not leave us on a melancholic note, however. Mann and the children reach safety. In response, Williams cues a new spiritual, 'Light My Way', which lends a cultural specificity due to its 'jubilee' form and replaces the more prevalent 'sorrow song' form of 'Look Down, Lord'.[32] The major mode, quicker tempo, and more optimistic lyrics match the characters' relief.

Oh glory, oh glory,
It's time to roll on up to the mountain top.
Singin' glory, Hallelujah.
Light the way, please take me up, Lord.
Light the way, please take me up, Lord.

Oh I been searchin' to find the long road up.
Send me the spirit, oh Lord I pray.
Help me hold on.
Send me direction.
Light my way, oh,
Light my way.

In the case of *Rosewood*, Williams employs a specific hymn-based palette in a selection of cues to underscore the Black characters with a — perhaps presumptuous, but nonetheless effective — vernacular.[33] Hymnody serves a similar function within the diegesis also. As mentioned above, the Black congregation of Rosewood's local church sing 'Amazing Grace' after the first lynching. In sharp contrast, the white townsfolk of Sumner are seen merrily intoning 'At the River' as they gather on a sunny Sunday for riverside baptisms. Song, presentation, and context juxtapose the lives of the two townships. The baptism scene is made even more powerful (and strikingly cruel) in comparison to its preceding scene, in which a non-diegetic gospel choir sings 'Look Down, Lord' over a montage of the empty lectern, pews, and organ in the Rosewood church. This ghostly apparition stands in place of the congregation too fearful to gather on the sabbath, even to mourn. The sensitivity and care demonstrated with the

[32] Sandra Jean Graham, 'Spiritual', *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi-org.may.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2225625> [30 August 2022].
[33] Lehman similarly notes this quality in the orchestral score, when writing that Williams's infusion of the vernacular and Hollywood traditions particularises the universal into something 'a bit more urgent and culturally specific — at the cost and threat of, perhaps, presumptuousness'. See Lehman, 'Race, Class, and the Responsibilities of Representation in *Rosewood*'.

diegetic musical performances are equally echoed in Williams's score, the most overtly religious of his entire career — exemplified by the composer's lyrics, the gospel performers, and the songs' connections to religious traditions and their echoing of religious practice.[34]

While contemporary filmgoers and soundtrack enthusiasts might challenge Williams's right as a white composer to depict Black trauma, it is difficult to criticise the effectiveness of the score. Williams's work on *Rosewood* demonstrates a skill with, and understanding of, the spiritual idiom. The considered cueing and style of 'Look Down, Lord' and 'Light My Way' showcase a certain sensitivity: a concern for both the historical events and the ramifications of depicting the atrocities on screen. Yet, while *Rosewood* adopts religious registers unequivocally and for a clear thematic and tonal affect, it is arguably *Lincoln* — which tackles America's racist past in a different manner — that has hymnody more thoroughly embedded into the score. Even so, despite the central role of hymnody, the themes and style of the score to *Lincoln* reflect an American past in a more ambiguous way than *Rosewood*. They do not create an explicit connection to specific narrative concerns or represent a familiar history in an alternative light; rather, Williams deploys this style in a broader manner, reflecting deeper ideological and mythic concerns within the fabric of the film.

3.2: Hymns in *Lincoln* (2012)

Williams's approach to a key narrative and historical moment in *Lincoln* is indicative of his general strategy in scoring the film.[35] Representatives gather on the floor of the House in preparation to cast their vote on the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment (the abolishment of slavery), a turning point in America's history. An anthemic theme, 'Freedom's Call', enters as a small group of well-to-do Black Americans make their way on to the balcony to observe the vote. 'We welcome you, ladies and gentlemen, first in the history of this people's chamber, to *your House*!', a fictional Radical Republican passionately declares, to ensuing applause from pro-equality Congressman. Rather than a grandiloquent surge of patriotic brass to mark this historic moment, Williams instead allows for a brief crescendo of iterative string chords and a plodding trombone bass line, regularly propelled by the scotch snap rhythm he also deployed in *Air and Simple Gifts*. The short and stately passage contains no grand cadences or cymbal crashes and does not offer a premature celebration of a liberty soon to be implemented in policy (Figure 29 and Table 4). Instead, music seems to mark this event as a natural progression of things, a step

[34] Even *Monsignor*, set largely in Rome and the Vatican, does not foreground religious themes as strongly in its score. Here, Williams's occasional *religioso* writing establishes setting rather than any spiritual themes of the film. In fact, the score's most obvious debts are to Nino Rota's music for *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) rather than any Catholic choral tradition.

[35] This case study has been informed by feedback from my paper '"The American Process": Williams and Hymnody' presented at *John Williams, dernier des symphonistes?* (December 2022).

toward the passing of the Amendment as if it were a foregone conclusion. (As with *Amistad*, illustration of historical racial issues seems of secondary concern to depicting American democracy and jurisprudence in action.)

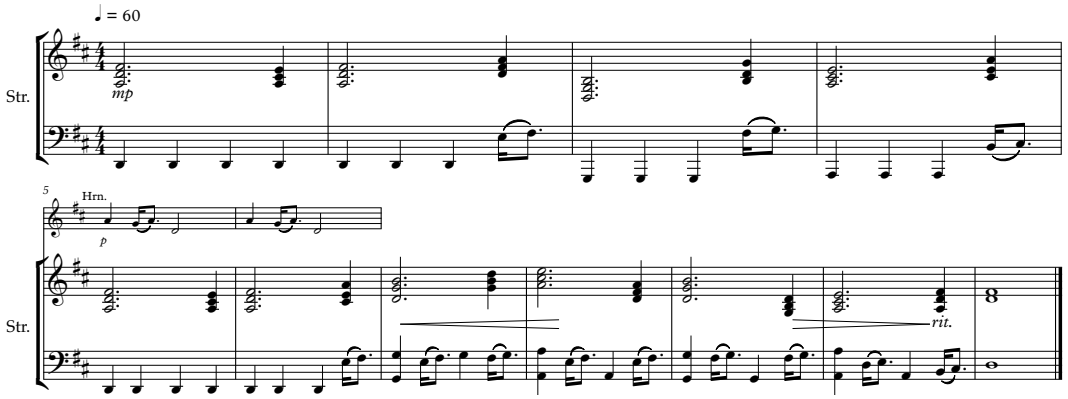

Figure 29: *Lincoln*, 'Welcome to this House', cue reduction and narrative summary. Adapted from *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012).[36]

Bar	Narrative cue	Musical cue
1	Black citizens enter house	Prayer theme, 'Freedom's Call', begins
5	They move to take their seats	Horn added
7	'… first in the history of this people's chamber, to *your House*.'	Crescendo and melodic high point

Table 4: 'Welcome to this House' sync point summary.

'Freedom's Call', like Williams's other themes in the film, is not definitively associative as in the manner of a leitmotif. It appears as Lincoln looks at his son's photos of young Black slaves, offers notable accompaniment as Republican Thaddeus Stevens (Tommy Lee Jones) moderates his radical position to the aid of fellow party members, and penultimately sounds as Stevens's Black partner reads the passed Amendment in bed. Given these associations, it seems loosely connoted with the promise of abolition, or freedom and equality more generally. Its cueing in this instance, as well as its quiet tone and relatively bare melody, is characteristic of the score as a whole, defined as it is by an overarching aesthetic of restraint.

Williams's score is most concerned with the depiction of the film's eponymous president, a figure of 'posthumous mythification' like JFK.[37] The four prominent musical themes

[36] The 'Welcome to this House' title is taken from the 'For Your Consideration' release of the soundtrack. The cue was not included in the commercially released soundtrack.

[37] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 426. Actual matters of race are of little concern in the screenplay: prompting criticism from some reviewers. For example, historian Kate Masur's op-ed for *The New York Times* addresses the issue at length. She notes that it was 'disappointing that in a movie devoted to explaining the abolition of slavery in the United States, African-American characters do almost nothing but passively wait for white men to liberate them […] Mr. Spielberg's 'Lincoln' gives us only faithful servants, patiently waiting for the day of Jubilee […] While the film largely avoids the noxious stereotypes of subservient African-Americans for which movies like "Gone With the Wind" have become notorious, it reinforces, even if inadvertently, the outdated assumption that white men are the primary movers of history and the main sources of social progress.' See Kate Masur, 'In Spielberg's 'Lincoln', Passive Black Characters', *The New York Times*, 12 November 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/opinion/in-spielbergs-lincoln-passive-black-characters.html> [11 July 2023].

— 'Freedom's Call', 'The American Process', 'With Malice Toward None', and 'The People's House' — seem purposely designed to underwrite the president's characteristics and actions with a valorising earnestness.[38] A pervasive tone of sincerity thus defines the whole film. The only break from this tenor is a small selection of folk cues, highlighting fiddles and banjo, which underscore the humorous antics of Republican political operatives, and also the foreboding dissonant soundscapes that accompany Lincoln's nightmares. The primary purpose of Williams's hymnal score to *Lincoln*, then, is to worship — as is evident in the scene in which the president is introduced.

Patriotic Pretensions

The narrative begins with a bloody mêlée. As combatants wrangle in the mud, a Black union soldier sprints centre-frame across the battlefield carrying the 'Betsy Ross' flag (thirteen stars and thirteen stripes). The prominence of the flag, the brutality of the — unscored — combat, and establishing solo trumpet theme of the prologue ('With Malice Toward None') seem to prime the audience for a war film like *SPR*, which similarly opens with solo trumpet and the American flag. While *Lincoln* is not a war film, its score shares similar patriotic concerns with Williams's work in that genre. The scene in which we are introduced to the sixteenth president readjusts initial expectations, setting the narrative tone and the style and purpose of the score.

We first sight Lincoln from behind — encouraged to regard his silhouette as if his visage and presence were too sublime to behold. The president (a 'scraped right off the penny' Daniel Day-Lewis) is seated, taking shelter from the rain, as two Black soldiers — Cpl Clark and Pvt. Green — approach him to discuss equality.[39] Their candid exchange is interrupted by two enthusing white soldiers, who take turns gracelessly reciting the Gettysburg Address at the president. All the soldiers are called to muster, but Clark (David Oyelowo) remains to conclude the recitation in earnest, literally looking up to Lincoln who has risen to his feet to bid the soldiers goodbye (Image 7).

[38] These titles are informed by their designation in *Music from Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012) and *Lincoln* (Sony Classical, 2012).
[39] Mike Fleming Jr, 'Mike Fleming's Q&A With Steven Spielberg: Why It Took 12 Years To Find Lincoln', *Deadline*, 06 December 2012, <https://deadline.com/2012/12/steven-spielberg-lincoln-making-of-interview-exclusive-383861/> [23 August 2022].

Image 7: *Lincoln*, Lincoln stands as soldiers depart but Clark remains to finish reciting the Gettysburg Address.

At this moment, Williams introduces 'The American Process': a bare theme set simply for solo piano (discussed in greater detail at Figure 30). Reserving thematic presentation until this moment serves to underline Clark's sincerity, as opposed to lending weight to the more stilted delivery of those over-eager white soldiers who initiated the oration. This sets the intimate tone that will continue for much of the film.

The selective and careful savouring of theme emblematises the overall deferential approach to the subject matter. Most often, the score is used in a strictly supportive role, only occasionally coming to the fore or competing with dialogue. Spielberg explained that his desire was 'not to make [his own and Williams's] voices heard above Lincoln's' but rather to use camerawork and music to 'linger in quiet support' of the American icon.[40] For the director, musical reverence is created through restraint, a limitation that may help to avoid accusations of jingoism and maintain a more naturalistic sensibility, striking a balance between the subtle and dramatic.

Compare, for example, the presentation of the Gettysburg Address here to Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* (which quotes Lincoln's famous speech). Copland, who chose and set the words himself, savours references to Gettysburg up to the finale, at which point the conclusion of the speech is quoted to the accompaniment of a recurring stately and optimistic figure in solo trumpet, played 'with simple expression'.[41] While it starts gently, the theme is continually repeated with added instruments, effecting a build-up of energy. After the final line ('perish from the earth') the theme sounds loudly in overlapping statements across the orchestra before the *largamente* triumphal cadence (I/♭VII–I/♭VI–I).[42] By contrast, Williams maintains the gentle dynamics throughout, and following the final line concludes with an understated and open-ended

[40] Steven Spielberg, liner notes for *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012), 2.
[41] The theme is derived from the folk song 'Springfield Mountain'. See Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 357–59.
[42] Aaron Copland, *Copland: Orchestral Anthology Volume 2* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1999).

cadence (ii–V). This is obviously not a like-for-like comparison: medium, style, setting, and context differ. Yet the Copland work offers an insight into what might have been had film production not been so concerned with restraint. This sensitivity was a common point of assessment in critical discourse that reflected on Williams's score: *The Hollywood Reporter* admired its 'subdued' nature, *Rolling Stone* acclaimed that the 'subtly resonant score never overpower[s] the action', and *Variety* respected its 'vital but unobtrusive support'.[43] Clearly this approach buttressed the film and its music against accusations of bombast, which may well have been the result had a less careful hand been employed. The restraint to which these reviews attest did not define the entire production process, however. Given the status of the subject matter for the filmmakers (as well as its standing in the national consciousness), certain mitigations were made for reasons beyond the filmic.

Ritualistic patriotic pretensions occupied much of the film-making process, particularly when concerning the supposed authenticity (unpacked more on pg. 149) of performances, sets, costuming, lighting, and sound. This mindset influenced not only the musical style itself but also extended to the making and recording of the soundtrack. Williams recorded the score with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (with Day-Lewis in attendance), so chosen because Lincoln lived in Illinois and the state was the first to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment: 'Steve and I [Williams] said to each other, "They've [the orchestra] earned the right to do this."'[44] Whether the CSO 'earned' the right to play and record this music just because of its location is a matter for debate: it seems like a welcome and useful opportunity for the orchestra, rather than some 'right' bestowed upon it by history. This seemingly tokenistic gesture demonstrates the general attitude of composer and director, and recalls the thinking behind Tom Hanks's reading of Lincoln's Bixby letter as the score to *SPR* was being recorded. Instead of working with freelance musicians in Los Angeles (Williams's most regular collaborators since the *Star Wars* sequel trilogy) or Boston or London orchestras (with whom the composer has long-established relationships), the decision was made to endow the production with a ceremonial patriotic spirit. It is this same spirituality, not a distinctly religious one, which defines the sound of the score, numerous recurring themes, and Williams's process of composition.

[43] Todd McCarthy, "Lincoln': Film Review', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 1 November 2012, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/steven-spielbergs-lincoln-movie-review-385705/> [14 June 2022]; Peter Travers, 'Lincoln', *Rolling Stone*, 8 November 2012, <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-reviews/lincoln-128459/> [14 June 2022]; Peter Debruge, 'Lincoln', *Variety*, 01 November 2012, <https://variety.com/2012/film/reviews/lincoln-1117948666/> [14 June 2022].
[44] Williams quoted in Jon Burlingame, 'The sounds of cinema: 'Lincoln'', *Variety*, 08 February 2013, <https://variety.com/2013/film/news/the-sounds-of-cinema-lincoln-1118065786/> [14 June 2022].

Scoring Reverence

Deference and reverence for the subject matter resulted not only in a smaller, restrained score, but also in a specific musical idiom: the modal and harmonic style of nineteenth-century Christian hymns. While the soundscape is also inflected with folk tunes and noble brass lines, intimate and prayerful strings, wind duos, and solo piano dominate, and sparse orchestrations and subdued dynamics act as a restrained counterpart to the sixteenth president's meetings with his cabinet and to his quiet familial moments. The simple score offers a warmth and solace harmonising with Janusz Kamiński's naturalistic and portrait-like cinematography. 'Simple' is not intended in a derogatory sense; this idealised bareness or sparsity has deeper historical connotations ingrained within different arts. Simplicity can represent devotion to God, signify a state of naturalness or beauty, and embody a rejection of materiality and modernity.[45] Copland connected the idea to hymnody, stating that American symphonies can be as 'plainly simple and direct as a hymn tune'.[46] He similarly drew links between the qualities of hymns and a quintessential Americanness, noting the 'optimistic tone', 'a directness in expression of sentiment', and a 'songfulness' as part of the anti-decadence of the idiom.[47] Williams's unassuming hymns seem to assimilate this tone, as though associating these qualities with the president.

This aesthetic of simplicity is evident in Figure 30, which shows 'The American Process' theme as it sounds when Cpl Clark finishes reciting the Gettysburg Address.[48] While not tightly synchronised to every line of dialogue, Williams's tune loosely fits the rhythm of Clark's delivery almost bar-by-bar (Table 5). The final two bars — sounding prominently as the sounds of rain and distant drums fade out — provide a cadence to the scene and a brief reflective moment during the slow shoulder-level dolly toward Day-Lewis's statuesque president. The theme evokes the nineteenth-century American folk-hymn tradition. According to the composer, church melodies and Appalachian folk music of the Civil War era were consulted as inspiration, but rather than incorporating known tunes directly into the score, Williams settled on using his own: 'it's all original but that's the vocabulary'.[49] The *topos* in the film, and in practice, is largely diatonic, uses a hexatonic scale, has short phrases and a tuneful triadic melody: each a feature included in the *Grove Dictionary of American Music* entry on the folk hymn.[50] Dissonances (sevenths

[45] The Shaker-linked tenet was echoed in both the music of *Appalachian Spring* and also in the set design of the ballet. Isamu Noguchi's design for the 1945 performance at the National Theatre were described by the *New York Post* as 'imaginative in inverse ratio to its simplicity'. See Johnson, 'Words and Music: Copland's 'Appalachian Spring' Danced by Graham's Company'.
[46] Copland quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 530.
[47] Ibid.
[48] The patriotic sensibility of the scene and its score recalls the spirit of Aaron Sorkin's patriotic moments in *The American President* (Rob Reiner, 1995), *The West Wing* (1999–2006) and *The Newsroom* (2012–14).
[49] Williams quoted in Burlingame, 'The sounds of cinema: 'Lincoln''.
[50] *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, Volume 7, 463.

and seconds) are fleeting and conventionally treated; tritones are avoided. Parallel fifths on the upbeat to the final bar enhance the open-endedness of the imperfect cadence.[51] These musical building blocks, the plain piano setting, the gentle tempo and performance, as well as Clark's earnest delivery establish a straightforward sincerity, which is maintained in most scenes featuring Lincoln, and seem to conjure that archetypal Americanness that Copland signalled.

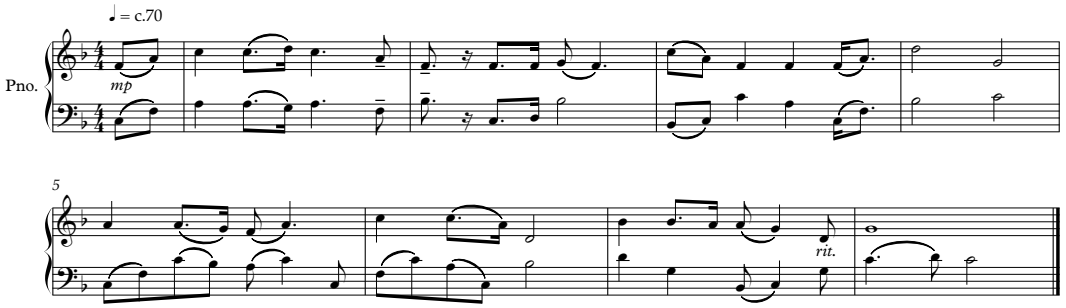

Figure 30: *Lincoln*, 'The American Process'. Transcribed from *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012).

Bar	Text
1	—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain
3	—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—
4	and that government of the people,
5	by the people, for the people,
6	shall not perish from the earth.

Table 5: overview of loose synchronisation between 'The American Process' and Gettysburg Address recitation.

One of the more noteworthy hymn-related stylistic features of 'The American Process' is its declamatory metre. Taking phrases as two bars long, with each note treated as a syllable (and slurred notes as melismas), the metre of this four-line stanza could be considered 9 (or 8)/6/6/6, with four iambic stresses per line, which naturally fall on the strong beats. The not dissimilar common metre (8/6/8/6) may have offered a model for the opening. Considering the popularity of American hymns such as 'Amazing Grace', 'Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past' ('St Anne'), and 'My Shepherd Will Supply My Need' ('Resignation)', Williams's adaptation of this proximal metre may have allowed him to capture an essence of the tradition without relying on direct quotation (Figure 31 shows how the text of a common-metre hymn might fit Williams's theme).[52] Similarly, the rising triadic contour of the opening line is a common feature of many other hymns (discussed in greater detail shortly). While Williams's themes are not texted, they

[51] This parallel movement similarly defines the infrequently heard B section of the theme.
[52] My immense thanks to Cathal Twomey for suggesting to set a text to Williams's hymn.

reflect the hymn functionality through their deference to the dialogue: the tune creates a sense of gravitas when accompanying Lincoln's many sermons, rather than merely providing a typical underscore (or sonic wallpaper).

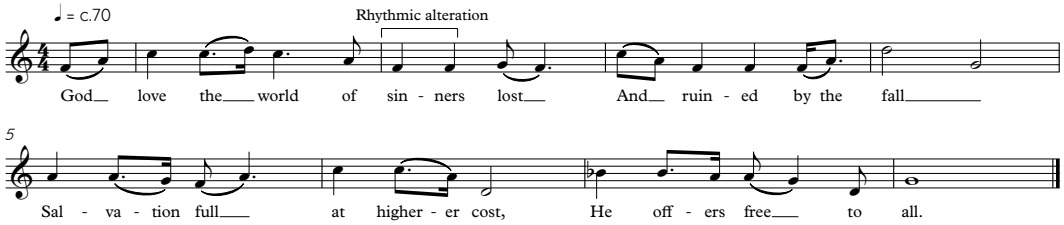

Figure 31: *Lincoln*, 'The American Process' set to the lyrics of 'God love the world of sinners lost' (with a slight alteration in bar 2).[53]

The title 'The American Process' is earned with the thematic apotheosis at the narrative climax. It is cued after several previous lame-duck politicians vote in favour of passing the Amendment and the irascible leader of the Radical Republicans, Stevens, offers a rare optimistic smile. A montage cuts between various representatives and a battalion of soldiers waiting attentively for updates as the lengthiest statement of the theme goes through a bassoon and clarinet duet and into a fuller complement of winds in the (infrequently heard) B section. On the cut to Lincoln and his young son quietly reading on a rocking chair, the theme takes a warmer turn to a solo oboe singing over soft strings (Image 8). The delicate wind timbres are subsequently dropped in favour of strings when cutting back to the House as the tally is concluded.

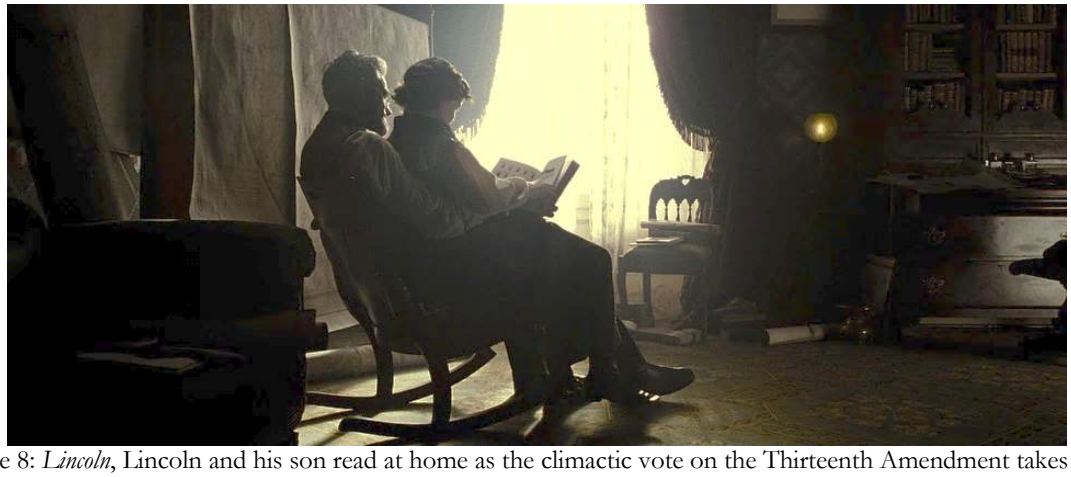
Image 8: *Lincoln*, Lincoln and his son read at home as the climactic vote on the Thirteenth Amendment takes place in the House.

This ultimate presentation results in two discrete thematic associations: government progress (a first step toward racial equality) and Lincoln's familial duties. The theme ties the two disparate

[53] While the characteristic dotted rhythms and the descending figure in bar 6 might make the singing of such a text difficult, this exercise (however imperfect) provides but an example of the declamatory nature of Williams's hymn tune.

settings together, intertwining the political and familial, the epic and the intimate, and suggesting a unity between these respective moments in the House and the White House. The music is not dramatising history, not adding tension to a story whose ending is known, nor laying down a Wagnerian associative framework; Williams avoids sensationalising the momentous with bombast, and instead mythically re-frames these moments with a sense of American-ingrained ascetism, both through theme and orchestration.[54] His simplifying tendencies imply a rhetoric of purity, a ploy appealing to the Spielberg who is so frequently drawn toward sermonising — particularly in his period films set in the United States. Williams marks these moments, underscoring what America means and what it means to be American not through clichéd marches and fanfares but with something more intentionally subtle.

This musical function is made most clear as the voting comes to a close. The significance of this historical moment is acknowledged (almost with a wink to the audience) in the text. 'This isn't usual […] this is history', the speaker of the House declares as he breaks from tradition by asking for his own vote to be counted. The act is not one of defiance intended to spark a political fire nor to tip the democratic balance but is instead the expression of a desire to be an active participant in this historical moment. As we are reminded of the momentousness, the score avoids cliché and resists general Hollywood convention (aside from the low-mixed tension-building strings as the final tally is announced); strings and woodwind (not brass) are prevalent, and heraldry is avoided.[55] Cueing, theme, and orchestration underline this era-defining and history-changing occasion with a sensitive sweep. This deliberate simplicity reflects the desire to avoid intense dramatisation and pompousness (although some audience members might find the earnest desire to avoid pretentiousness itself pretentious). While the tune and orchestrations are Williams's own, they follow an American musical model; this is not simply because the theme hearkens back to two-century-old idioms, but because the simple approach has been assimilated as American.[56]

The American style of the score has been occasionally compared to Copland in online discourse and reviews.[57] Yet Williams is not merely referencing a Copland idiom but appears to

[54] Of course, the tendency toward simplicity in this scene (and the wider film) is itself a form of dramatisation. However, it draws less overt attention to itself, and might even mask its dramatising function.

[55] The exception is a short ascending call on French horn that precedes the vote of the speaker of the House — 'Aye, of course' — and horns supporting a fleeting fragment of 'With Malice Toward None' before the final vote is announced.

[56] Williams's completely orchestrating his own scores is not always a given, especially on large projects like the *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, and *Harry Potter* series. His common collaborators include John Neufeld, Herbert Spencer, Conrad Pope, Eddie Karam, Angela Morley, Alexander Courage, and William Ross. This practice is discussed in more detail by Ian Sapiro in 'Star Scores: Orchestration and the Sound of John Williams's Film Music', in *John Williams: Music for Films, Television and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 191–208.

[57] A comment under the score's review on *FilmTracks* reads, 'This unbelievably majestic score struck me as Williams' closest ever emulation of Copland. I literally heard Appalachian Spring Suite as I listened to this and I mean that as the highest possible compliment. This score isn't about America, it IS America. Absolutely beautiful.' See 'Lincoln (John Williams)', *FilmTracks*, 17 November 2013, <https://www.filmtracks.com/comments/titles/lincoln/index.cgi?read=14>, 25 July 2022. Similarly, Texas Public Radio reviewed that, 'For "Lincoln", the earlier composer of reference feels (naturally) like Aaron Copland.' See Nathan Cone, 'Soundtrack Review: 'Lincoln'', *Texas Public Radio*, 22 November 2012, <https://www.tpr.org/arts-culture/2012-11-22/soundtrack-review-lincoln> [08 May 2023].

conceive of his themes and cues through a style evoking those redolent qualities of succinctness and plainness, much like *Air and Simple Gifts* (albeit in a more innovative manner here). A Copland sound has become the frame through which many listeners view America in art and film music: as Jack Sullivan wrote of the score, 'Copland hovers in the background'.[58] Yet this reductive comparison does Williams a disservice. While the *Lincoln* score observes a similar aesthetic of simplicity, such an approach, despite being synonymous with Copland, is not his alone. *Lincoln* is neither a mere imitation nor the rudimentary perpetuation of a film music cliché.[59] A testament to Williams's own brand of American simplicity is how his themes are deployed and orchestrated. Despite the full complement of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra being present, tutti moments are rare; instead, the score is often characterised by a chamber-like intimacy.[60] The frequent prioritisation of small ensembles or soli — particularly clarinet and bassoon duets, and trumpet, horn, or piano soli — reinforces the leanness of the melodies, which were designed to make way for the pensive sensibility of Tony Kushner's screenplay or the controlled direction of Spielberg's camera (to 'linger in quiet support').[61] For example, during a long tracking shot that follows Lincoln as he rides through the fog-shrouded remnants of a battlefield outside Petersburg, Virginia, Williams cues a simple elegy for solo piano, entitled 'Blue and Grey'. While this is one of the few instances in the film where a single cue is dominant and uninterrupted in the mix, the piano still holds back, playing 'simply with nostalgia'.[62] An iambic and aeolian paean with gentle block diatonic accompaniment, the piano tune does not endow the image with tragedy; only the addition of the traditionally mournful string timbre on the final cadence (i–♭VII–i) might hint toward the 'elegiac register'.[63] The only competing sounds are the wind and the clip-clop of horses, allowing the tone of subtlety and restraint to go uninterrupted. Such a cue hearkens back to traditions far older than Copland's.

The quiet and reverent tone of themes like 'Blue and Grey' often seem to harmonise with the multifarious virtues attributed to the president, venerating the American sage through their hymnal dialect. 'With Malice Toward None' primarily confers this deific depiction. The theme shares an opening contour almost identical to 'The American Process' (1̂, 3̂, 5̂, 6̂, 5̂, 3̂) although the two are rhythmically quite distinct. It is unclear if Williams is attempting to establish a connection between the two themes; rather the case may be that both tunes are drawn from a

[58] Jack Sullivan, 'Spielberg-Williams: Symphonic Cinema', in *A Companion to Steven Spielberg*, ed. Nigel Morris (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 217–38: 234.
[59] The clichéd approach might be more plainly evident in some of James Horner's American writing, such as that of *Apollo 13*.
[60] Numerous soloists are commended in the liner notes: Robert Chen (violin), Christopher Martin (trumpet), to whom Williams dedicates the trumpet concert arrangement of 'With Malice Towards None', Stephen Williamson (clarinet), Daniel Gingrich (horn) and Randy Kerber (piano).
[61] Spielberg quoted in *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln*, 2.
[62] Williams, *Piano Solo: Lincoln*, 15.
[63] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 218–20.

similarly marked idiom and thus share certain stylistic similarities (as will be exhibited with regard to 'The American Process' shortly). Despite the prototypical solo trumpet presentation of 'With Malice Toward None' (hereafter 'Malice') in the prologue, which sets the musical tone for listeners, it appears little during the narrative.[64] A sense of significance is lent through absence, the theme acting more as a 'reminiscence motif' (or *Errinerungsmotiv*), associated with post-Revolutionary *opéra comique*, than as a typical filmic leitmotif.[65] Its most prominent restatement, some two hours after the prologue, reveals a function that is virtually predetermined by the Spielberg approach to historical dramas.

After the Thirteenth Amendment has passed and peace has been declared, the president makes for Ford's Theatre, a pregnant moment for the audience. 'Malice' is cued on solo trumpet as Lincoln prepares to leave: 'I suppose it is time to go. Though I would rather stay.', the president imparts. His valet, Slade (Stephen McKinley Henderson), hurries after him with his forgotten gloves — cueing strings. As opposed to following, Slade watches the silhouette of the lumbering president, who quietly retires (Image 9); the audience adopts Slade's perspective. The gentle and slow trumpet hymn generates calm, encouraging a moment of reflection, with the resulting stillness only briefly countered by interjecting short piano dyads on a quick reverse shot to the glint-eyed valet.[66] The trumpet continues all the while, shadowing Lincoln's exit and sombrely cadencing over the scene transition (Figure 32).

Image 9: *Lincoln*, the President departs from the White House for Ford's Theatre, as Slade looks on.

[64] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 66–8.
[65] For an exploration of similar concepts in Williams's scores to the *Star Wars* sequels, see my MA thesis, 'Building a Past: Music and Nostalgia in the *Star Wars* Sequels' (MA Thesis, Maynooth University, 2019).
[66] These juxtaposing short piano dyads of fifths and seconds follow those of 'Blue and Grey', perhaps intertwining the tragedy of the battle outside Petersburg with Lincoln's fate.

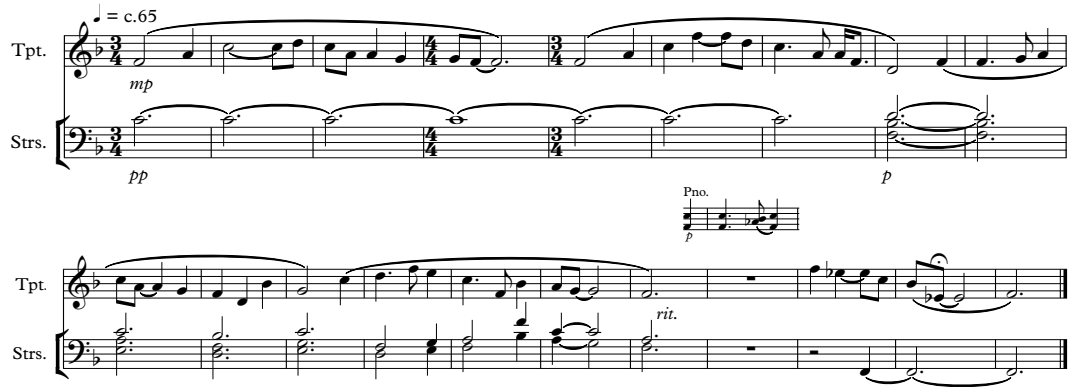

Figure 32: *Lincoln*, 'Trumpet Hymn' cue revives the 'With Malice Toward None' theme for Lincoln's final scene.[67]

The retention of the opening theme until this moment reveals much about the grander function of hymnal music as a component of filmic myth. It acts as a sort of 'baptism' for the president as a symbol, bookending the film by recognising the fulfilment of a fabled destiny and providing a musical frame for the entire story.[68] In contrast to the other themes that reflect various aspects of Lincoln's character, his purpose, and his government, 'Malice' canonises the icon. The tone of finality in the scene — Lincoln's unknowing goodbye, Slade's distant admiration, and the audience's foreknowledge — is also marked by the dignifying and ennobling essence of the trumpet (so often capitalised upon in film music for such purposes). Realising that the president has served his role in American history, the audience recognises the music as signalling conclusion — and thus the completion of the presidential portrait promised by the film title.[69] The staging, cinematography, and score breathe a dignified finality to this departure: a simple and noble farewell for (what is shown to be) a simple and noble man. Cue credits?

Memorialising Myth

A coda follows what would have been a poignant end note: Tad Lincoln hears of his father's death at the theatre, Lincoln is pronounced dead in the White House, and a particular memory pointedly emerges from the light of a flickering gas lamp. Robert Burgoyne and John Trafton, in agreement with the wider critical response, summarise these scenes as an 'unnecessary addendum, an anti[-]climax'.[70] The memory is of Lincoln's 'With Malice Toward None' speech from his Second Inaugural Address (a month before his assassination in 1865); it is accompanied by the appropriately titled theme in a prayerful string arrangement. If the previous iteration of the theme was a dedication to legacy, this appearance is a memorial — and a particularly emotive one given the warm, slow-moving arrangement. Consequently, in style and function it recalls the

[67] The 'Trumpet Hymn' title is taken from the 'For Your Consideration' release of the soundtrack.
[68] London, 'Leitmotifs and Musical Reference in the Classical Film Score', 87.
[69] Although the narrative was more concerned with the story of the Amendment rather than presenting a biopic of Lincoln.
[70] Robert Burgoyne and John Trafton, 'Violence and Memory in Spielberg's *Lincoln*', in *A Companion to Steven Spielberg*, ed. Nigel Morris (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 440–55: 452.

'elegiac register', with the trope 'suggest[ing] a bid by [the] filmmakers to encourage viewers to think back upon the narrative through a particular sort of lens', as Decker described its purpose in war films.[71] Here, Williams's theme loftily underscores the speech, and realises and augments a sense of adulation, sentimentalising the (already poignant) flashback and providing a last glance into the window of the past.

The mawkish or overdrawn ending is a frequent and often criticised hallmark of a Spielberg film. Film critic Bilge Ebiri draws a connection, in this regard, between the 'retroactively' elegiac endings of *Lincoln* and *SPR*: 'when Lincoln says to us, "Let us strive on to finish the work we are in," isn't he saying, in essence, "Earn this"?' (Capt. Miller's final words).[72] Ebiri posits that Lincoln's speech is as much directed at film-viewers as at Lincoln's audience, pointing to an audience-text relationship that is similarly echoed in the post-mortem augury of Lincoln's Secretary of War (Edwin Stanton): 'Now he belongs to the ages.' Such a narrative perspective affirms Decker's notion that musical eulogies encourage meta-textual associations.[73] In this vein, then, should we consider 'Malice' as Williams's own commemorative Lincoln portrait, as a work dedicated to, and in honour of, the memory and spirit of the martyr?[74] If one is not persuaded by the sparse use of the theme within the film, then perhaps its extra-filmic appearances reflect this wider patriotic purpose. These include a number of performances by 'The President's Own' between 2016 and 2023, at a 'A Country Salute to Our Troops' concert by the Boston Pops in 2013 (programmed alongside 'Hymn to the Fallen' of *SPR*), and as a solo trumpet arrangement for A Capitol Fourth in 2013 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.[75]

The reverential quality evident in the cueing and concert performances extends to the make-up of 'Malice' itself. The requisite hymn features are all present: diatonic melody, gapped scale, arching phrases, declamatory trochaic lines, a phrase structure redolent of long metre, weak mediant-related harmonies (indicative of the 'old tunebook flavour', as noted in Gene Hinson's study of select American sacred works), and the occasional Scotch snap rhythm — which adds a

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[71] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 228–9.
[72] Bilge Ebiri, 'Ghosts in the American Machine: Amistad and Lincoln', *They Live By Night*, 23 November 2012, <https://ebiri.blogspot.com/2012/11/ghosts-in-american-machine-amistad-and.html> [21 June 2022].
[73] Decker, *Hymns for the Fallen*, 228–9.
[74] Spielberg, too, admitted to referring to the film occasionally as a Lincoln portrait. See Fleming, 'Mike Fleming's Q&A With Steven Spielberg: Why It Took 12 Years To Find 'Lincoln".
[75] See programme for *John Williams and "The President's Own"*, 16 July 2023, <https://www.marineband.marines.mil/Portals/175/Docs/Programs/071623.pdf> [9 August 2023]. Although 'With Malice Toward None' is not mentioned in the published programme to the Pops concert, it is present in the Boston Symphony Orchestra Archive. It is likely that the piece was included after the intermission, whereupon 'selections [were] to be announced from stage'. See programme for *A Country Salute to Our Troops*, 23 June 2018, <https://archive.org/details/bostonpopsorches2013bost/page/25/mode/1up?view=theater> [06 July 2022]. 'Lincoln John Williams Spielberg A Capitol Fourth', Zooba57 (pseud.), 27 April 2014, a performance of 'With Malice Toward None', conducted by Williams with Christopher Martin as the featured soloist, for A Capitol Fourth in 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lmw9xQhMfE> [9 August 2023].

detectable folkish sensibility.[76] Alongside Williams's solo piano performance on the soundtrack album, the concluding string arrangement evinces a vivid spiritual tone. It is clear from these qualities that veneration was at the very heart of Williams's homespun tunes. Such a hymnal style, then, seems pertinent to Spielberg's general aesthetic of restraint, if not to this particular moment of American history altogether.

With his traditional and conservative approach, Spielberg conceives of familiar legends in an approachable style, and generally reinforces the most fundamental of American myths (as in *SPR*). As a result, and due to the rootedness of this history, Williams was required to provide a score similarly ingrained in America's culture and its musical past. However, given the patriotic attitude that the composer has demonstrated in the numerous scores addressed in this thesis, it is clear that Williams is more than simply a functionary following the director's orders. Rather, as I have noted elsewhere, there is every likelihood that the composer's self-perceived national duty bears as much weight as his filmic role on these types of projects. Intimately aware of the function of music in film, Williams nevertheless seems to push beyond compliance or complicity with the aesthetic decisions in the film-making process to forge something more. Williams, I suggest, has consciously designed his *Lincoln* score (like the Lincoln Memorial and *Lincoln Portrait*) not simply to capture the essence of the man but to encourage us to revere him.[77]

An outlier compared to other manifestations of Americana in his work, the unadorned themes and conscientious cueing of *Lincoln* exemplify the project's uniqueness for Williams. While both fitting and cohesive in the film, the hymnal idiom seems to have been a necessity for the score — and perhaps also a means for Williams to distinguish the project from those on American subjects that might be deemed of lesser significance. Freer of historic links than the spirituals in *Rosewood*, the hymns of *Lincoln* have more distant and elusive origins. In what follows, I trace these possible origins with a view to illuminating how Williams's music matches the aesthetics and mythology of *Lincoln* and how it relates to the wider canon of American music from which Williams has drawn throughout his career.

[76] The opening progression follows a I–iii–IV–I framework and is answered by I–V–iii–IV. I–iii and V–iii–IV reflect the weaker movement noted by Hinson. iii recurs frequently, perhaps acting as a substitute for Ib. 'Hymn to the Fallen' of *SPR* similarly opens with an evocative I–iiic–Vb–vi–V progression. This mediant-related motion also appears in Copland's setting of 'At the River' where it serves a cadential function. See Gene Lee Hinson, *An Investigation of the Common Stylistic Traits found in selected works of Randall Thompson and Virgil Thomson* (PhD Thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992), 49.

[77] The composer most clearly addresses this aspect of the music when discussing 'With Malice Toward None'. He stated that its 'purpose' was 'to provide a reverential background to Lincoln's words'. See Williams, *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln,* 2.

3.3: Hymns of the Past

The often-noted traditionalism of Williams's popular scores for blockbuster franchises is similarly evident in *Lincoln*, albeit this score appears nostalgic for an idiomatic language befitting of the era represented on screen rather than one of Hollywood's musical past. In scoring America of 1865 and the paragon of American exceptionalism, Williams re-appropriated the reference points of Copland and the American symphonists, drawing upon a lived American past, an idealised utopia.[78] True, this American style might not be as neatly defined through comparison as the Sousa- or Copland-inspired *topoi* of previous chapters; however, like them, it might be implicated in similar ideological rhetoric. The *Lincoln* score clearly takes on a sentimentality, given both the associations of its themes and the status of its stylised hymnody (like that of Copland's 'Simple Gifts') in the cultural consciousness. Furthermore, the ideological undercurrents intertwined with this nostalgia might well be heightened compared to previously discussed *topoi*, due to the potentially nativist mindset associated with this particular national style. In taking account of the origins of Williams's hymn sound, the Americanist lens by which it was conceived requires consideration.

A useful means of investigating the hymnal idiom might be to contextualise the source of this sound and to identify its building blocks, even if the lack of musical signposts, like quotation, makes this a challenging task. Whereas with the cowboy tunes of *Billy the Kid*, the Shaker hymn of *Appalachian Spring*, or the Sunday school hymns of *Symphony on a Hymn Tune*, quotations give clear insight into a composer's source of inspiration, *Lincoln* provides few obvious clues. Given his established eclecticism, it is highly doubtful that Williams's score is influenced by any one source — such as a tunebook or the sounds of a specific religious denomination. Williams noted that the music 'in some fundamental way should have the harmonic and melodic grammar of the nineteenth century — music that might have been heard at the time.'[79] But he added that his research into contemporaneous church and folk melodies did not result in anything that felt 'exactly right'.[80] In this vaguely defined context, I attempt to identify possible models, first by offering an overview of American hymnody, and then by honing in on music contemporaneous to the film setting, to ask where this style comes from, to contextualise how Williams taps into it, and to assess the potential ideological consequences of its assimilation, acculturation, and adaptation in film.

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[78] Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 21–22.
[79] Williams quoted in Jon Burlingame, 'The sounds of cinema: 'Lincoln''; John Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams', KUSC Radio Interview, 7 February 2013, <https://www.kusc.org/series/kusc-interviews/page/8/> [24 July 2022]. See Appendix C for the full quotation and context.
[80] Ibid.

Hymns and History

Following the Revolutionary War, America acquired not only its political independence but also, in certain respects, a musical independence. Early Puritans and settlers — who had brought with them the hymns and psalms of their homelands — had defined the music of the colonies, but a fever of change took hold in the final decades of the eighteenth century. The founding of singing schools in the early 1720s following Thomas Symmes's advocation of 'regular singing' (i.e. with congregational unity, as opposed to nonuniformity) in *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing, or Singing by Note* (1720) had led to the formation of choirs and the development of a formalised musical pedagogy.[81] A generation later, a school of American composers — seeded in the singing schools — would emerge alongside the new nation. Tunes from this First New England School flourished after the Revolution and so the idea of America's 'musical distinctiveness' came into being.[82] The embodiment of this new tradition was William Billings (1746–1800), 'the father of our New England music', whose *The New England Psalm Singer* (1770) would become the first tunebook of solely American music by one American composer.[83] This American school also gave rise to a specific American style of hymn-writing, one of a 'rough honesty' (as Copland would later define it) and defined by tenor-led melodies, crossing parts, parallelisms, and unresolved dissonances — many of these a likely side-effect of independently conceived horizontal voice-leading.[84] This style proved pervasive in the early years of the United States but was later pilloried by many hymn reformists and scholars. Gilbert Chase, for example, claimed that this early generation's 'violation of conventional [European] "rules" was so persistent, and generally so consistent, as to constitute a well-defined style.'[85]

This rule-breaking was not a concern for American congregations, who could now sing their own native hymns, the number of which would exceed British hymns twice over by the 1790s.[86] These tunes — Billings's 'Chester' most of all — represented the dominant practice of New England around the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and were preserved by shape-note hymnbooks (the first of which was *The Easy Instructor* published in Philadelphia between

[81] John Ogasapian, *Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 40. The full (and lengthy) title of Symmes's book is even more revealing of the intent behind the publication: *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing, or Singing by Note: In an Essay, to Revive the True and Ancient Mode of Singing Psalm-tunes, According to the Pattern in Our New-England Psalm-books; the Knowledge and Practice of which is Greatly Decay'd in Most Congregations*..

[82] Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 127. Perhaps a testament of Billings's importance to American music is William Schuman's *New England Triptych* (originally titled *William Billings Overture*) which quotes Billings's 'Be Glad Then, America', 'When Jesus Wept', and 'Chester'.

[83] Nym Cooke, 'Sacred Music to 1800', in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nichols (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 78–103: 93; 'Billings, William', *The Grove Dictionary of American Music* (Second Edition), Volume 1, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 480.

[84] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 80.

[85] Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955), 190.

[86] William Robin, 'Travelling with "Ancient Music": Intellectual and Transatlantic Currents in American Psalmody Reform', *The Journal of Musicology*, 32/2 (Spring 2015), 246–78: 254.

1798 and 1802).[87] This mode of tune pedagogy and preservation continued throughout the early decades of the century, and peaked with the influential *The Sacred Harp* (1844) (which included the first printing of the popular spiritual 'Wayfaring Stranger'). Yet 'the heart of the fasola [or shape note] singing movement', according to Chase, was William Walker's (1809–75) *Southern Harmony* (1835), the subsequent editions of which continually added new and popular tunes, perhaps most notably the 1847 edition, which included the first setting of 'Amazing Grace' to the 'New Britain' tune with which it is now commonly associated.[88]

As shape-note books documented music of the early nineteenth century, a less formal musical tradition was growing. This was one that was orally transmitted and can perhaps be considered the most distinctive musical product of the religious fervour and revivalism of the Second Great Awakening: the spiritual. The product of camp meetings — the first of which took place in Kentucky in 1800 — spirituals combined West African and Anglo-American musical practices. Formalised pedagogy and published hymnbooks could not accommodate the thousands of attendees at these day-long rural gatherings. A musical style which was quick and easy to learn was required and spirituals proliferated out of this necessity. This less austere folk form of worship was based on simple melodicism, call and response, repeated refrains, and lyrical variability. In his account of American hymnody, Henry Foote described the tunes as a 'pure' folk song of unknown origins which 'sprang' from the 'hearts of the people'.[89] Like other folk traditions, oral transmission lent fluidity to the tunes; many different songs may well have derived from the same source, leading to numerous recurring patterns and features.[90]

While this was primarily an oral tradition, some of the tunes were transcribed as early as 1805 and appeared in Jeremiah Ingalls's (1764–1838) *Christian Harmony* (albeit harmonised in the conventionalised New England manner); later, John Wyeth's (1770–1858) *The Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (1813) — targeted at Methodists and Baptists — would prove an influential anthology of the emerging tradition as it retreated to the south and developing west.[91] There they would become the dominant musical form of the Primitive Baptists, who preferred stirring folk hymnody over the 'severe' Wesleyan hymns that had travelled from the more urban east.[92] Spirituals would have an abiding influence, outlasting the shape-note practice and integrating into

[87] Frank J. Metcalf, "The Easy Instructor': A Biographical Study', *The Musical Quarterly*, 23/1 (January 1937), 89–97: 89–90.
[88] Chase, *America's Music*, 154, 194.
[89] Henry Wilder Foote, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 271.
[90] Pullen Jackson uses the term 'tune family' in reference to 'a group of melodies following a similar trend but differing from one another in musical detail and found in combination not only with related texts but also with texts which show no relationship at all.' See George Pullen Jackson, 'America's Folk-Songs', *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 12/1 (January 1936), 34–42: 38.
[91] Irving Lowens, 'John Wyeth's "Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second": A Northern Precursor of Southern Folk Hymnody', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 5/2 (Summer, 1952), 114–31: 121.
[92] George Pullen Jackson, 'Buckwheat Notes', *The Musical Quarterly*, 19/4 (October 1933), 393–400: 399; Foote, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody*, 171.

a new folk hymn tradition. Both in turn would be incorporated, following the Civil War, into the gospel hymn — 'a lower form of folk hymnody', according to tune-collector Philips Barry — and over time influence much popular music of the twentieth century.[93]

These prominent new American idioms were not admired by all, however. The improper practices of shape-note hymnody were particularly loathed by those whose musical preferences remained with Europe. Among the critics was Lowell Mason (1792–1872), the so-called 'Founder of American Protestant Hymnody' and the 'Father of Public School Music', whose admonishment of 'Yankee tunesmiths' (his term for Billings's generation) would lead to an era of clergy-led reform, an abandoning of the 'crudities of half-learned harmonists'.[94] The locus of this change was in the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches, the evangelical traditions of which encouraged a more conservative approach to worship.[95] The thesis of Mason's (and Thomas Hastings's) popular hymnbooks was in adapting the 'Ancient Music' style of the European masters — primarily Handel and Haydn.[96] (Mason often published with *The Handel and Haydn Society* of Boston, and would serve as their president for a time.) This new perspective established a connection to the European intelligentsia, and the attendant suggestion of a '"civilized" nation' (i.e. Britain) acting as a means of linking America's parochial communities and budding metropolises to the dignified practices of the Old World.[97] Numerous stylistic shifts resulted from this revivalism: formerly tenor melodies now sounded in the treble, fuguing tunes became plainly homophonic, and new tunes followed the conventional European rules of harmony and voice leading. It was, in short, a homogenisation of the European 'scientific method' (which viewed shape notes as 'unscientific').[98] The popular tune 'Old Hundred' served as the quintessential model of this style, in light of its heritage, stateliness, cultural currency, and associations with Calvinist Protestantism.[99]

This reform style resulted in a decline in the popularity of American tunes, with the First New England School all but fading into obscurity.[100] (Ironically, despite disapprobation of their predecessors, reformists' tunebooks were partly responsible for the preservation of this early heritage.[101]) New hymn-settings, conventionally modelled on European forms, such as 'Rock of

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[93] Philips Barry quoted in Foote, *Three Centuries of American Hymnody*, 270.
[94] Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), ix; preface to *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick* quoted in Robin, 'Travelling with "Ancient Music"', 248.
[95] *The Grove Dictionary of American Music* (Second Edition), Volume 5, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 404.
[96] Crawford, *America's Musical Life* 131. Pemberton assesses Mason's relationship with the First New England School, writing that 'Mason himself did not say quite so bluntly what he thought of the styles of earlier American musicians, but his views were implicit in the "correct music", English and European in origin, that he selected and promoted.' See Pemberton, *Lowell Mason*, 39.
[97] Robin, 'Travelling with "Ancient Music"', 251.
[98] Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 160.
[99] Ibid., 132. Virgil Thomson would later quote it in *The Plow that Broke the Plains.*
[100] Ibid., 133.
[101] David W. Music, 'Early New England Psalmody and American Folk Hymns in the Tune Books of Thomas Hastings', *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 10/3 (2016), 270–303: 298.

Ages' (sung to 'Toplady') and 'My Faith Looks Up To Thee' (using 'Olivet'), would emerge from this tradition and become part of the American Protestant musical canon. Among Mason's other — occasionally adapted, original, and unauthored — tunes are 'Antioch' (used for Isaac Watts's 'Joy to the World'), 'Fountain' or 'Cowper' ('There is a Fountain Filled With Blood'), and the popular settings of 'Bethany' for 'Nearer My God to Thee' and 'Missionary' to 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains'.[102] Some of these tunes would eventually serve as a basis for later American composers; an example, according to Richard Crawford, is Ives's String Quartet No. 1, 'From the Salvation Army', which adopts the 'Missionary' tune (among others) to 'project a sense of timelessness' and 'of New England past'.[103]

Mason did not entirely abandon the music of the United States, or secular forms (on occasion including a Billings fuguing tune like 'Majesty' in *Carmina Sacra Enlarged* (1869)). His rhetoric was 'cis-Atlantic', in dialogue with earlier British reform rather than purely European-inspired.[104] Despite the appearance of an eastward perspective (a postcolonial attitude), Mason was not in favour of suppressing an American contribution to its own nascent tradition. Instead, his desire seemed to be to bridge multiple traditions for the purposes of edification.[105] For instance, Crawford notes that the popular *Spiritual Songs for Social Worship* (1832) 'blended elements of European science and American revivalism', a practice which has 'endured in Protestant hymnody to this day.'[106] This fusion was always carried out in the name of a "better" music. Mason describes this rationale in his preface to *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* (1838):

> It would have been easy to have given a larger portion of light music, and of imitative and fugueing [*sic*] pieces; but it was supposed that the good sense and improved taste of the public would be better satisfied with those tunes, which, while they have a sufficient flow of melody to interest and please, are, at the same time, *sufficiently chaste and dignified for public religious worship.*[107] [emphasis mine]

Although consciously distanced from the cruder, yet distinctly American, models, Mason's European aesthetic never entirely repudiates an American-associated simplicity, instead seeking to combine it with European learning and 'solemnity':

> One of the most important characteristics of a good psalm [or hymn] tune is simplicity […] with respect to both melody and harmony, as shall render the design intelligible, and the execution easy. Solemnity is no less important […] Correct harmony is undoubtedly important […] Let there be […] simple, easy, and solemn tunes selected for […] worship.[108]

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[102] Chase, *America's Music*, 160. Chris Fenner, 'There is a fountain filled with blood', *Hymnology Archive*, 06 March 2020, <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/there-is-a-fountain> [27 June 2022].
[103] Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 144. Ives also clearly draws upon 'Fountain' in his song 'West London'.
[104] Robin, 'Travelling with "Ancient Music"', 253.
[105] Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 140.
[106] Ibid., 172.
[107] Lowell Mason, *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* (Boston, MA: J. H. Wilkins & R. B. Carter, 1838), iv.
[108] Mason quoted in Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 40.

Tapping into History

These goals of intelligibility, solemnity, and simplicity could with equal appropriateness be taken to describe Williams's *Lincoln* no less than the hymns of Mason's age. Stylistically, the comparison may end there; yet in terms of function, the links run deeper. Hymns in *Lincoln* serve a dual purpose: as a restrained underscore providing an American-sounding undercurrent to the historical drama, and as an idiomatic device encouraging deification. More than a means of tapping into America's musical past, the use of the nineteenth-century hymn *topos* would seem to encourage a particular relationship between the character Lincoln and the film audience. Just as the text of a hymn tune is designed to bring focus to God, Williams's themes and much of the score analogously adopt a position of deep-seated awe to revere American history and Lincoln himself. Along with the traditional role of a film score to bridge an emotional gap and close the distance between the viewer and the screen, Williams's music implicates a different connection by making a congregation of the audience. After all, are Lincoln's orations and actions not the subject of an aesthetic idealisation flowing over the course of American history and politics? Like the omnipresent subject of Christian American hymnody, is the martyred president not an icon who is believed to embody something greater?

A short comparative analysis of 'The American Process' will demonstrate how Williams draws upon this American hymnal style. Having analysed hymn tunes from a variety of different collections, I have chosen a selection of tunes that bear resemblance to 'The American Process'. Figure 33 includes the opening phrases of 'The American Process', alongside 'Cleansing Fountain' ('There is a fountain filled with blood'), 'Wondrous Love' ('God loved the world of sinners lost'), and 'Missionary' ('From Greenland's Icy Mountains'). All have been transposed to C major for ease of comparison. Highlighting certain stylistic commonalities between the tunes, with reference to more thorough surveys on American nineteenth-century hymnody, will elucidate how Williams's score taps into this tradition. The intent is not to claim that Williams directly imitated the selected tunes (he may not even have been aware of them); rather, similarly styled tunes were selected to show how Williams's theme presents itself as being of this canon.

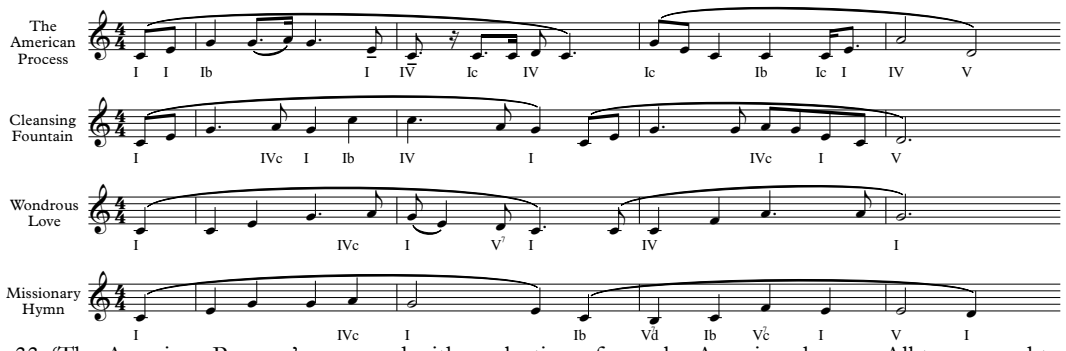

Figure 33: 'The American Process' compared with a selection of popular American hymns. All transposed to C for ease of comparison. 'The American Process' transcribed from *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012); 'Cleansing Fountain' and 'Wondrous Love' transcribed from P. P. Bliss, Ira Sankey, *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (New York, NY: Biglow & Main, 1876); 'Missionary Hymn' transcribed from Lowell Mason, *Carmina Sacra: Boston Collection of Church Music* (Boston, MA: J. H. Wilkins & R. B. Carter, 1841).[109]

Melody

Each opening is lean and unadorned, marked by an ascending triadic figure and ornamented by an unaccented upper auxiliary note (î, 3̂, 5̂, 6̂, 5̂). These melodies could belong to the same 'tune family' given these surface similarities.[110] The exclusive diatonicism is a pervasive element of the reformist style, as are their limited ranges, 'keeping the vocal limits of the average churchgoer in mind.'[111] In fact, the range of Williams's tune is, together with 'Wondrous Love', the narrowest (both span a major sixth). And, a similarly recurring feature reflective of the folk hymn is the common hexatonic scale (present in all excluding 'Missionary').[112]

Harmony

Plagal harmonies predominate, particularly I–IVc–I, a common pattern in the reform style.[113] Although Williams's tune is not harmonised in a chorale style like the others, the bass voice does assert a mostly tonic and subdominant relationship to the treble (as evident in Figure 30 earlier). Mason favoured tunes in the major mode, and chromaticism and modulations were uncommon. This same conservative approach is one of the defining aspects of *Lincoln*. Williams's more popular themes, including those linked to American topics (as discussed in previous chapters), are much more harmonically adventurous, frequently modulating or using modal interchange. However, the B section of 'The American Process' strays from the 'scientific' in its use of aeolian harmonies and parallel movement, which recall the open sound of the eighteenth-century shape note tradition.

[109] Abbreviated hymnbook titles used here. Full titles available in bibliography.
[110] Jackson, 'America's Folk-Songs', 38.
[111] Pemberton, *Lowell Mason*, 187.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 188.

Rhythm

As with melody, the rhythms of many hymns are decidedly simple, and often limited and repeated to serve the text more effectively. Given that Williams does not have to contend with text-setting, his tune includes various embellishments that might have otherwise disrupted the traditional syllabic flow of established hymns. The dotted rhythms he adopts are 'typical rhythmic traits' of secular tunes and gospel hymnody, but less characteristic of the examples of Protestant hymnody provided.[114] Upbeats, which characterise 'about four-fifths of [Mason's] most popularly used hymns', also mark those of Williams, including 'The American Process', 'The People's House', 'The Blue and Grey', and certain statements of 'Malice'.[115] As mentioned previously, 'The American Process' (save an extra syllable on the first line) loosely fits the typical common metre (8/6/8/6) to which 'Cleansing Fountain' and 'Wondrous Love' adhere strictly; 'Missionary Hymn' subtracts a syllable (7/6). The other declamatory hymns of *Lincoln* also recall hymn metres: 'Blue and Grey' fits an 8/7/8/6 schema, while the trochaic 'Malice' might suit a long metre structure (8/8/8/8) given that its phrases often suggest 8–10 syllables.

Form

Each is in AABA form, except 'Wondrous Love' (AABB). The A section of Williams's theme is grammatically structured in a four-bar antecedent-consequent form, with consequent phrases carrying on basic markers of the antecedent (rhythm and contour).[116] This conventional phrase structure reflects the similar basic periodic approach to the texted hymns.

Although at times Williams peeks beyond the reformist pale, overall his *Lincoln* themes inherit the overarching chasteness of nineteenth-century hymnody. Beyond 'The American Process' and 'With Malice Toward None', the *ne plus ultra* of this aesthetic is 'The People's House', another triadic theme, but one more rhythmically and often texturally restrained. The tune has a certain modesty, recalling the bookending solo clarinet triads of *Appalachian Spring* whose *semplice* and '"white" tone' instruction would not be out of place in *Lincoln*.[117] In particular, one solo presentation of the 'The People's House' almost invites such a performance instruction (Figure 34, bar 1). The theme is cued on solo clarinet when Lincoln speaks of equality, fairness, balance, and justice, colouring his sermon with warmth in a cue entitled 'Telegraph Office'.[118] The theme

[114] Stephen Shearon and Harry Eskew, 'Gospel Music', rev. by James C. Downey and Robert Darden, in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <https://doi-org.may.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2224388> [30 August 2022].
[115] Pemberton, *Lowell Mason*, 187. The upbeat in 'With Malice Toward None' seems to be a more consistent feature of its solo trumpet concert arrangement rather than its appearance in the film. Additionally, the prominent quasi hymn-styled theme of *Amistad*, 'The Long Road to Justice', is also marked by an upbeat.
[116] Mark Richards, 'The Use of Variation in John Williams's Film Themes', in *John Williams: Music for Film, Television and the Concert Stage*, ed. Emilio Audissino (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 119–51: 120, 147.
[117] Aaron Copland, *Appalachian Spring (Ballet for Martha)* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2004).
[118] The title is taken from the 'For Your Consideration' version of the soundtrack.

is then passed to an even more restrained flute before a solo trumpet takes the consequent phrase, marking the president's quiet departure (and foreshadowing the cueing of his final scene); see Table 6 for a summary of the sync points. The ascent of the consequent phrase has been noted as resembling the 'Springfield Mountain' theme of *Lincoln Portrait* or the opening of *Appalachian Spring* (it also appears in Friedhofer's *The Best Years of Our Lives*), although I suggest that the comparable $\hat{5}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$ motif (bars 4–5, 16–17, and 18) is a coincidence sparked by a shared vocabulary rather than a direct (and likely overly obvious) homage.[119] As with the other themes and presentations examined in this case study, Williams does more than present a pastiche of a nineteenth-century hymn style to effect a reverent and American sensibility; rather, an all-encompassing American doctrine is suggested by the careful cueing of themes and the chamber-like orchestration, which appear to abide by the ideologically charged notion of simplicity.

[119] Mikko Ojala (pseud. Incanus), comment on 'Score: Lincoln – Album Review & Complete Score Analysis (John Williams)', *JWFan.com*, 26 October 2012, <https://www.jwfan.com/forums/index.php?/topic/22296-score-lincoln-album-review-complete-score-analysis-john-williams/> [12 July 2023].

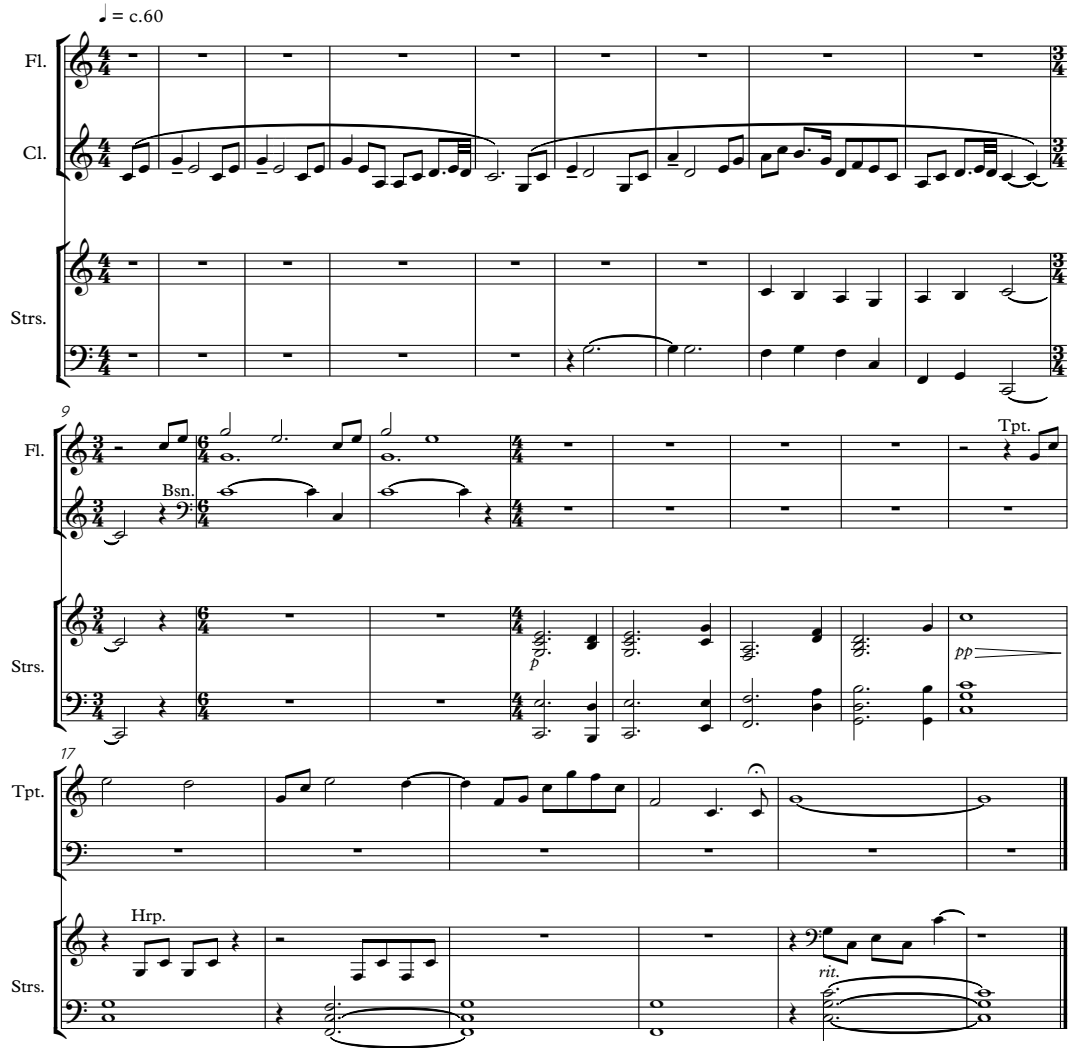

Figure 34: *Lincoln*, 'The Telegraph Office' cue transcription.

Bar	Narrative cue	Musical cue
1	'We begin with equality.'	Solo clarinet, 'The People's House'
9	Lincoln decides to delay peace accords to ensure the passing of the Amendment.	Solo flute with bassoon, 'The People's House'
12	He concludes his order and makes to leave.	Strings, 'Freedom's Call'
16	Lincoln silently leaves.	Solo trumpet, 'The People's House', with harp coda

Table 6: 'The Telegraph Office' sync point summary.

In the short scene from which this cue originates, Lincoln cites Euclid's first axiom as a means of proposing racial equality: 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other.', he says. With this self-evident truth in mind, I might remark that not only has Williams assimilated the style of nineteenth-century hymns but that his are simply new hymns of a different kind, in service of a different credo.

Hymns for the Past

Williams's compositional style in *Lincoln* resembles both the folk and reform traditions, the combination of which alludes to the gospel hymn form. Historically, this style constituted a mélange of the 'respectable' qualities of the reform sound and the 'exuberance' of spirituals, and would be an appropriate choice given the rising popularity of gospel hymns during the period represented in the film.[120] Whether the composer was consciously guided by the principles of these traditions is a matter of speculation, but the style of the score certainly suggests a desire for authenticity, and this raises the question of why authenticity would matter.[121]

Such concerns were not Williams's alone and can also be detected in Day-Lewis's strict method-acting approach, as well as through the production design and cinematography.[122] For sound designer Ben Burtt, the goal was to make audiences 'believe sounds are authentic'; accordingly, he and his team recorded and used the sounds of "'Lincoln's pew'" and the bell in St. John's Episcopal Church (an oft-visited church for Protestant presidents), the creaking furniture, clocks, and door knocks of the White House, and Lincoln's own watch: 'so, every time you hear that little ticking in the story, that's Abraham Lincoln's actual pocket watch.'[123] Burtt qualified these exercises in authenticity, observing that 'I could have recorded a watch that belonged to my great-grandfather […] but there is something sacred about working on a film about Lincoln.'[124] Here, the sound designer touches on two points that are relevant to Williams's score: (1) a sense of individual obligation and (2) the significance of the 'sacred' subject matter.[125]

First, just as it is improbable that audiences would identify the idiosyncrasies of Lincoln's timepiece, they are similarly unlikely to recognise Williams's hymnal style as being historically appropriate. Yet perhaps this was not the intent. For Williams, it was 'making this effort' that was

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[120] Shearon, Eskew, 'Gospel Music'.

[121] While Williams does not detail a specific search for the authentic, he speaks of his work on *Lincoln* in a manner akin to those for whom authenticity was a concern when expressing his desire to find an American 'music that might have been heard at the time'. See Burlingame, 'The sounds of cinema: 'Lincoln''. Additionally, like Ben Burtt (quoted in main body), Williams mentions the 'particular challenge and heavy responsibility' of finding 'something worthy', and that he 'wouldn't feel comfortable [varying tunes] of the canon', so he composed his own instead. See Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'.

[122] On Day-Lewis's supposed imitation of Lincoln's voice and related qualities in other actors, Williams said that 'we accept them as being authentic'. See Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'. For the film's Oscar-winning set decorator Jim Erickson, the quest for the authentic extended to such minutiae as wallpaper. Erickson, after detailing his reproduction of Lincoln's office, noted that 'we worked up a pattern that was as close as we could actually get without having a real piece of it in front of us.' See The Deadline Team, 'OSCARS: 'Lincoln' Production Design', 16 February 2013, <https://deadline.com/2013/02/oscars-lincoln-production-design-431982/> [27 June 2023]. On the cinematography, Kamiński described his chance to 'create a semi-realistic world' and his efforts to 'create some kind of a sense of reality and place for the viewer' through the lighting. See Janusz Kamiński quoted in Bill Desowitz, 'Immersed in Movies: Cinematographer Janusz Kaminski Talks 'Lincoln'', *IndieWire*, 23 January 2013, <https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/immersed-in-movies-cinematographer-janusz-kaminski-talks-lincoln-199908/> [27 June 2023].

[123] Ben Burtt quoted in DeNeen L. Brown, 'Historical sound effects captured in Spielberg's 'Lincoln'', *The Washington Post*, 13 November 2012, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/movies/historical-sound-effects-captured-in-spielbergs-lincoln/2012/11/13/f1aa9b0c-2ce2-11e2-9ac2-1c61452669c3_story.html> [14 July 2023].

[124] Ibid.

[125] Screenwriter Tony Kushner mentioned a 'responsibility that you have' when depicting a historical event such as the Civil War. (He made a comparison to the 'erroneous' depictions of the period in *The Birth of a Nation* (D. W. Griffith, 1915) and *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939)). Perhaps Spielberg's other collaborators, Williams included, felt a similar responsibility. Kushner quoted in in Ann Hornaday, 'Steven Spielberg talks about 'Lincoln' and finding the man inside the monument', *The Washington Post*, 8 November 2012, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/movies/steven-spielberg-talks-about-lincoln-and-finding-the-man-inside-the-monument/2012/11/08/fed9f4f8-29b8-11e2-96b6-8e6a7524553f_story.html> [14 July 2023].

significant; self-evident conscientiousness was more vital than the actual results of research.[126] For the audience, Williams's music is already explicitly American given its associations, cueing, and the pervasive resonances of the Coplandesque in film scores. Any concerns regarding the authenticity of style, or even regarding the European-inspired roots of Mason's methodology, are surely of secondary concern to the American-associated restraint and the 'unadorned charm' of hymn tunes.[127] As Ilka Oramo has argued, 'what is accepted as national is national, wherever its roots may be.'[128] For the audience, the score connotes successfully due to both the generic associations of the nineteenth-century hymnal vernacular, of pious religiosity, and its connection to a broad Americanness, due to the lineage of the Shaker/Copland tradition.[129] Given the idiomatic guarantee of stable associativity, then, Williams's assiduous efforts were instead a personal imperative.

Second, while Williams described his 'hope' that the score would be 'remotely worthy of the writing, and the performing of the piece', I contend that this intention was instead a plea to the history itself.[130] Perhaps Williams's assimilation of hymnal traditions was not simply to add an appropriate period flavour (as was the case for the spirituals in *Rosewood*), but because, like Burtt, he deemed the subject matter as something sacrosanct, and, thus, as requiring a particularly diligent approach. As Spielberg described, the whole process of making *Lincoln* was an 'entire sacred effort'.[131] Given the statements of Burtt, Williams, and Spielberg, the composer's process of research and his writing in this distinctive tradition can be regarded as something of a patriotic ritual. As with the hiring of the CSO to record the score, the history and subject matter necessitated a special effort, a ceremonial act as an expression of national faith. These efforts, under the guise of authenticity, reveal Williams's reverence for this history. Just as the hymns in the finished score facilitate a patriotic piety, their composition — a pilgrimage to the authentic — was a form of patriotic worship in itself.

With these concerns that go beyond the regular work involved in film-scoring, ties to Williams's *Gebrauchsmusik* become evident. Not only is the vernacular of *Lincoln* related to his similarly hymnal music for American occasions — such as the aforementioned *Air and Simple Gifts*, *Hymn to New England*, and *American Journey* — but it is similarly dedicative, placing it in a

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[126] Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'. This attitude toward craft evokes the Shaker concept of hand-mindedness, which will be addressed in more detail in the chapter conclusion.
[127] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 94. This Copland description of revivalist hymns seems equally applicable to Williams's themes.
[128] Ilka Oramo, 'Beyond Nationalism', in *Music and Nationalism in 20th-Century Great Britain and Finland*, ed. Tomi Mäkelä (Hamburg: Bockel, 1997), 35–43: 43.
[129] Furthermore, the positioning of Williams's hymnal style within this identity- and ideology-forming narrative affixes the *topos* to an Americanness in a reciprocal process. The music imparts a homespun and patriotic warmth and sentimentality to the film through the stylisation, modesty, and discretion of the score; while, simultaneously, the film weds the music to the history it depicts, using it — like costumes and make-up — to anchor the narrative with a verisimilitude.
[130] Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'.
[131] Spielberg quoted in Hornaday, 'Steven Spielberg talks about 'Lincoln' and finding the man inside the monument'.

lineage of Lincoln-related works by Robert Russell Bennett (1894–1981), Copland, Rubin Goldmark (1872–1936), Morton Gould, Harris, Ives, Daniel Gregory Mason, Robert Palmer (1915–2010), Earl Robinson (1910–91), Elie Siegmeister (1909–91), Jacob Weinberg (1879–1956), Jaromír Weinberger (1896–1967), and others.[132] The score's hymnal *topos* gives it a degree of prestige (as it is a less troped code for Americanness), a uniqueness akin to the film's eponymous icon of American exceptionalism. Clearly, then, *Lincoln* is something more significant to the composer. Grounded in a sense of (self-)importance and distinct from the scores assessed in previous chapters, Williams's *Lincoln* is ceremonial and sacramental, and is the clearest expression of his national sentiment.

As the previous chapters have shown, a firm footing in the Coplandesque pastoral or military music traditions is a common reference point. Their ubiquity is likely the result of a more conventionalised compositional approach; they have formed a bedrock in certain genres and hence can prompt stable and familiar associations and emotions — though of course, their use depends on the project. For more light-hearted (or even generic) films — like *The Cowboys* or *1941* — such a recognised style is not only apropos but necessary to maintain Hollywood audiences' expectations. The hymn-centredness of *Lincoln*, then, both showcases an additional side of Williams's Americana and also the specific mindset or ideology this style of film seems to warrant, and, above all, a patriotic sensibility removed from the histrionics of his scores for blockbusters. However, *Lincoln* is not unique in adopting this perspective.

3.4: Historiographic Hymns

The musical palettes of *Lincoln*, *SPR*, and *The Post* lend a sincerity appropriate to the tone of each film. They do not attempt to overcompensate for an emotional shallowness through exaggerated, affecting cues (as might be considered the case with *The Cowboys*, *The Patriot*, or *Born*). Hymn-inflected scores such as these reflect a potentially deeper but less exaggerated emotional core and a more complex meta-narrative concerning fundamental myths of American history, functioning to convey an earnestness, to vitalise these styles of stories, and to situate their narratives in American lore. While Williams's music is obviously in service of a directorial agenda, his hymnody also fulfils a reverential role expected of Hollywood historical dramas. One might draw a tentative connection here between Williams's Americanist scores and American propaganda films, the result of a partnership between Hollywood and the Office of War Information during

[132] Bennett's 'Abraham Lincoln' Symphony (1929), Goldmark's *Requiem Suggested by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* (1918), Gould's *Lincoln Legend* (1942), Harris's *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* (1953) and his sixth and tenth symphonies (1944 and 1965, respectively), Ives's *Lincoln, the Great Composer* (1921), Mason's 'A Lincoln Symphony' (1936), Palmer's *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* (1948), Robinson's *The Lonesome Train* (1942), Siegmeister's 'The Lincoln Penny' (1947), Weinberg's *The Gettysburg Address* (1936), Weinberger's 'The Lincoln Symphony' (1941).

WWII. I do not claim Williams's scores to be propaganda *per se* but I do believe that they may serve a sociologically propagandistic function by reinforcing an 'assimilating identification' of the United States.[133] After all, the influential power of film music has been capitalised on in the past in service of such agendas.[134]

As a brief example, in *Aaron Copland's Hollywood Film Scores* Paula Musegades has noted the persuasive capabilities of Copland's film music. *The North Star* (Lewis Milestone, 1943) was originally released as pro-Soviet propaganda, encouraging Ukrainian resistance against Nazi invaders, all to the accompaniment of Copland and Ira Gershwin songs based on Russian folk melodies, and a Russian-inflected score (including balalaika). However, the film was later accused of being written by Communist writers by the House Un-American Activities Committee.[135] When subsequently re-released as *anti*-Soviet propaganda (under the title *Armored Attack* (1957)) much of Copland's previously Oscar-nominated music was subdued. Musegades believes that the manipulation of the score revealed the filmmakers' belief in the ability of music 'to elicit emotional responses and send powerful political messages to audiences', and that these edits altered themes of 'understanding, sympathy, and unification' to ones of 'fear and anxiety'.[136] With such capabilities in mind, Williams's hymnal music might occasionally be seen as pro-American propaganda (we have already seen his marches act in such a manner in *Midway* in Chapter One). Brief examples from *The Post* and *SPR* will demonstrate how Williams's hymnal music has been used to regard America from a certain point of view; this patriotic predisposition of some of his scores is not lost on reviewers and, as the following examples show, is occasionally the subject of critique.

The Post (2017)

Concerns about an overstated use of hymnody marred the mostly warm reception to *The Post*, another Spielberg-Williams American period piece. Williams noted that he did not want his contribution 'to stand in the way of the story', and, thus, his aesthetic aim was for a 'subliminal effect but not a conscious effect'.[137] Reviewers, however, begged to differ. *Entertainment Weekly* critiqued Spielberg's rather transparent intentions ('he rises to our current moment on stilts, with

[133] While I do not claim that Hollywood films are actively propagandising, some have been noted to inadvertently act in such a way in the past; for example, *Top Gun* (Tony Scott, 1986) led to a rise in applications to the US Air Force. See Mark Evje, 'Top Gun' Boosting Service Sign-Ups', *Los Angeles Times*, 5 July 1986, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1986-07-05-ca-20403-story.html> [08 July 2022]; Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141.

[134] Annabel J. Cohen discusses the psychological effect music can have on film audiences in 'Film Music: Perspectives from Cognitive Psychology', in *Music and Cinema*, eds. James Buhler, Caryl Flinn and David Neumeyer (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 360–378.

[135] Brenda Murphy, *Congressional Theatre: Dramatizing McCarthyism on Stage, Film and Television* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 16.

[136] Musegades, *Aaron Copland's Hollywood Film Scores*, 91. Musegades has also noted Copland's hymn references in *Our Town*. The composer draws on the diegetic hymn 'Blest Be the Tie (that Binds)' — another Mason-arranged tune — in the cue 'The Town at Night' where its dissonance draws attention to the discordances in the New England town. See *Aaron Copland's Hollywood Film Scores*, 67.

[137] Spielberg quoting Williams in Tim Gray, 'Steven Spielberg on How Longtime Collaborators Helped Push 'The Post' on the Fast Track', *Variety*, 3 January 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/artisans/production/director-steven-spielberg-post-1202651201/> [25 July 2022].

a megaphone and a swelling John Williams score'), *The Washington Post* damned the 'shamelessly manipulative' music's lack of subtlety, and *PopMatters* described the score as 'overpowering'.[138] This is unexpected criticism considering that the score is arguably understated by Williams's standards. Yet, one particular climactic scene presents an obvious exception, undoing the more considered work of the film by making text out of what had previously been subtext. Following the dramatic dénouement, the score shifts away from the minimalist ostinatos, synthesised textures, and ominous brass which had regularly underscored the narrative.

The Washington Post had been sued for publishing information illegally acquired from top secret files, The Pentagon Papers, which detailed the full history of American involvement in Vietnam. Following their appearance at the Supreme Court, freedom of the press is maintained, and *The Washington Post* granted the right to publish. Upon the paper's vindication, one of the editors relates a Supreme Court Justice's message to her colleagues: 'The Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfil its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed not the governors.' A sense of immediacy and gravity is lent to the words through a slow dolly-in and a stately and earnest string chorale hymn (Figure 35). While critics did not refer to a specific moment as evidence of the heavy hands of Spielberg and Williams, this musically marked and overwrought scene seems to be the most obvious culprit. The reverent idiom amplifies the patriotic sentiments already accented by the invocation of the Founding Fathers and the defence of First Amendment principles. Consequently, the scene comes across as a rather po-faced patriotic sermon on American virtue, contrasting with the more considered negotiation of themes of journalistic duty, feminism, and truth.

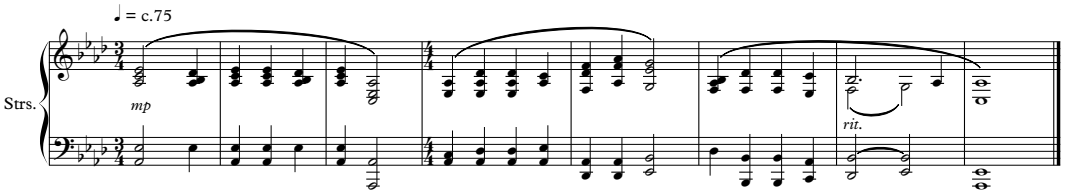

Figure 35: *The Post*, 'The Court's Decision and End Credits', a chorale-style arrangement of a prayerful theme. Adapted from John Williams, *Piano Solo: The Post* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2018).

The stately hymn theme seems designed to dramatise the Justice's dictum as recounted by the editor, inviting the audience to exalt in the moment; in this regard, it is like the Gettysburg recitation in *Lincoln*, with both bookending moments using simple cues for similar purposes. In

[138] Chris Nashawaty, 'Meryl Streep elevates *The Post* beyond its obvious message: EW review', *Entertainment Weekly*, 06 December 2017, <https://ew.com/movies/2017/12/06/the-post-review/> [11 July 2022]; Ann Hornaday, 'In 'The Post,' Streep and Hanks lead a stirring homage to the pursuit of truth', *The Washington Post*, 07 December 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/forget-the-subtle-slow-boiler-the-post-romantically-rouses-the-ideals-of-the-fourth-estate/2017/12/06/d1d32a3c-d47c-11e7-a986-d0a9770d9a3e_story.html> [30 June 2022]; J. R. Kinnard, "The Post' is an Exhilarating Love Letter to Journalistic Integrity', *PopMatters*, 6 December 2017, <https://www.popmatters.com/the-post-is-an-exhilarating-love-letter-to-journalistic-integrity-2515121860.html> [30 June 2022].

terms of narrative, both scenes are flights of fantasy relishing in self-indulgent patriotic pageantry, yet a key difference between them is musical context.[139] The reverential and patriotically spirited scoring of *Lincoln* is *de rigueur* but, in *The Post*, it contrasts with the established tone of the soundtrack. Perhaps it is this idiomatic disparity that marks, and for some mars, this climactic moment as one of intrusive pretension. As screenplay and score take an uncharacteristically gauche turn toward mythmaking, the audience becomes aware of the manipulation. *The Post* is not the only Williams score that has overplayed its mythopoetic hand, however.

The hymn-styled chorale also serves similar patriotic ends in *Amistad*. A variation of its Americana theme, 'The Long Road to Justice', occurs when ex-President John Quincy Adams encourages empathy and understanding with the captured and close-to-being-enslaved Mende people (Figure 36.1). The theme is deployed across the film to acclaim the political system — or more often, the values required to uphold it. Serving similar ends is a brass chorale unique to the end credit suite of *The Patriot*. This short interjection between the main march and love theme effects a warmth and dignity — as well as a militaristic edge via the dotted rhythms — as if taking a moment to extoll the nation newly conceived in liberty (Figure 36.2). Like the chorale of *The Post*, these predecessors adapt the evocative register and revel in nationalistic pretension.[140]

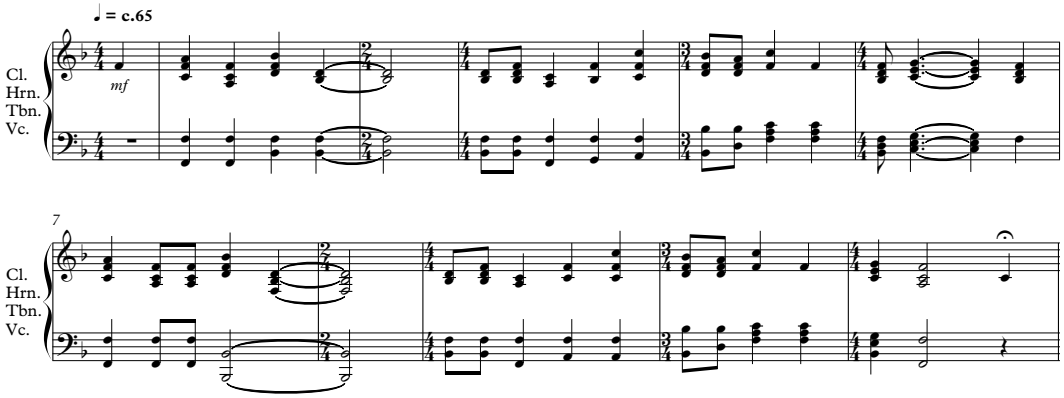

Figure 36.1: *Amistad*, 'Mr. Adams Takes the Case', a chorale variation of 'The Long Road to Justice' theme. Transcribed from *Amistad: Piano/Vocal Selections* (New York, NY: Cherry Lane Music, 1998).

[139] Although this dialogue in *The Post* is based on the words of Justice Hugo Black, their presentation is somewhat saccharine and almost appears to pander to American audiences' patriotic sentimentality.

[140] Contrastingly, the *appassionato* chorale that forms the climax of 'Arlington' from *JFK* (bar 67–73) suggests a heart-wrenching Barber-esque agony to convey the distance from the patriotic promise of America signified in the chorales of *The Post*, *The Patriot*, and *Amistad*. See John Williams, *Suite from JFK* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1992).

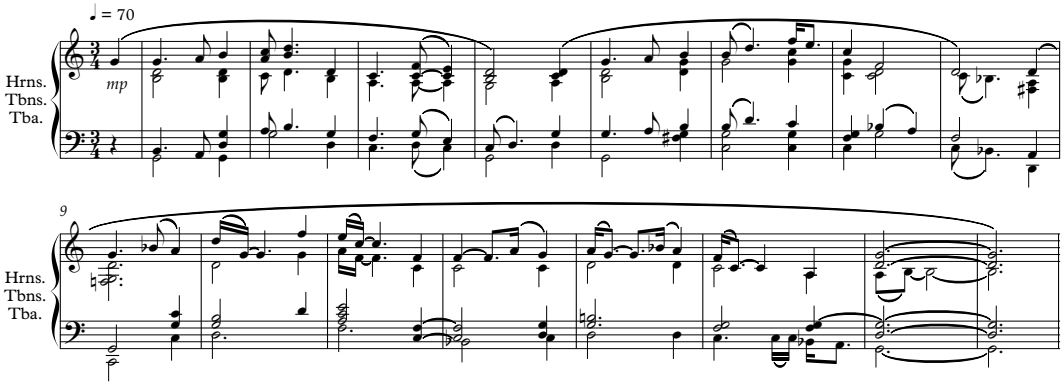

Figure 36.2: *The Patriot*, 'The Patriot (reprise)', 'The Colonial Cause' chorale in the end credits.

The hymnal registers of *The Post* also trace some of their roots back to the restrained style of *Lincoln*. Following the more obviously manipulative string chorale cue, Williams retreats to an established patriotic mode again. When newspaper owner Katharine Graham (Meryl Streep) examines the type-setting for the following day's headlines, Williams cues the hymn theme once more — now in the familiar plainspoken piano style (Figure 37). The coda-like recasting of the theme grounds the ending with those same values that the piano espoused in *Lincoln*. As it accompanies Graham's inspection of the fruits of hard labour, and following the victory of the people over power, the piano almost seems to declare the maintenance of some form of status quo. While its delicacy appears to balance subtlety and mythmaking to greater effect than the maudlin chorale, the music of both scenes falls back on that same patriotic sentimentality evident in the coda of *Lincoln*.[141] Particularly in the Trumpian post-truth age with which *The Post* was consciously in dialogue, this sort of conspicuous sentiment comes across as preachy, the hymn idiom an unsuitable means of reframing this historical moment as a legend exemplifying the power of ordinary American people. Rather, the most natural home of the hymnal idiom appears to be in historical dramas whose mythic terrain has already been firmly established in national discourse and legend, a realm where, in consequence, it draws less obvious attention to itself.[142]

[141] The coda of *Nixon* is another obvious culprit of a musically-assisted final turn toward sentimentality, as a plaintive piano makes a brief appearance to lend fleeting dignity to the president as he resigns, in a cue called 'The Farewell Scene'. While its conflicting major and minor inflections and chromatic string triads give the short moment a sombre tone, the simplicity of the piano melody line — just a single note at a time — generates a poignancy that might seem even more out of place than the conspicuous chorale of *The Post*, were if not for the disparate (occasionally jarring) styles and approaches of the entire *Nixon* score.

[142] Other chorales testifying to this connection are 'Freedom's Call' and the arrangement of 'With Malice Toward None' that introduces the credits to *Lincoln*. Although, perhaps Williams's best know is in 'Omaha Beach' of *Saving Private Ryan*, a theme sometimes associated with Pvt. Ryan.

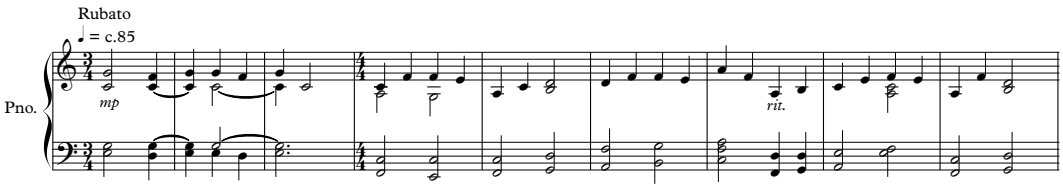

Figure 37: *The Post*, 'The Court's Decision and End Credits' prayerful theme set for solo piano. Transcribed from John Williams, *Piano Solo: The Post* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2018).

Saving Private Ryan (1998)

The hymnal *topos* of *SPR* was used for a more traditional purpose and was also better received than the score for *The Post*. *The Hollywood Reporter* captured the general critical tone, assessing that the score 'only occasionally overplays its patriotic hand. For the most part, it allows the film's eloquent, nonjudgmental message to be heard without unnecessary encumbrance.'[143] This tonal balance in the score successfully maps on to the more consistent myth-conscious sensibility of the film, with Spielberg using national icons, imagery, and virtuous characters to negotiate American themes in a well-established historical moment. The WWII setting serves as a frontier where ideals and virtues can be affirmed by history, rather than the less positively-associated Vietnam era (of *The Post*), a site of national failure and emblematic of sixties/seventies paranoia. Unlike the forced mythopoeia of *The Post*, *SPR* more often deals with nationalistic concerns thematically rather than narratively — nationalistic didacticism (such as the General's reading of Lincoln's Bixby letter) is distanced from the central narrative arc of Capt. Miller and his team and is more prominent in the scenes removed from the battlefield.[144] The score functions from the offset to perpetuate an American grand narrative, making use of the familiar *topoi* artfully, and not to patently wax Americana.

The thrust of the score is distilled in the closing credit cue, 'Hymn to the Fallen', a tribute to America's military and 'a requiem, almost, for the people lost in the film', in Williams's view.[145] Despite using a veritable toolkit of familiar signifiers — open brass dyads (à la *Fanfare for the Common Man*), unbroken diatonicism, primary harmonies (sometimes superimposed), tonic pedals, conventional voice leading, wordless choir — the message of the piece rises above narrative specificity to serve less nationalist-specific ends; its ruminative tone opens a free space

[143] Michael Rechtshaffen, "Saving Private Ryan': THR's 1998 Review', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 24 July 2017, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/saving-private-ryan-review-1998-movie-1023817/> [10 August 2022].
[144] Critical readings of the letter-reading scene vary. For Albert Auster, the scene is pivotal to establishing a triumphal aesthetic, noting that it 'takes the film out of the realm of mere realism and bathes it in the more luminous power of a sublime nationalism that has come to be associated with Lincoln' and it 'represents the first bit of triumph in the film—the triumph of the American spirit.' See Auster, '*Saving Private Ryan* and American Triumphalism', 101. Catherine Kodat critiques the filmmakers' intentions, noting that historical questions regarding the letter's legitimacy and authorship 'serve to heighten our appreciation of the lengths to which the creators of *Saving Private Ryan* were willing to go in order to get Abraham Lincoln into the film.' See Kodat, 'Saving Private Property', 88. And Frank Tomasulo, one of the film's most antagonistic critics, is one of the few to bring Williams's music into his discussion of the scene, expressing his view that the 'solemn, almost ecclesiastical, musical accompaniment' helps to establish a filmic tone that will ultimately 'provide the self-perpetuating jingoistic justifications for future unilateral military invasions, incursions, and interventions.' See Tomasulo, 'Empire of the Gun, 123, 127.
[145] John Williams, 'Music and Sound', *Saving Private Ryan* (special-edition DVD) (DreamWorks, 2004).

for broader memorialisation.[146] It is the film that frames the hymn in an American context; the music does little to contextualise itself via theme or a specific nation-associated style.

Notwithstanding some fleeting familiar tropes of the American vernacular, 'Hymn to the Fallen' has something of an associative promiscuity. Its familiar colouristic components are not so dominant as to place the listener in the same patriotic realm as *Lincoln*. Instead, a more all-purpose *religioso* feeling creates a space for reflection partially sequestered from the patriotic domain. Such an attribute is not unique to 'Hymn to the Fallen'; the religious and elegiac registers of 'With Malice Toward None', 'Exsultate Justi' (*Empire of the Sun*), 'Remembrances' (*Schindler's List*), 'Dry Your Tears, Afrika' (*Amistad*), and 'A Prayer for Peace' (*Munich*) have achieved a similar status, as Matessino has argued.[147] Each of these are cohesive works befitting of a concert setting more than the typical film cue and, in lieu of a concrete association with a specific scene, they rise above narrative confines and seem capable of depicting more than the specific subject matter of their film.[148] Spielberg recognised such a quality in 'Hymn to the Fallen', conferring on the piece a universality when noting that it will 'stand the test of time and honour forever the fallen of this war and possibly all wars.'[149] (This claim to universality speaks to a broader issue that will be addressed in the conclusion.)

The protean character of 'Hymn to the Fallen' is engendered by a (relative) compositional conservatism, or, as one review more harshly put it, a 'somewhat pedestrian' nature, with nothing in it 'to suggest the sharp edges of conflict or patriotism.'[150] This essence is brought about by almost statuesque chorale textures and isometric rhythms, distant trumpets and hushed snares, and a sense of freedom in the *rubato* interlude for clarinet and bassoon; the work subtly alludes to various combinations of Americana *topoi*, including the militaristic and the pastoral.[151] The central hymn theme employs many familiar idiomatic features, including step-led melodies, slow-to-change chorale harmonies, homophony, a baroque harmony-setting bassline, and (mostly) conventional voice-leading procedures. In the context of our concerns with American hymnody, traditional features such as these call to mind 'Old Hundred' — that

[146] This hymn-affected commemorative sensibility also occurs in Williams's arrangement of 'Eternal Father, Strong to Save', a navy hymn that appears diegetically in *JFK*.
[147] Matessino, liner notes for *Saving Private Ryan*, 12. I might also add 'Arlington' (*JFK*) to this list.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Steven Spielberg, liner notes for *Saving Private Ryan* (New York: NY, Cherry Lane, 1998).
[150] Christian Clemmensen, 'Saving Private Ryan', *FilmTracks*, 28 August 2020, <https://www.filmtracks.com/titles/saving_private.html> [29 August 2022].
[151] Adopting Kleppinger's categorisations, one might tentatively suggest the hymn as mixing 'protaganistic introspection' (low, stately, mid-ranged, and homophonic), 'idyllic nature' in the woodwind approach to the conclusion (open consonant voicings, soft, slow, diatonic, and occasionally angular), and, at a stretch, a modification of 'triumphant exordium' (through the trumpet and snare combination, triadic stresses, and 'bugleity' — the overtonal and pitch class structure commonly associated with bugle calls). See Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'; 'bugleity' is discussed by Daniel Harrison in *Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 21–23.

favoured tune of the reformists that embodied their preferred 'scientific' methods.[152] While there is no evidence or hint that Williams drew on 'Old Hundred' as an intentional influence, the similarities between the two hymns might indicate a tacit point of stylistic reference or an associative model. Figure 38 shows an extract of 'Hymn to the Fallen', Image 10 provides a facsimile of an 1838 setting of 'Old Hundred', and Table 7 offers a comparative overview.

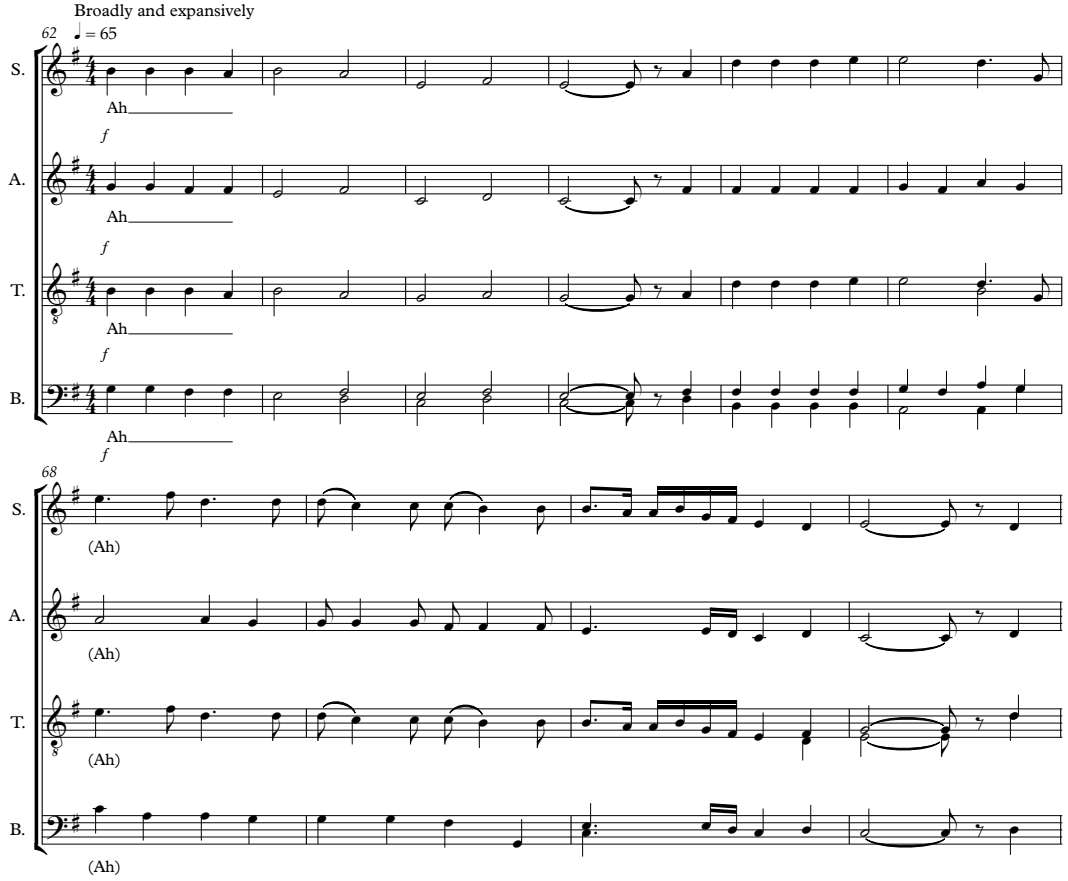

Figure 38: Williams, *Saving Private Ryan*, 'Hymn to the Fallen', choral extract (bars 62–71). Transcribed from *Hymn to the Fallen* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 1998).

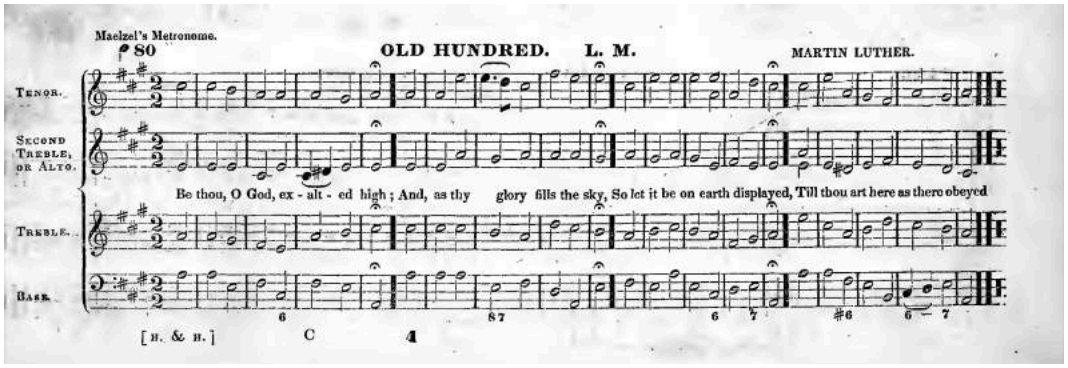

Image 10: Martin Luther (arr. Lowell Mason), 'Old Hundred'. Transcribed from Lowell Mason, *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* (Boston, MA: J. H. Wilkins & R. B. Carter, 1838).

[152] John Sullivan Dwight testifies to the piece's significance, "'Old Hundred!" king of the sacred band of ancient airs. Never shall our ears grow weary of hearing, or our tongues of singing thee! And when we get to heaven, who knows but what the first triumphal strain that welcomes us may be — "Be thou, O God, exalted high".' See John Sullivan Dwight, 'Old Hundred', *The Music World*, 36/35 (28 August 1858), 558.

Categories	Common to 'Old Hundred' and 'Hymn to the Fallen'	Unique to 'Hymn to the Fallen'
Melody	Step movement, diatonic	Soprano-led, triadic movement, occasional dissonant leaps (9th)
Harmony	Primary chords, diatonic	Pedals, suspensions, extended sevenths (all diatonic)
Rhythm	Stately, isometric	Dotted patterns, semiquaver embellishments
Texture	Homophonic	Briefly imitative
Voice leading	Rising leading notes, falling sevenths, mostly traditional	Occasional parallel block movement

Table 7: short comparison of features in 'Hymn to the Fallen' and 'Old Hundred'.

The wordless chorus, chorale textures, direct harmonies, and 'reverent' performance direction of 'Hymn to the Fallen' create an all-purpose hymnal effect redolent of the multi-denominational 'Old Hundred'.[153] Both tunes possess an orthodoxy due to their 'scientific' qualities, to borrow the reformists' word again. Although Williams does not follow every conventional rule of voice leading and harmony in classical practice, his hymn shows a remarkable degree of conventionality, and a leanness, much like his music for *Lincoln*. This restraint lends both tunes a certain ahistorical Euro-American Christian sound, or, extending the universal quality espoused by Spielberg, a timelessness (a term previous applied to 'Missionary' and Ives's String Quartet No. 1. For the around-five-hundred-year-old hymn, its use and reuse across different countries and in various settings have given it a flexible associativity, and thus a certain unknowability. The case for 'Hymn to the Fallen' is somewhat similar; its religious, pastoral, and militaristic signifiers are not as foregrounded as in some of Williams's other works, thereby giving it an elusive quality. Above all though, it is their shared contemplative mood that sparks the comparison. For Mason, such a mood served a clear religious purpose; yet if Williams's hymn speaks to a certain God, their identity and denominational form are not alluded to in the music.

3.5: Hymns without Religion

Apart from the spirituals of *Rosewood*, each of the hymns discussed in this chapter is almost agnostic. If the tunes of *Lincoln*, *The Post*, *Amistad*, *The Patriot*, and *SPR* indicate any faith, it is a faith in America, each facilitating reflection and meditation on the virtuousness displayed in these fables on US history. Williams is certainly aware of the inherent contradictions between the style and function of these hymns, describing 'Malice', for instance, as being like a 'Protestant hymn, but without any overt sense of religiosity.'[154] This is not an altogether unheard-of anomaly; many

[153] Williams, *Hymn to the Fallen*.
[154] Williams, *Piano Solo: Lincoln*, 2.

American folk hymns have been constructed by combining established secular tunes with sacred texts. Yet, while hymn precedents exist, Williams did not intentionally model his a-religious tunes on any such tradition. Instead, as he revealed in an interview focussed on *Lincoln*, he took a cue from the techniques of nineteenth-century American symphonists, citing Arthur Foote (1853–1937), George Whitefield Chadwick (1854–1931), and Edward Burlingame Hill (1872–1960).[155] Williams argued that these composers touched a 'groundstone' of American music, that their writing built upon a 'bedrock source of melody' mined from liturgical sources, nineteenth-century hymnody (he named Lutheran hymnbooks specifically), and from locations such as New England and Appalachia.[156] Hewn from these traditions, then, the tunes of Williams's own devising were excavated for their (perceived) intrinsic Americanness rather than for their resonances with any one religion.

Despite these origins, Williams's process was not without a certain spirituality. In the same interview, he described writing the *Lincoln* score as 'a natural thing', 'an elusive spiritual thing', and a process 'he didn't have to think very much about', practically suggesting some innate connection to these sources of American inspiration.[157] In this context, such an attitude puts one in mind of historical notions of music as a form of religion, with the composer acting as Creator. While it seems out of character for Williams intentionally to portray himself in such a light (his methods, as he describes, are like those of a craftsman or sculptor, of one who takes time to shape and hone materials), it is interesting to consider this instinctive approach to craft.[158] Indeed, Williams was not the first to address such praxis with regard to hymn setting: Copland had already suggested that hymn tunes could only be 'successfully handled' by a composer 'who [was] able to identify himself with, and re[-]express in his own terms, the underlying emotional connotation of the material.'[159] Stripped of religiosity and abstracted from their original function, hymns, in Copland's view, served as vehicles of expression. Although Williams may have found the process of composing the hymns of *Lincoln* a spiritual one, this was not necessarily incompatible with Copland's mandate regarding the uncovering of their intrinsic emotional core.

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155 Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'.

156 Ibid. While Williams did write his own *Hymn to New England*, it does not seem to be a hymn *of* New England in the vein of much of the sound of *Lincoln*. The work is grounded in fanfares and triumphal percussion firstly, and its hymn theme lacks the simplicity and restraint of his filmic hymns, given its busier textures, dense chords, and modal interchange. Often, the supposed hymn theme leans more toward an anthem, given its ascending optimistic lines, or even a march with its repeated rhythmic character and continuous upbeat-effected momentum.

157 One might even be tempted to read Williams's continued process of composing with pencil and paper at the piano, rather than at the computer like so many composers today, as an almost ritualistic act contributing to his craft.

158 On writing 'Raiders March', the composer said 'a piece like that is deceptively simple […] I remember working on that thing for days and days, changing notes, changing this, inverting that, trying to get something that seemed to me to be just right. I can't speak for my colleagues but for me things which appear to be very simple are not at all, they're only simple after the fact. The manufacture of those things which seem inevitable is a process that can be very laborious and difficult.' See Williams quoted in Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 166. Regarding finding the correct five-note motif for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Williams described that it 'was the result of a lot of experimentation […] I think I wrote about 300-plus examples of five notes starting with all on one note and with no rhythmic variation, just intervallic, that is to say pitch differences. And we settled on this one [five-note motif from the film] for whatever reasons.' Williams quoted in Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 262–63.

159 Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 103–04.

As I have discussed, Williams's affecting and agnostic hymns prompt reflection and reverence, and facilitate a surrendering to cinematic American myths. Such a function of the score, again, relates to aesthetic practices outlined by Copland; for him, the aim of assimilating the style was not to uncover a 'quotable hymn or spiritual' but 'to find a music that would speak of universal things in a vernacular of American speech rhythms.'[160] As established at the outset of this chapter, Copland appeared to accomplish this goal by connecting his own 'imposed simplicity' practice to Shaker hymnody.[161] In direct parallel, Williams compared the innate 'Americanisms' of music to 'speech' and 'inflection', even extending the comparison to Day-Lewis's 'believable impression' of Lincoln's voice.[162] The *Lincoln* score would also appear to have found its own speech rhythms via the Shakers, with traces of their aesthetics evident in Williams's performance directions, which echo the 'simply expressive' instruction of the first appearance of 'Simple Gifts' in *Appalachian Spring*.[163] Hal Leonard's publication of *Lincoln* for solo piano — arranged, unusually, by Williams himself — instructs that 'Malice' is to be played 'with simple expression', while the string orchestra arrangement indicates 'freely and simply' and 'andante, with simple sincerity'.[164] Williams is undoubtedly aware of the Shaker resonances of such performance directions, using them not to allude to the Shakers' faith but to their tokenistic American status. Although he does not mention any such ties in reference to *Lincoln*, the connection came to surface in the more modernist score to *Nixon*. Conflating Shaker associations with Nixon's own Quaker upbringing, Williams observed that the fleeting nostalgic Americana dialects of that score reflected a 'Shaker/Quaker American roots solidity'.[165]

Such ideas of simplicity and solidity have a firm footing in the Shaker belief of 'hand-mindedness' — a beauty in function, a 'practical perfection'.[166] The notion of 'solidity' that Williams references is essential to all Shaker craftsmanship, from art to carpentry. For Shakers, a care in craft, in their 'gifts', is a form of worship in itself, and the fruits of any such labour should be, as decreed in the "Holy Laws of Zion", 'plain and simple, and of the good and substantial quality which becomes your calling and profession, unembellished by any superfluities, which add nothing to its goodness or durability.'[167] On the other hand, the concept of simplicity can easily be recognised in the lyrics of 'Simple Gifts': "'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be

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[160] Ibid., 104.
[161] Copland, quoted in Starr, 'Copland's Style', 69.
[162] Williams, '2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams'.
[163] Copland, *Appalachian Spring (Ballet for Martha)*.
[164] Williams, *Piano Solo*: *Lincoln*, 22. The arrangement for solo trumpet and orchestra indicates that the theme is to be played 'broadly' and 'freely' instead. See John Williams, *Music from Lincoln* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2012), 40.
[165] 'Interview with John Williams', *Nixon: Election Year Edition* (DVD) quoted in Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 422. The passage to which Williams was referring was undoubtably the wistful Americana used to soundtrack Nixon's recollections of his youth and the courting of his wife, 'Growing up in Whittier' (example previously provided in Figure 7.1 of Chapter One).
[166] John M. Anderson, 'Force and Form: The Shaker Intuition of Simplicity Form', *The Journal of Religion*, 30/4 (October 1950), 256–60: 246–57.
[167] Edward Deming Andrews, 'Designed For Use — The Nature Of Function In Shaker Craftsmanship', *New York History*, 31/3 (July 1950), 331–41: 336.

free' and 'When true simplicity is gained/to bow and to bend we will not be ashamed.' This tenet can also be observed within hymn composition and performance. In their general study of the sect, Anna White and Leila Taylor note that Shaker 'hymns are marked by sweetness, simplicity, and spirituality, a force of appeal which touches strongly all who listen […] the simplest are often the most effective.'[168]

Musical simplicity is not only a compositional aesthetic but a means of heightening the affective and the American quality of a tune. Again, whether or not Williams consciously modelled his scores with reference to this precept is open to question but, as his homespun and plainspoken hymns emerged from an avowed 'elusive spiritual' process, this idiolectic Americana, Williams's own musical 'vernacular of American speech rhythms', demonstrably resonates with Shaker practices.[169] After all, the sect has exerted influence on wider American society, 'helping shape and guide in no small measure the spiritual career of the United States of America', as one expert observed in 1867.[170] It would appear that, though Williams's hymns are 'without an overt sense of religiosity', they are not without a deep-rooted sense of spirituality, one fundamentally directed toward America — its presidents, and its martyrs — rather than to any God. (Image 11).

Image 11: *Lincoln*, America's most iconic martyr adopts a cruciform pose in the final shot of the film.

[168] Anna White and Leila Sarah Taylor, *Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message* (Columbus, OH: Press of Fred J. Heer, 1905), 342.
[169] Copland, *Music and Imagination*, 104.
[170] The scholar further claimed that 'no one can look into the heart of American society without seeing that these Shaker unions have a power upon men beyond that of mere numbers.' See Hepworth Dixon quoted in White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 389–90.

Conclusion: Williams's Lingua Americana

Nominally a theme for American jurisprudence, 'The Long Road to Justice' in *Amistad* is, in fact, a theme for John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States.[1] The core of Williams's Americana in the 1997 score, this theme represents the composer's patriotic writing at its most familiar, both in its style and its associations. Yet, ingenuity can be seen in the way in which Williams entwines different *topoi* in the first statement of the theme, during the five-minute cue 'Introducing John Quincy Adams'. The scene follows the first meeting between Quincy Adams (Anthony Hopkins) and the abolitionists Lewis Tappan (Stellan Skarsgård) and Theodore Joadson (Morgan Freeman) at the Capitol building. As the ex-president leaves the House of Representatives, the abolitionists approach him and immediately begin detailing their concerns (Image 12). They appeal to Quincy Adams for guidance, hoping that he will win the freedom of the imprisoned Mende people. Despite the abolitionists' pleas, Quincy Adams does not join their fight, thinking the local issue is beneath him and that the abolitionists were graceless in their methods of approach.[2]

Image 12: *Amistad*, John Quincy Adams inspects a flower in the garden before the Capitol, seemingly ignoring those who have come to meet him.

The accompanying cue makes use of a veritable catalogue of Americanist gestures and *topoi* (Table 8), with hymnal phrases, pastoral winds, trumpet calls, horn chorales, angular and open melodies, plagal harmonies, dotted martial rhythms, and simple and clear textures. This dialect is

[1] The theme is another of Williams's presidential portraits, the third in a gallery of five: preceded by Kennedy and Nixon and followed by Obama (if one is permitted to include *Air and Simple Gifts*) and Lincoln.
[2] He will join their cause later, after the call to release the Mende is overturned when the politicking President Van Buren appeals the case to the Supreme Court.

contrasted with the African-associated soundworld of the score, exclusively characterising the American search for justice. In this scene, 'The Long Road to Justice' signifies Quincy Adams's prestige and status, marks an establishing shot of the Capitol building, and accompanies Joadson's most desperate appeal in which he invokes the Founding Fathers (specifically President John Adams, Quincy Adam's father).[3]

Time	**Narrative cue**	**Musical cue**	***Topos* (orchestration)**
0:00	Abolitionists make for Washington	Introduction	Military brass (open horns).
0:15	Quincy Adams is called upon; he is pretending to sleep.	'Long Road'	Hymnal call (solo trumpet).
0:46	Quincy Adams responds to a Representative, expressing disapproval.	Short prayerful phrases	Hymn (strings, with echoing horn then flutes and clarinets).
1:37	Quincy Adams greets abolitionists outside.	'Long Road'	Hymnal call (solo trumpet accompanied by strings and answered by solo horn).
2:00	Wide shot of Capitol.	'Long Road'	Pastoral prayer and call (winds with bright strings, horn pedal, and ascending solo trumpet line).
2:14	Abolitionists inform the ex-president about the plight of the Mende.	Short prayerful phrases	Hymn (strings, with answering solo horn then solo flute).
2:34	Quincy Adams criticises President Martin Van Buren.	Transition	Military brass (horns in open fifths).
2:55	Quincy Adams asks for assistance and makes for the garden.	'Long Road'	Pastoral (solo clarinet, with horn fifths and high string pedal).
3:12	He picks a flower and says he will not help the abolitionists.	Lyrical strain	Hymn and call (planing strings, iterative chords, trailed by ascending horn call).
3:44	Joadson tries to convince Adams to help, asking him to complete the 'one vital task the founding fathers left to their sons'.	'Long Road'	Hymnal call (solo horn, with undulating soft strings and a trailing clarinet and flute line).
4:14	Quincy Adams begins to respond.	Short prayerful phrases	Hymn (strings).
4:21	Quincy Adams declines the abolitionists' request.	'Long Road'	Hymnal call (solo trumpet with string support and echoes).
4:46	Quincy Adams departs.	Short prayerful phrases	Hymn (strings with sustained trumpet).

Table 8: Overview of 'Introducing John Quincy Adams' from *Amistad*.

As Table 8 shows, the various *topoi* that have been discussed throughout this thesis in isolation from each other can and often do overlap.[4] In the case of 'The Long Road to Justice',

[3] James Buhler has described the persuasive implications of Williams's American vernacular at the film's climax, noting that the differentiation of Williams's 'expansive harmonies reminiscent of Aaron Copland', which underscore Quincy Adams's argument, from the 'dissonant chord and a descending motive', which accompanies the opposition, 'encourages audience identification' with Quincy Adams. He contends that 'the right and true gain their force in this scene through an association with the beautiful' and that the music 'makes it unnecessary to deal with [the opposition's] argument', and thus we have no choice but to accept Quincy Adams's position, and are forced to comprehend the scene from a specific perspective. See Buhler, 'Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (II): Analysing Interactions of Music and Film', in *Film Music: Critical Approaches*, ed. Kevin J. Donnelly (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 39–61: 50. Interestingly, such biases are ones Spielberg intended to avoid through static camerawork which was designed to make audiences feel like 'observers in the courtroom': objective spectators, uninfluenced by the trickery of cinematography and shot composition. See Janusz Kamiński quoted in Freer, *The Complete Spielberg*, 255.

[4] Other examples of this topical hybridity that have already been discussed include the solo trumpet renditions of the pastoral 'Massapequa… The Early Days' from *Born on the Fourth of July* (Figure 10, Chapter One) and the 'Trumpet Hymn' cue in *Lincoln* (Figure 32, Chapter Three). The

Williams appears to combine the reverence of the hymn with the stateliness of the call, intertwining them to generate a sense of significance and exalt the ex-president's introduction with a nationalistic purpose. For example, in the first statement of the theme (0:15) the *legato* opening phrases seem to suggest the hymnal via a simple and rhythmically straightforward melody line, while in the final bars the call *topos* takes over with its rising arpeggio-style figures (which echo bugle overtones), an upbeat-effected momentum, and more forward-driving semiquaver and triplet rhythms (Figure 39).

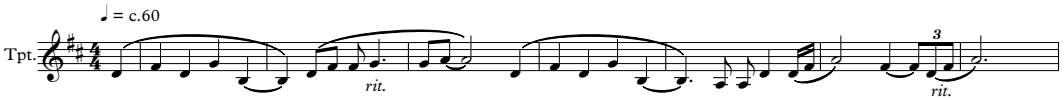

Figure 39: *Amistad*, 'Introducing John Quincy Adams', the first statement of 'The Long Road to Justice' combines hymn and call *topoi*.

Although not as distinctive as his later themes in *Lincoln*, *Amistad* does hint at Williams's maturing American vernacular. For the earlier film, Williams unites and interweaves *topoi* to provide thoroughly American roots to the non-African half of the score, a process which brings the fluidity and potentiality of his Americana into focus. Less obviously indebted to familiar (or any singular) precedents, the Americanised gestures seem to have relaxed and coalesced into something more dynamic. Such a process extends that which Bribitzer-Stull has described: quotation has relaxed into allusion and become topical, and, now, the topical has been absorbed into a broader musical lexicon.[5] The result is a veritable *lingua Americana* capable of speaking to, and signifying, the American in a comprehensible manner. Like a lingua franca uniting elements of disparate languages to facilitate communication, this *lingua Americana* has reconciled competing legacies (Sousa, Copland) and traditions (folk hymnody, cowboy song, military musicmaking) into an identifiably American vernacular that can signify the specific and suggest the universal.[6]

The dialectical issues of this musical language are the same as those of other lingua franca, which have been addressed by linguist Juliane House:

> Rules of discourse, conventions of textualization and communicative preferences often remain hidden and act stealthily at a deeper level of consciousness. This does not mean, however, that they are less powerful and persuasive. On the contrary. Once we have internalized 'universal' communicative conventions and cultural values (to which we will be exposed ever more frequently), it may be difficult, indeed, to appreciate multilingualism, multiculturalism and culture specificity.[7]

comparable horn calls of *The Cowboys* and *Superman* were previously discussed in reference to both pastoralism and mourning. In addition, the introductory theme of 'Omaha Beach' (*SPR*) is seemingly grounded in the hymnal with its long string melody line; however, the subtle, but pervasive, timpani add an appropriate undercurrent of the militaristic.

[5] Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 123–24.

[6] The various influences on a European lingua franca, a vehicular 'contact vernacular' of various nations in the eastern and western Mediterranean, is probed in detail in Henry Kahane and Renée Kahane, '*Lingua Franca*: The Story of a Term', *Romance Philology*, 30/1 (August 1976), 25–41.

[7] Juliane House, 'Universality versus culture specificity in in translation', *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*, ed. Alessandra Riccardi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 92–110: 108–09.

Considering topicalisation, overdetermined associations, and audience fluency, it is clear that this vernacular has been acculturated, and internalised by both viewer-listeners and by the medium of film, and that, over the course of Williams's uniquely long career, Americana has assimilated the specific and earned the "'universal" communicative convention[ality]' of which House speaks.[8] For example, the *topoi* in the above-mentioned scene connote both simple established associations as well as something that has evolved beyond topical roots. The trumpet hymn does not just endow Quincy Adams with a patriotic significance but suggests ideals (justice and equality) which while cloaked in Americanness have wider resonances. Yet, although Williams's *lingua Americana* may speak to (and associate with) issues that reach beyond US borders, this cultural universalism is rooted in Americanism. Arguably, however, the hybridity of the universal and the American would not be fully realised until *Lincoln*, wherein Americanness is sublimated into a vernacular in which the nationalistic is less conspicuous but all the more persuasive. Symptomatic of the American accent shaping voices of Hollywood film, Williams's *lingua Americana* also reveals much about the specific type of America it preserves.

The 'Introducing John Quincy Adams' sequence is emblematic of both the signifying-capacity of this language and Williams's related attitude of veneration. A 'social problem film' such as *Amistad*, as Lester Friedman notes, 'never indict[s] the American capitalist system as a whole but rather conceptualise[s] isolated problems as "aberrations within a fundamentally sound society".'[9] Most of Williams's projects thematically and textually concerned with America have been set in a past that is constantly idealised, with his scores often homogenising a rose-coloured perception of America. Locating the flaws of US society in the past makes the depiction of certain issues (such as the court case regarding slavery in *Amistad*) more 'palatable' to audiences, who can approach and understand these transgressions against a utopic America 'without feeling so personally implicated as they might with a contemporary setting.'[10] Those films and scores viewed in this thesis do not contradict this proposition. If America's societal anomalies are confined to the past (and thus have been overcome), then Williams's music has not, as Dana Anderson argued, become 'the theme to a new sort of American dream'; instead,

[8] Even so, the vernacular is still liable to appear in troped narrative contexts. For instance, film scholars have described the score in certain scenes of *Amistad* as 'intrusive, even overpowering' and 'descend[ing] to melodrama with painful regularity'. The contextual associations of such moments do not speak to the effectiveness of the language but rather to the nature of film music itself. Given that this Americana is a construct refined in Hollywood film music, it is most often viewed with regard to its associativity rather than to its musical complexity. Although cues like 'Introducing John Quincy Adams' (or later 'What Is Their Story?' and 'Adams' Address To The Court') often signify in troped narrative contexts, they have the potential to speak to something greater. Lester Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 175; Gary Rosen, "'Amistad" and the Abuse of History', *Commentary*, February 1998, <https://www.commentary.org/articles/gary-rosen/amistad-and-the-abuse-of-history/> [3 August 2023].

[9] Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg*, 245.

[10] Ibid., 246. *Jaws*, *E.T.* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* were each set in the present, yet do not explicitly foreground (what I might tentatively call) American themes in the same manner as the war films and historical dramas — although, *Close Encounters* does depict scenes of quasi-authoritarian government control when the army plant false reports that a toxic nerve-gas has leaked so as to evacuate the surrounding area (yet, this B-plot is subsidiary in comparison to the protagonists' search for alien life). Likewise, in *Jaws*, the subplot regarding the Mayor's commercialist greed goes unaddressed (and unresolved) in the second half of the film.

his variously styled American scores have continued to observe and reinforce that orthodox America and its history.[11]

The overwhelming historical gaze and perspective of American-set-and-themed films have allowed Williams to return again and again to his signature sentimentalism, and have connected this heightened emotionality to concepts of nation. Intertwined concepts of mythology and patriotism have been clear to see and hear in the increasingly mature Americana of *Amistad*, *SPR*, and *Lincoln*, where the score not only supports the narrative but seems to actively reflect on it; however, even when this kind of contemplation seems less pertinent, Williams retreats to an American past. A good example is the case of 'Follow Me' from *Always* — a 'boisterous slice of Americana' (in Ian Freer's words).[12] In contrast to the otherwise vaguely new-age score of impressionistic synthesised colours and long-line yearning horn melodies, this cue falls back on a familiar 'exuberant country dance' *topos*, with a simple triadic melody, thin textures, repeated open fifths, pentatonic mode, and implied pandiatonic harmonies (Figure 40).[13] In conjunction, these gestures appear to draw explicitly on multiple Copland examples: 'Buckaroo Holiday' and 'Hoe-Down' of *Rodeo*, 'Street on a Frontier Town' from *Billy the Kid*, the *subito allegro* of *Appalachian Spring*, or the finale of *An Outdoor Overture*.[14] The unmistakable Coplandesque idiom accompanies a light-hearted sequence in which a young pilot, trailed by an admirer, follows an unmanned runway taxi that ultimately crashes into a house. Here Williams underscores the comedic nature of the scene, drawing attention to the free-spirited and youthful nature of the pilot's lovestruck pursuer. As indicated in Chapter Two, such *topoi*, through reification, have become untethered from their original associations, distanced from cowboys and prairies; however, perhaps here Williams is attempting to resummon the associations that have been lost with topicalisation.[15] With its similar energy and music-affected excitement, the jovial chase through a military runway might as well stand in for a cowboy riding into a new adventure, with Williams transplanting a *topos* once firmly encoded in westerns to a new filmic frontier.

[11] Dana Anderson, 'John Williams', in *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: An Overview*, ed. Graeme Harper (New York, NY: Continuum, 2009), 463–71: 463.
[12] Freer, *The Complete Spielberg*, 188. Freer also (not inaccurately) describes *Always* as 'probably the most forgettable score John Williams has ever created for a Spielberg movie.'
[13] Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[14] Kleppinger has also identified later appropriations of the *topos* in Tiomkin's 'Marshal Kane Flees Town' from *High Noon* and Randy Newman's 'The Whammer Strikes Out' from *The Natural*. In fact, Newman seems to be particularly fond of the 'Copland sound', in the *Toy Story* series many of the cues characterising the cowboy, Woodie, seem informed by the idiom ('Andy's Birthday', 'Operation Pull Toy', 'Parting Gifts & New Horizons'). See Kleppinger, '"The Copland Sound" as Object of Appropriation'.
[15] Lerner, 'Copland's Music of Wide Open Spaces', 505.

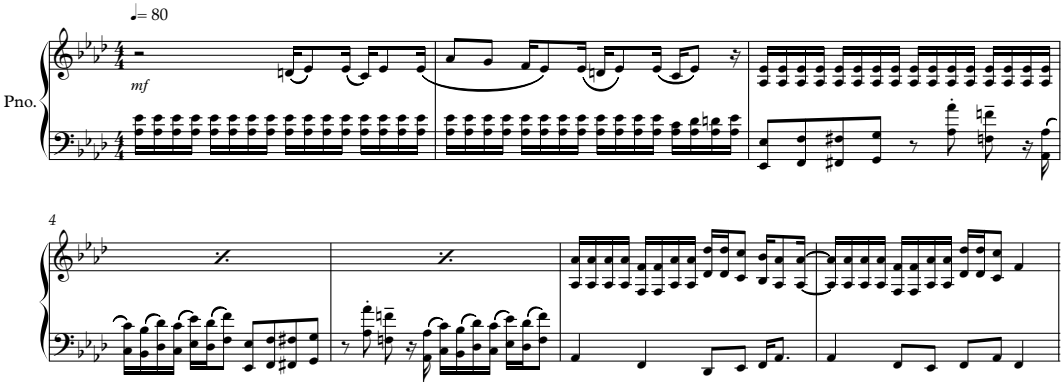

Figure 40: *Always*, 'Follow Me', piano reduction.

One might be tempted to read 'Follow Me' as evidence of a hackneyed approach or as an instance of "temp love". In light of the findings of this thesis, I read it as a clear example of Williams's processes of Americanised recall. Such nostalgia is layered into both the filmmaking (Caryl Flinn implicated this uninspired remake of 1944's *A Guy Named Joe* (Victor Fleming) in the endemic nostalgia of New Hollywood) and the narrative (seen through the perspective of a ghost, struggling to let go of his love and move on into the afterlife).[16] With these overtones in mind, one might view Williams's pastiche and the film as triply nostalgic: (1) indicative of the director's fondness for the classics, (2) an example of the composer's reflection on the musical history of America, and (3) a tacit and unconscious desire of the Hollywood system — or wider American culture — to return to an idealised past represented by cowboys (and their modern stand-ins) and sonically signified by an established nation-associated sound.[17] (The *Always* cue is but one example of such an obvious stylistic citation: 'Isabel's Horse and Buggy' from *Stepmom*, 'Popular Entertainment' from *American Journey*, or the Rodeo-styled theme for NBC's *The Mission* would furnish comparable illustrations.[18])

Conjuring a sense of pastness, homages of this kind act as playful references to a familiar style; however, their mode of referentiality is out of the ordinary for Williams, whose stylistic citations are often somewhat understated. As I have previously alluded to in the context of *Lincoln* or *SPR*, Williams's less explicit Americana can be deceptive, in that it masks ideology. While fulfilling the expected function of narrative accompaniment, his *topoi* act as musical devices of differentiation (most clearly in *Amistad*); if scholarship has addressed this categorisation of the Other, there has been a failure to notice — or a silent acceptance of — *topoi* marking the self,

[16] Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 151.
[17] Additionally, it might be worth noting that Williams had been given little opportunity to write in this Copland style during the 1980s — the traditional western was extinct and his 'Americana period' long since passed; this 1989 remake might also have provided the composer with some sense of nostalgia for that earlier time in his career.
[18] Williams updated *The Mission* in 2004, adding a new Copland-inspired theme that has occasionally served as a bumper; see Victor Vlam, '"Today" Bumper', *NetworkNewMusic.com*, 10 November 2004, <https://www.networknewsmusic.com/today-2004-bumper/> [15 August 2023] and Thor Joachim Haga, 'Celluloid Tunes # 81: The Complete John Williams Television Music Walkthrough, Part 6 (30th International Edition)', *Celluloid Tunes*, 3 May 2023, <https://celluloidtunes.no/celluloid-tunes-81-the-complete-john-williams-television-music-walkthrough-part-6-30th-international-edition/> [23 August 2023].

particularly the American — but taken to be universal — self.[19] The scores featured in this study have illuminated both this differentiation and this musical perspective on the self; they have indicated how Williams's music, in its reliance upon affects and associations, has helped, to borrow Ralph Locke's phrase, 'occlude […] the functioning of empire'.[20] America has been able to define itself in Hollywood music with little or any contestation or critique. Its attributes have been simplified and codified by associated *topoi*, which have helped to conceal self-defining mechanisms. With precision in cueing and astute referentiality, Williams's *lingua Americana* can thus be regarded as, in Buhler's words, an 'exquisite weapon of power', organising and transforming affect and signification along ideological lines.[21]

These influential sonic simulacra of an imagined America operate in tandem with flattering, uncritical visual representations of a lived America. Examining these collusions between the audio and visual unmasks a pervasive colonialist ideology, one suggestive of a propagandistic sensibility within the constituent components of film and film music (most evident in *Midway*, *The Patriot*, and *The Post*). Such understanding of the capabilities of music to promote a universalising and all-encompassing national ideology helps expose Hollywood's national-self-mythologising impulse, or, as Buhler notes by way of Taruskin and James Parakilas, the "'double bind" of "autoexoticism"'.[22] Williams's recurring practices reveal a 'colonial will-to-represent' the self, a defining of America through musical codes for victory, optimism, and nobility that, as the case studies indicate, have abounded and re-sounded in a *mise en abyme*.[23] His Americana has maintained, crystallised, or even self-policed the power dynamics between America and its others, with some *topoi*, as mentioned in Chapter One, effectively replacing memories of the past with affects and ideals linked to patriotism and tradition.[24]

As the mythopoetic hymnal vernacular of *Lincoln* demonstrates, certain *topoi* are more potent when they are self-effacing when they can operate in ways impossible for the troped marches, pastorals, or 'exuberant country dances'.[25] Not just limited to persuasive *topoi* in American-set films, this functionality has also been shown as echoing in Williams's scores for fantastical films; as Lerner has argued, with regard to *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Spielberg, 1977) specifically, Williams's 'sweepingly nostalgic music reassures, persuades,

[19] Buhler has observed this, noting that 'The excessively marked content that constitutes the stereotype generally serves to obscure the power dynamic inhering in the dramatic structure that requires the representation and its efficient communication.' See Buhler, *Theories of the Soundtrack*, 196.
[20] Ralph Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34.
[21] Buhler, 'Ontological, Formal, and Critical Theories of Film Music and Sound', 213.
[22] Ibid., 211.
[23] Ibid. Such practices have likely been ingrained in codified *topoi* since silent cinema and classical Hollywood.
[24] Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, 57.
[25] *Topoi* like the march and 'exuberant country dance' arguably violate Claudia Gorbman's principle of 'invisibility' desirable for film music. See Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 73–76.

and above all else lulls us into being uncritical.'[26] Taking the similar side effects of Williams's patriotic-*cum*-sentimental scores into consideration, it is clear that the ideological roots, associations, and deployment of his Americana have historically suggested a nationalistic attitude, a sensibility that might only be heightened by the supposed verisimilitude of these films on US history. As in the cases of *Born*, *SPR*, *The Cowboys*, *Lincoln*, *The Post*, or *Amistad* an 'assimilating identification' of America is reiterated by certain traditionalist attitudes and conservative imagery, themselves concealed by Williams's suturing *lingua Americana* and its 'assimilated unmarkedness' (to recall Ronald Rodman's term previously applied to the brass *topoi* discussed in Chapter One).[27] Such processes of assimilation — and eventual universalisation — have been, in Kassabian's view, a 'necessary ongoing function for the constitution of the United States as a nation'; these ceaseless operations create a nationalistic gaze, which, in the case of marches and calls, always brand America as the ultimate and objective protagonist.[28] These issues, pertaining to Williams's American writing specifically, have already been observed by Lehman, who identified that Williams's music is bound up with a postmodern 'authorship of historical meaning', a will and capacity to manipulate depictions of the self.[29] Although Lehman was discussing *JFK* and *Nixon* — films that are more actively concerned with offering reinterpretations and new perspectives of recent US history — a similar attitude has pervaded Williams's other American scores.

When *topoi* operate alongside (or seemingly from within) a film narrative that is presented from an attempted impartial perspective — think of Spielberg's 'subdued visual style' in *Amistad*, the 'model of restraint' evident in *Lincoln*, or the 'subtle' approach and lack of 'flashiness' in *The Post* — our own ability to recognise the influential power of music might be diminished.[30] Spielberg's relative (stylistic and thematic) traditionalism, main-stream popularity, and his quiet politics might have given Williams's *topoi* the potential to be all the more persuasive. His films rarely proselytise (as do those of Oliver Stone), nor are they politically motivated acts in and of themselves (such as John Singleton's *Rosewood*).[31] In Spielberg's social problem films, historical dramas, and war epics, music operates at a subliminal level — 'linger[ing] in quiet support' and

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[26] Neil Lerner, 'Nostalgia, Masculinist Discourse and Authoritarianism in John Williams' Scores for *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*', in *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Philip Hayward (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 96–108: 106.
[27] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 141; Rodman, '"Coperettas", "Detecterns", and Space Operas', 53.
[28] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 116.
[29] Lehman, 'Scoring the President', 439–40
[30] Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg*, 279–80; Janusz Kamiński quoted in Desowitz, 'Immersed in Movies'; Adam Chitwood, 'Janusz Kaminski on 'The Post', Steven Spielberg, and Why the Art of Cinematography Is Disappearing', *Collider*, 12 January 2018, <https://collider.com/janusz-kaminski-interview-the-post-steven-spielberg/> [27 June 2023].
[31] The exception is, of course, *The Post*, a story about American journalism and a meddling president released at the end of the first year of Donald Trump's presidency. Spielberg described that 'the level of urgency to make the movie was because of the current climate of this administration, bombarding the press and labelling the truth as fake if it suited them'. See Jonathan Freeland, 'Steven Spielberg: 'The urgency to make The Post was because of Trump's administration', *The Guardian*, 19 January 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/jan/19/steven-spielberg-the-urgency-to-make-the-post-was-because-of-this-administration#:~:text=The%20director%20first%20read%20the,their%20first%20film%20together)%20in> [11 August 2023].

thus little remarked upon unless it draws attention to itself (as in *The Post*). Never radical in their depiction of US history, these films and scores mostly conform and thus reinforce the national self-image. That their operations go unnoticed further contributes to the hardwiring of the associations of the vernacular, to the assimilating of specific cultural values, and to the essentialising of a specific cultural norm.

In line with scholarship on Williams's music by Buhler, Lehman, and Lerner, I have recognised this manipulative capacity of his scores for films with explicitly American themes. This invites the question of whether it might not be productive to explore how such a nationalistic attitude could apply to his scores for non-American-set films. Might a recognition of this unstated *lingua Americana* uncover meta-textual layers that unconsciously shape reception and interpretation?[32] Freed of explicit American links and associatively diluted over time, might the default language of Hollywood impute something of this Americana where no explicit American associations are apparent? For example, a study of the *Star Wars* scores through such a lens might provide new means of assessing a fantasy that purports to be a universal monomyth. If one reads a Copland influence in the title theme — rather than the oft-cited *Kings Row* (Sam Wood, 1942) by Korngold or temp-tracked *Ivanhoe* (Richard Thorpe, 1952) by Rózsa — the resonances of the *Fanfare for the Common Man* or the jazz-related complexities of the syncopated inner lines could serve to enliven potential Americanist narrative underpinnings.[33] Similarly, what might a further exploration of the Sousa-esque origins of 'Raiders March' reveal of Indiana Jones's American identity? And, for *Harry Potter*, might such an analytical approach to the quartal writing in the victorious Quidditch fanfare, the hymnal and anthemic material for Hogwarts, or the open and disjunct family theme trace the boy wizard's ancestry not to England but America?[34] If, as Buhler notes of Williams's mythmaking *Star Wars* leitmotifs, 'the music seems to intuit connections that are beyond immediate rational comprehension', it might be prudent to assess such nationalistic connections in these penetrating unheard melodies.[35]

For these 'nostalgia films' (a title Fredric Jameson dubbed upon *Star Wars* and *American Graffiti* but that is similarly applicable to *Indiana Jones* or *Superman*) the spectator abandons their sense of the now, of the impoverished present, capitulating to serialised spectacle and reanimated filmic pasts.[36] However, in the genres on which I have focussed the scores do not urge us to

[32] Although the totalitarian power of Hollywood can surely always be felt, to a degree.
[33] *Star Wars* editor Paul Hirsch debunked the commonly held belief that Korngold was temp-tracked for the title theme, instead pointing to *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, while sound designer Ben Burtt recalls the use of *Ivanhoe* instead. See Paul Hirsch and Ron Sadoff, 'Picture Editing and Music: A Marriage of Invisible Arts', *Music and the Moving Image*, 16/1 (2023), 3–21: 14.
[34] Mike Matessino, liner notes for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone: Expanded Archival Collection* (La-La Land Records, 2018), 26–28.
[35] James Buhler, '*Star Wars*, Music, and Myth', in *Music and Cinema*, ed. James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 33–57: 44.
[36] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 19.

regress to a state of childlike wonder; instead, their American *topoi* brand these films — in effect — as ethics lessons, recalling national values and patriotic practices in an attempt to edify us and to encourage mass participation.[37] We do not capitulate to these re-presented and mythicised pasts in order to relive them but to learn from them. This aesthetic recalls the 'utopian function' of film music outlined by Caryl Flinn, one that helps extend 'an impression of perfection and integrity in an otherwise imperfect and unintegrated world.'[38] Shortly after defining this operation of the score, Flinn qualifies it, noting that the longing for an idealised past 'never fully "escapes" ideology but can only be expressed through it.'[39] While Flinn was writing more directly about ideologies pertaining to the romantic traditions of European art music and classical Hollywood (as well as to those films and scores that recall both), I have found an American ideology to be similarly inescapable when investigating my own case studies. Whether a score appears to be searching for an idealised past in Golden Age Hollywood film or in the mythicised chapters of US history, the fleeting strains of utopia only ever 'offer the promise of plenitude and unity'.[40] (That most of the Williams scores assessed are for post-Vietnam films set in pre-Vietnam times heightens the division between the nationalistic mindset of the present moment and the mid-twentieth-century (or earlier) optimism of the narrative drama.[41]) Williams's music can soften, but not erode, the hard edges of America that conflict with the on-screen idylls and icons. These scores help dissolve what tensions there are between the eidolon within the frame and the reality outside of it, with fanfares, marches, calls, pastorals, and hymns offering 'the sense of something better', the ultimate utopian promise; cinema, after all, reproduces illusion not reality.[42]

There resides a fundamental issue at the heart of these cinematic American utopias: a homogeneity. Almost all of the films addressed return to significant episodes, figures, and moments in US history, each representing a nation that is mostly uncomplicated and comfortable, and thus 'palatable'.[43] With the exception of *Rosewood* (and, to a lesser degree, *Amistad*), Williams has continually scored narratives that reflect an America that has, in Richard Dyer's words, 'long sat uneasily with the idea of being any other colour than white' — or, indeed, anything other than cis male and heterosexual.[44] In acknowledging this trend, my intent is not to accuse Williams of perpetuating a standardised idea of American identity and culture through his

[37] Indeed, Spielberg even reflected on this notion following the financial failure of *Amistad*, saying that, 'I kind of dried it out and it became too much of a history lesson.' See Spielberg, quoted in Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg*, 270.
[38] Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 9
[39] Ibid., 11.
[40] Ibid., 153. These promises of return can be read increasingly cynically or earnestly depending of the effectiveness of the film and the time in which the film is received. For example, recall the reception of *The Post* during the Donald Trump presidency and *Lincoln* during that of Barack Obama, and the extent to which Williams's scores might have been implicated.
[41] Save for *The Post* and the Oliver Stone collaborations the settings of the assessed films are entirely pre-Vietnam.
[42] Flinn, *Strains of Utopia*, 9.
[43] Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg*, 246.
[44] Richard Dyer, *White: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 149.

music — as noted at the outset of this thesis many of the 'meanings' which surface in my case studies are those which Bordwell would define as 'symptomatic', influenced by 'social dynamic[s]' and, thus, likely unconscious on the part of the composer.[45] Abundant ammunition exists with which to indict him: hymn styles linked to a Euro-American concept of "purity"; a supposed universalism in 'Hymn to the Fallen' (according to Spielberg); exoticising tendencies in *The Plainsman*, *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*, and *Amistad*; the racialised history of cowboy and folk songs; the class-based and racial associations of the inherited Sousa idiom; and his second feature film score, *I Passed for White*, among others.[46] However, there is little to be gained by this exercise, which furthermore runs the risk of becoming a film musicological equivalent to a witch hunt. Similarly, such a diatribe against the white composer would also be a disservice to — by failing to give them due recognition — Williams's projects with Black artists, music, and culture: the Obama inauguration, his collaboration with Rita Dove on *Seven for Luck* (1998), or his early career with gospel singer Mahalia Jackson.[47] Yet, by virtue of his prominent position in Hollywood, the decisions of his collaborators, the history of the film industry, and the period in which he was most active, Williams has been implicated in this systemic issue, and his *lingua Americana* can thus be accused of being biased toward a specific type of American and Americanness. It is evident that dominant power structures have impressed on Williams's music, and its polysemic nature cannot but reproduce those hierarchies and ideologies that surround it.[48] Consequently, just as Hollywood has universalised images and ideals of a utopic synecdoche of the United States, Williams's music has overdetermined this manufactured and ubiquitous image.[49]

Throughout the numerous case studies overviewed in this thesis, it is evident that Williams's American writing is in perpetual dialogue with spectres of the American past, not solely by citing them but also by constructing a broader canvas of interrelated nationally associated *topoi* through

[45] Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, 9. Given his frequent collaborations with Spielberg, Williams's music in consequence mostly represents the specific America that Spielberg recreates ('warts and all'). Spielberg has received criticism for, as Lester Friedman described, his 'incapab[ility] of creating complex female characters' (at least until *The Post*), and similarly for the white-centredness of his narratives; see Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg*, 8. (The two exceptions are *Amistad*, which appropriately gives the Mende their own (if slightly exoticising) musical identity, and *The Colour Purple* (sans Williams).) Williams scores then may become ensnared by representing only that which Spielberg depicts. Similar issues have surfaced with regard to the male gaze of his music, explored in more depth in Laura Berghout McTavish, *John Williams's Musical Treatment of Cinematic Heroines: Romance and Heroism in Star Wars, the Skywalker Saga* (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University Idaho, 2023) and by myself in 'Swashbucklers and Femme Fatales: Gender Coding in John Williams's Score to *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008), *Cuadernos de Investigación Musical*, 15 (2022), 91–104.

[46] For more on this issue in Sousa's music see Michael Pisani, 'John Philip Sousa's 'Red Indians': A Case Study of Race in Music', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 3/1 (2011), 73–88. John O'Flynn has addressed the musical exoticisation of *Amistad* from a critical consciousness approach in his paper 'America sounding its Others in *Amistad* (1997)'. For more on the history of folk and cowboys songs and their status in westerns, see Kathryn Kalinak, 'How the West Was Sung', in *Westerns: Films Through History*, ed. Janet Walker (New York: Routledge, 2001), 151–76.

[47] Lehman has partially reflected on this issue of cultural sensitivity in his paper 'Race, Class, and the Responsibilities of Representation in *Rosewood* (1997)'.

[48] Buhler, 'Ontological, Formal, and Critical Theories of Film Music and Sound', 215.

[49] Maxime Cervulle 'Looking into the light: Whiteness, racism and regimes of representation', in Dyer, *White*, xiii–xviii.

them. As one would expect of the composer and the aesthetics of his scores for popular films, his music re-treads established national-musical territory, reviving *topoi* and gestures not through a noticeably modernist lens but by resummoning the familiar in his own idiosyncratic manner: a poignant timbre or form in an evocative context, distinctive voice-leading and harmonic procedures, the suggestion of a text through rhythm and phrase structure, or an intermingling of various *topoi*. It is clear from examples like *SPR* and *Lincoln* that his Americana has the capacity to sound at once familiar and unknowable, as if the composer has uncovered something long forgotten from some old tunebook or folk source. These most innovative and original of his American scores possess a homespun quality. Themes like 'Hymn to the Fallen' and 'With Malice Toward None' are unadorned and plainspoken and seem, in no small part, drawn from a sense of national spiritualism. This notion of spirit, vague as it is, is not just present at the kernel of Williams's Americana but in his very process of recalling familiar voices and styles. As Sergio Micelli has written, Williams's 'playful' quotations 'are not taken literally but in their spirit'.[50] It is these allusions, the judicious assimilation of his forebears' styles and spirits, that have helped him find his own American voice and write 'the soundtrack to our national identity and our national spirit' (to quote Col Jason Fettig) while also channelling the culturally loaded pasts from which his predecessors came.[51] Through this process, the composer positions himself as the successor to Sousa, Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and other American voices, not by usurping them but by subsuming their sounds into his own *lingua Americana*. In this light, it is apt to recall the concluding declaration of John Quincy Adams in *Amistad*. Accompanied by a suitably anthemic statement of 'The Long Road to Justice' in mellow woodwinds, the ex-president encourages the court to learn from the Founding Fathers, averring that, 'who we are is who we were.'

Williams has not forgotten or moved beyond those styles that have historically signalled America. In continually looking to his forbears, he also updates and revives their begotten traditions, often perpetuating and universalising standardised ideals and images of his homeland in the process. Although certain filmic narratives might depict a nation in doubt, in peril, or in its infancy, Williams's *lingua Americana* helps to alleviate anxieties, promising that America will remain, that justice will prevail, truth will be upheld, freedom will be maintained. With marches, pastorals, and hymns he musicalises American virtuousness, reliably scoring this idealised country and its mythicised past. Although the body of work I have analysed is distinct in terms

[50] Sergio Miceli, *Musica per film: Storia, Estetica, Analisi, Tipologie* (Lucca: LIM, 2009), 616–18, translated and quoted in Audissino, *The Film Music of John Williams*, 139. In a similar vein, this school of thought might also reflect Williams as a 'paraphraser', as outlined by Orosz, 'Paraphraser or Plagiarist?'.

[51] Col Jason K Fettig quoted in Rachel Ghadiali, 'Marine Band at 225: Masterpieces and Musicmaking with John Williams', *Marines* (The Official Website of the United States Marine Corps), 4 August 2023, <https://www.marineband.marines.mil/News/Article/3483036/marine-band-at-225-masterpieces-and-musicmaking-with-john-williams/> [5 August 2023].

of its references and subject matter, it remains united with Williams's wider filmography by virtue of his pervasive and idiosyncratic sentimental sensibility; yet, as I have shown, in his patriotic scores that same depth of emotion and breadth of reminiscence can act as a propagandistic tool of the American culture machine, of Hollywood. Given this recurring hallmark of his variously styled voices, it seems characteristic of the composer to be conservative in furnishing perspectives of an American imaginary. Just as he has been required as a film composer to support an emotional narrative, he has revealed himself to be equally obligated as an American composer to support a national narrative. With these twin duty-driven imperatives, and across his entire career, Williams has proven himself as both an American composer and a composer of America.

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——— *Man of Steel* (Warner Bros., 2013)
Sorkin, Aaron, *The Newsroom* (HBO, 2012–14)
——— *The West Wing* (NBC, 1999–2006)
Spielberg, Steven, *1941* (Universal Pictures, 1979)
——— *A Timeless Call* (2008)
——— *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (Warner Bros., 2001)
——— *Always* (Universal Pictures, 1989)
——— *Amistad* (DreamWorks SKG, 1997)
——— *Catch Me If You Can* (DreamWorks SKG, 2005)
——— *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Columbia Pictures, 1977)
——— *Empire of the Sun* (Warner Bros., 1987)
——— *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (Universal Pictures, 1982)
——— *Hook* (TriStar Pictures, 1991)
——— *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (Paramount Pictures, 2008)
——— *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Paramount Pictures, 1989)
——— *Jaws* (Universal Pictures, 1975)
——— *Jurassic Park* (Universal Pictures, 1993)
——— *Lincoln* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2012)
——— *Munich* (Universal Pictures, 2005)
——— *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Paramount Pictures, 1981)
——— *Saving Private Ryan* (DreamWorks SKG/Paramount Pictures, 1998)
——— *Schindler's List* (Universal Pictures, 1993)
——— *The Adventures of Tintin* (Paramount Pictures, 2011)
——— *The Colour Purple* (Warner Bros., 1985)
——— *The BFG* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2016)
——— *The Fabelmans* (Universal Pictures, 2022)
——— *The Post* (20th Century, 2017)
——— *The Sugarland Express* (Universal Pictures, 1974)

——— *The Terminal* (DreamWorks SKG, 2004)
——— *The Unfinished Journey* (1999)
——— *War Horse* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2011)
——— *War of the Worlds* (Paramount Pictures, 2005)
——— *West Side Story* (20th Century Studios, 2021)
Stone, Oliver, *Born on the Fourth of July* (Universal Pictures, 1989)
——— *JFK* (Warner Bros., 1991)
——— *Nixon* (Buena Vista Pictures, 1995)
Sturges, John, *The Great Escape* (United Artists, 1963)
——— *The Magnificent Seven* (United Artists, 1960)
Swanton, Harold, 'Second Chances' (S01E18), *Alcoa Premiere* (ABC, 1962)
Taylor, Don, *Tom Sawyer* (United Artists, 1973)
Thompson, J. Lee, *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home* (20th Century Fox, 1965)
——— *The Guns of Navarone* (Columbia Pictures, 1961)
Thorpe, Richard, *Ivanhoe* (Loew's Inc., 1952)
Vidor, King, *Duel in the Sun* (Selznick Releasing Organization, 1946)
Wise, Robert, Jerome Robbins, *West Side Story* (United Artists, 1961)
Wood, Sam, *Kings Row* (Warner Bros., 1942)
——— *Our Town* (United Artists, 1940)
Wyler, William, *How to Steal a Million* (20th Century Fox, 1966)
——— *The Best Years of Our Lives* (RKO Radio Pictures, 1946)
——— *The Big Country* (United Artists, 1958)
——— *The Heiress* (Paramount Pictures, 1949)
Zinneman, Fred, *High Noon* (United Artists, 1952)
Zucker, David, Abrahams, Jim, Zucker, Jerry, *Airplane!* (Paramount Pictures, 1980)
Zwick, Edward, *Courage Under Fire* (20th Century Fox, 1996)

Appendix A: *Born on the Fourth of July* trumpet call table

Narrative chapter	Trumpet theme	Narrative cue (timestamp)	Narrative association
Youth (1956–61)	'Elegy'	Credits (00:15)	
	'Homecoming'	Kovic runs home to watch Kennedy's inauguration (7:50)	Innocence, youth, utopia
	'Elegy'	Marines recruit at Kovic's high school (15:05)	Duty, service
Marine (1968–69)	'Elegy'	Kovic realises he has killed Wilson (34:50)	Pain, trauma
	'Elegy'	Kovic patrols Vietnamese countryside (37:35)	Duty, service,
	'Elegy'	Wounded Kovic is transported to hospital (42:20)	Pain, trauma
Recovery			
Veteran (1969)	'Homecoming'	Return to childhood home (58:55)	Family, utopia, restoration
	'Elegy'	Kovic experiences post-traumatic stress during the July Fourth parade (1:09:45)	Pain, trauma
Dejection			
Activism (1972–76)	'Homecoming'	Travel montage from Mexico to Texas (1:56:50)	Purpose, possibility
	'Elegy'	Kovic mourns a Wilson's grave (1:57:30)	Trauma, duty
	'Homecoming'	Credits (2:21:25)	
	'Elegy'	Credits (2:23:10)	

Appendix B: Air Force Band Interview Transcription

'Interview with John Williams', The United States Air Force Band, 7 June 2016, an interview between John Williams and Col Larry Lang, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFXCfXkJSmA> [13 July 2021]

[0:41] Col Larry Lang:

> You know, in the Air Force, we're kinda proud to claim you as our own because you served as an Airman back in 1952. We don't know a lot about that. Could you share some of your experiences in the Air Force? Tell us about that.

[1:02] Williams:

> I was submitted in 1951. Was that right? Or maybe it was 1952, there? And the first… I wanted to get into the music programme, of course, and I was a serious piano student, and doing pretty well, but I also played brass instruments: trombone and some very early trumpet. And, I don't remember the exact mechanics of it but basic training was at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas.

[1:29] Lang:

> It still is!

[1:30] Williams:

> Is it still? And I must have requested in some form, or whatever, to go in the band programme and I was very luckily and happily [sent] to Davis Monthan in Tucson, Arizona, which was then a huge [base]. I'm sure it still is. We had a wonderful band there and there was a lot of my mates from LA, who had been students at USC (in my case), City College and UCLA, and they were all quite young. They were probably in their late teens or twenties or anyway. But we had, actually, fabulous players because the universal draft was still in place — World War II and the necessitates and dramas of the Korean invasion in the fifties changed the complexion, I think, of the inductees, at that time. And it was wonderful because the Air Force was very generous with us, [and] said, 'If you want to take courses at the University of Arizona, you could', which we did. And I had a wonderful year there and enjoyed it very much. And then, received orders to go to St. John's, Newfoundland for a period where I spent two years there.

[2:36] Lang:

> Was there a band there?

[2:38] Williams:

> There was a band there — and also a very good band with fabulous players: a fantastic orchestra — well — French horns, trumpets, there were two virtuoso flutists (really), violas…

[2:49] Lang:

> Now, did you arrange as well? You went in as a pianist, or did you go in as a pianist and then…

[2:55] Williams:

> I went in as a pianist and a brass doubler. I don't know if you still do these things. And, because I could arrange for band — I'd done some arranging as a youngster, actually all through my teen years of studying instrumentation and orchestration and growing up in a musical milieu. And, discovered that I

could be useful in writing arrangements for our dance band. Although published arrangements were available, but I could perhaps advance the harmonisations, add some tricks, or have some fun with the personnel I was living with. I remember a situation where we had a wind quintet, and the available music was not great. So, 'oh, I'll write a wind quintet.' And so I did that. And when I was in St. John's, Newfoundland, we were a very active group. We had a chorus. I was a pianist for the chorus. We had a good conductor. And I wrote many arrangements for the men's chorus.

[3:56] Lang:

Where do you think all that music is?

[3:59] Williams:

I've no idea! If there was a library, it would have been in the band library. I wouldn't have been conscious enough to have saved any of it. And we also did a short film score for the province of Newfoundland because I had written some arrangements for the concert band, when we used to give summer concerts. I guess it became known, somehow, in the city of St. John's that I could write music. And so, there was a film company there, Atlantic Films, and they wanted a special film score for a little travelogue — a film really about the province of Newfoundland. And asked if I would do it. And I went to my, to our, commander. And he [did] whatever he had to do. (We couldn't be paid for it.) He gave us — graciously gave us — permission, to do this. So our director said, 'Go ahead and write the score.' So I did that. We got in the band room, and I rehearsed them, and we went to Atlantic Films to record the score with the Air Force band. So, we did radio, we did endless dance sessions, officer's club shows […] And the band in Newfoundland was […] at that time in the Northeast Air Command, it served the entire — I'm not sure that command is still in the form now that it was in then but it was the province of Newfoundland, Labrador, Iceland, and Greenland. And the band serviced those areas and there were probably six or eight bases at that time.

[5:36] Lang:

How many members where in your band?

[5:39] Williams:

Oh, fifty or more. It was quite a good-sized band. We had a concert band and played, you know, concert repertoire, overtures, and the rest in our concerts, and some of my arrangements and a lot of Richard Russell Bennett.

[5:55] Lang:

Right! Now, do you think you Air Force experience prepared you, in any way, for your Hollywood life?

[6:01] Williams:

Oh, I don't think there's any question about that. No, none at all. No question. Living in — as were then — I was living always on the base — I didn't have (I wasn't married) and didn't have any other available housing, and I was quite happy about it. Living with these young players, some of which I had known from Los Angeles, and certainly the best way, I think, to learn instrumentation is to live with and play with and study other people as they study their instruments. And so, in terms of instrumentation and arranging, as far as band was concerned, I had a tremendous education in the Air Force, in those years that I served there. And, I think, in my mind, [I] reference it still.

[6:48] Lang:

Really?

[6:49] Williams:

Oh yeah. It was like being put into… The youngsters all of us were very excited about music, and we were very keen to get back to conservatories — as most of them had come [from conservatories] — which I did the minute I could. When I was discharged, I went back to studying and pretty shortly after began working commercially. But it was a wonderful experience musically.

[7:11] Lang:

Now our conductor emeritus, who I talked about earlier, Colonel Arnold Gabriel, led our band for so many years and helped establish an international reputation for the band. But he was a combat infantryman before World War II, and actually served in the beaches of Normandy; and he along with many of us programme your 'Hymn to the Fallen' as we're doing concerts that pay tribute to those who serve and especially those who've given the ultimate sacrifice. Do you think your military service inspired or informed that soundtrack to *Saving Private Ryan* or even something like *Schindler's List?*

[7:54] Williams:

I don't think there's any question if it was part of my musical formation and my formation as a musician, probably as a person also. But I have to also say, Larry, that — because at my age — WW2 was an enormous influence on, certainly me as a child, and I think our generation. I was ten through thirteen [during] the years of the war. And I remember the eighteen year olds all being drafted out of our neighbourhood. And watched the progress of the armies and the navies all through the war; it was the most dramatic event in my young life. And, of course I remember the music. And of course I remember the country spirit at the time. And how, in my young mind, the effort really defined who we were, at that point, completely. Twenty-four hours a day it was our mission to complete this — [to] get through this difficulty. And so, I'm certainly not a military composer in any kind of sense but since you mentioned 'Hymn for the Fallen', the impact of the film *Saving Private Ryan* on me, was not simply the impact of the film, it was the impact of my childhood of what I remember of the adult suffering, of the loss of these kids, and the horrors that war created. I was old enough to appreciate what was happening to a pretty great extent. And so looking at *Saving Private Ryan*, first of all I think it's one of Steven's great, great films and one of the most fabulous editing jobs he had done on films in maybe decades, I think: one of the most vivid. I mean I wasn't on the battlefield, but it was certainly one of the most vivid and realistic depictions of what it must have been like. And so the accumulation of all of this in my experience, and *my experience in Air Force bands*, is something that it is a part of me, that for better or worse, that is part of what defines how I think, and how I feel about our music, and about our country, and about where I've been.

Appendix C: *Lincoln* Interview Transcription

'2013 Best Score Oscar Nominee John Williams', KUSC, 7 February 2013, <https://www.kusc.org/series/kusc-interviews/page/8/> [24 July 2022]

[6:20] Jim Svejda:

Given the nature of the picture [*Lincoln*] itself, I think it's one of your most quiet scores. Not that there aren't very big moments but it's a very, very quiet, chamber-like piece, for much of the score.

[6:34] Williams:

Its function of course is, Jim, to provide accompaniment in many cases to very dense dialogue. And the dynamics of all of the sound and the accompanying music, and so on, will be shaped by those requirements, of course. I want to say that, when we're listening to the music, we're listening to members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra play. Even some of these very delicate, quiet passages that require so much control and they're delivered by the players in Chicago with tremendous artistry, in every case. And, it may be interesting to your listeners to know, and they may wonder why the Chicago Symphony is performing on this film soundtrack. The reason really is that for ten or twelve years now, or so, I've been conducting fairly regularly in Chicago and know the orchestra well and like them very much. And every time I came back from Chicago, I would say to Steven Spielberg 'That is a fabulous orchestra!' — of course, everybody knows this — but I would enthuse at the end of each appearance that I've had to him. And so, when the question of where we should record the music for *Lincoln* arose, Steven said 'Why don't we just do it in Chicago? It's the land of Lincoln, Illinois, the centre of the country, the great orchestra, and so why not do it there?' And I think the thing that clinched the deal, in his mind, was that — we were told that — Illinois was the first state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. And therefore, it might be, certainly, an honour that the citizens of Illinois might want to accept. And so we rang up the orchestra and they readily agreed to do it. And, even though the score is, in many ways, intimate and quiet and accompanimental in its character, still the great artistry of the orchestra and the players within it, I think, is apparent. We recorded in symphony hall in Chicago. It's a beautiful acoustic there, their hall, which permeates the face of the sound.

[9:15] Svejda

[Plays extract of] The 'Battle Cry of Freedom'. And for someone who hasn't seen it yet, it's not quite the way it appears in the film, and I thought that was one of the most electrifying moments. When — and, again, I don't want to spoil the surprise but — here are a bunch of politicians, for reasons of their own, mostly Republican politicians, singing the 'Battle Cry of Freedom'. And it's not the most elegantly sung, but it doesn't have to be. And, it suddenly morphs into the Chicago Symphony Chorus. And, every single — just talking about [it] every single hair on both forearms snaps to attention. It's a great, great moment.

[9:55] Williams:

It's a wonderful moment really. And (yes), challenging, actually, to deal with these raw recorded tracks of the congressman, which were not examples of Robert Shaw's idea of intonation and ensemble. But exactly right for what it needed to be. And to morph from the all-male congress, as it then was, to an all-male, increasingly professional sound, and adding the women and the orchestra — just as we went on the street scene — gradually and smoothly, I hope we accomplished it. I think it's there. Actually the end of it is very rousing, sonically. The brass in Chicago is particularly fabulous. And the chorus was very fine. The one regret I have about that sequence, Jim, is that it was too short. I wanted them to go on and play and sing more. They sounded so magnificently good in the hall.

[10:45] Svejda:

Excellent. Excellent. Well along with being wonderfully intimate and almost chamber-like, I can't really think, with the possible exception of *Saving Private Ryan*, of a more intensely American score that you've ever written. Again — and this is the tough thing to do I would think — it's a period piece, it's the nineteenth century, and to not make it seem like a quaint period piece… I mean, the harmonies, there were many of those big open fifths being written in the late nineteenth century. But so much of the melodic content of the score, not only has the quality of folk music — you listen to it for the first time,

[and] you have the uncanny sense you know this music. You've never heard it before, but it is so folklike.

[11:30] Williams:

The particular melodious quality in American music is something that we would, I suppose, need a very fine musicologist to take us through the history of. What is the real *groundstone* of American melody? (Is it?) The stone is in New England certainly. And it's certainly in the Appalachia. When I was in Boston, Jim, conducting — I still conduct there for over thirty years but in my fourteen years as music director in Boston — we played as much American music as we could. And I began with an interest in early symphonic American music, meaning people like Burlingame Hill and George Chadwick — whose short pieces we played fairly frequently — and Arthur Foots — some beautiful things — and others. And this is the generation of American composers who, somehow, found their melodic inspiration in this American bedrock source of melody. Coming, I suppose, from liturgical sources and hymnbooks, and the rest of it. A generation that preceded Roy Harris and Aaron Copland, Bernstein, and later ones.

So, this question of Americanism in music has certainly been part of my whole musical life. This was an opportunity to think about sources. And working backwards, at the end of the film, to accompany the second inaugural, I felt a particular challenge and heavy responsibly to find something that was worthy of the moment, worthy to accompany some of the greatest words ever written in our American language. And I could never find it — anything in a hymnbook that was exactly right. I mean, the Lutheran hymnbook, I think, has 660 items in it; I don't know if it's a definitive American hymnbook, but I'm sure there is one, with hundreds of items, maybe they're shared with European sources: textural, liturgical, and very religious. And the harmonic style is of the nineteenth-century Christian hymnal style that we know very well. But I somehow didn't feel that that ever could be exactly right with the religious overtones that almost all of these hymns have. And that — I felt I was better off arranging a series intervallically and harmonically that would shape, in the time that I had, the right way. And so, I ended up doing what I usually do: writing my own tunes, and shaping them to the film, and reshaping them freely in a way, that perhaps, that I wouldn't feel comfortable doing with something from the canon.

I think… It's a process. At least for me, living with American music my entire life, it's a natural thing; I don't have to think very much about this. Our music is so rich. Nothing to do with Lincoln at all, but the spiritual choral repertoire that we have from the African-American area of our music, and jazz, and all that, something I know and love well all my life. And, I have always enjoyed performing, especially in Boston, those earlier composers. And trying to work the wonder, and answer the question, what these Americanisms that we hear, what they really consist of, other than the simple intervallic and harmonic analysis we might do. It's an elusive spiritual thing, I suppose, that is as complicated as the difference between — our — this speech that we use now and the inflection we might have used in 1861 or whatever period we look at. Fascinating things! And a wonderful opportunity, for me in *Lincoln*, to do the best I could: to get things just right, to accompany these fabulous speakers with wonderful voices, speaking in probably largely twentieth-century inflections but we accept them as being authentic. I think Daniel Day-Lewis, apparently, has done a very believable impression of what Lincoln must have sounded like. We read that Lincoln had a reedy, high, penetrating voice — good thing — and Daniel was able to replicate this. It's a big question, Americanism in music that's been with me a very, very long time. And I so enjoyed making this effort [*editorial cut*] and I hope its remotely worthy of the writing, and the performing of the piece.