

Chapter Title: Scherzo humoristique (Cat and Mouse): Copland's American Petrushka and His Debt to Stravinsky

Book Title: The American Stravinsky

Book Subtitle: The Style and Aesthetics of Copland's New American Music, the Early Works, 1921-1938

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Published by: University of Michigan Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3znzqf.7>

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Scherzo humoristique (Cat and Mouse)* :: Copland's American *Petrushka* and His Debt to Stravinsky

Who wrote this fiendish "Rite of Spring,"  
What right has he to write the thing,  
Against our helpless ears to fling  
Its crash, clash, cling, clang, bing, bang, bing?  
—NICHOLAS SLONIMSKY, *Music Since 1900*

Copland's path to a modern neoclassical musical style has two stages of training, American and European. The first began during the late teens in New York with compositional studies with Rubin Goldmark; the second began in 1921 in France with his study with Nadia Boulanger. His American training offered him mastery of styles and techniques of the Classic-Romantic period; his European training provided him with mastery of those of music then current in Europe. Past studies of Copland's life and career have conventionally credited Boulanger with shaping his ideas about modernism and with the maturation of his musical style. However, before Copland departed North American shores, he had ideas of his own—ones clearly formed in New York independent of Goldmark that reflect a level of maturity that would be refined by Boulanger. Copland showed an acute and analytical interest in the music of Igor Stravinsky, Aleksandr Scriabin, and French composers such as Debussy and Ravel.

Early works composed during his studies with Goldmark and Boulanger illuminate Copland's understanding of ultramodernism and modernism. These compositions reveal his interest in and mastery of the new techniques of Stravinsky and, limitedly, Scriabin, seen first in his earliest mature composition, *Scherzo humoristique (The Cat and the Mouse)*. *Cat and Mouse* was also the work that brought Copland his first public success. He took it with him to Paris, where it was publicly performed and became his first published composition.

## New Music in New York

The new music of both American and European composers during the second decade of the twentieth century was variously referred to as modern and as ultramodern music. As Carol Oja writes in her study of the rise of modern music in New York, during the time the music of European modernists began to arrive in the United States, through the early years of the Great Depression, *modernism* was something of an umbrella term that encompassed the works of composers who “explored an imaginative range of styles and ideologies.” Styles and compositional methods varied among composers who emerged during the 1910s and 1920s, and “difference and diversity were at modernism’s core.” There was no common musical style or language; no single school of composition dominated. The one uniting principle was freedom, innovation, and reaction to—if not rejection of—the nineteenth-century German Romantic tradition in a new century marked by technological, economic, and social change. Pianist-composer Leo Ornstein’s early public performances (from 1915 to the end of the decade) of both his own works and those of other modernists introduced New York audiences to highly dissonant music marked by tone clusters and a new conception of piano technique. Other prominent modern composers emerged as leaders of the movement. Bartók received some performances; Scriabin (who had visited in 1906) and Erik Satie were well received in the United States. The music of Arnold Schoenberg was sporadically programmed during the century’s second decade, his String Quartet in D Minor premiered by the Flonzaley Quartet in January 1914 in New York. His orchestral works also received major performances: in December 1914 the Boston Symphony Orchestra performed *Five Orchestral Pieces* under the baton of Karl Muck. Months later the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society premiered *Pelleas und Melisande*. Ornstein also introduced New York audiences to Schoenberg’s music, performing *Opus 11* in recital. One influential modernist, Edgard Varèse, first arrived in late December 1915, and became what Oja terms the “matinee idol of modernism” in New York during the 1920s. Other Europeans soon followed: Ernest Bloch, E. Robert Schmitz, and Dane Rudhyar. By the second half of the 1920s, two Americans would emerge as modern music leaders: Henry Cowell and Aaron Copland.<sup>1</sup>

While many styles were considered “modern” during this time, critics referred to the dissonant, innovative music of composers such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky as “ultramodern.” Composers of this ilk sought to break free of the tonal system, embraced an aesthetic of experimentation, and liberated dissonance in their works. Stravinsky made an early and major impact on American concert life. The BSO performed *Fireworks* in December 1914. American audiences were further intro-

duced to his works *via* the Ballets Russes' 1916 Metropolitan Opera-sponsored American tour. Other New York performances of *Firebird* and *Petrushka* took place in January 1916. *Petrushka* appears to have captivated New York audiences, inspiring sisters Irene and Alice Lewisohn to present it at Grand Street's Neighborhood Playhouse later that year. A production of *Petrushka* choreographed by Adolph Bolm (based on Michel Fokine's) choreography was staged at the Met in 1919. Concert performances of Stravinsky's works also took place. Although his *Three Pieces for String Quartet* was poorly received in 1915, Olga Haley and the London String Quartet successfully presented *Pribautki* in New York in the spring of 1918; the Flonzaley Quartet premiered *Concertino for String Quartet* in November 1920.<sup>2</sup>

### Early Piano and Composition Studies

Most of Copland's exposure to contemporary music during his youth was the product of autodidacticism and study of the piano literature. There was amateur music making in his home: his mother played piano and sang; his uncle played the violin, and occasionally his brother and sister would play violin and piano duets. Their selections consisted mostly of "potpourris from operas—but their top accomplishment was a fair rendition of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto*," Copland recalled. Other music performed in his home included ragtime and selections from popular shows. Copland started piano at the age of seven, learning the basics from his sister Laurine. His father, Harris, finally consented to formal lessons when Copland was thirteen; he studied with three prominent New York pedagogues: Victor Wittgenstein, Clarence Adler, and Leopold Wolfsohn. From Adler, Copland learned both technique and the core piano repertoire—Chopin waltzes; Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven sonatas; Hugo Wolf songs, Debussy preludes, and Scriabin tone poems. In the fall of 1917, his senior year of high school, Copland began composition studies with Goldmark. After a year of study, together they agreed that Copland had learned about as much as he could from Wolfsohn; Goldmark recommended Wittgenstein. Copland had hoped to learn more about the contemporary piano literature, but like Wolfsohn, Wittgenstein was, in Copland's view, a musical conservative and considered Copland something of a radical. The most modern work he performed during his study with Wittgenstein was Ravel's *Sonatine*. The teen studied two years with him before moving on to study with Adler, with whom he remained from the winter of 1919 to the spring of 1921.<sup>3</sup>

On his own Copland began to discover new music, that of Scriabin, Debussy, and Ravel. Modern music emerged before the phonograph and

sound recordings became mainstays in American homes, initially disseminated through live performances and scores, published reviews, and simply word of mouth. Similarly, Copland encountered modern music by attending concerts in Manhattan, which he began in earnest after commencing studies with Goldmark. During World War I and following, the popularity of German music declined in the United States due to anti-German sentiment. This led to increased performances of works by French composers, the United States' ally. Thus, Copland was exposed to a range of new French music. He heard Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony Orchestra, and Debussy's *Nocturnes* performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra; he attended a Chicago Opera production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He also attended concerts by both Prokofiev and Paderewski, who inspired Copland to become a composer around 1915. Copland also subscribed to the Metropolitan Opera, where he heard his first opera, *Boris Godunov*. He also enjoyed dance, attending performances by Isadora Duncan and the Ballets Russes. He is known to have attended a performance by Ornstein in 1919.<sup>4</sup>

Copland gained further exposure to modern music through the study of scores, either through purchase or by borrowing them from Manhattan's Fifty-eighth Street branch of the Public Library. Among works from the standard repertoire, he was drawn to the music of Chopin, Grieg, and Tchaikovsky rather than to the German Romantics. Bloch's Violin Sonata inspired Copland to study more of his works. Independent of either Goldmark or his piano teachers, Copland studied several Debussy piano works, Scriabin's "Vers la flamme" (1914) and his Tenth Sonata (1913); and the works of Ravel, Mussorgsky, and other contemporary composers.<sup>5</sup> Thus, before he had even graduated high school, Copland had been exposed to the music of the leading European modernists, ranging from Debussy to Stravinsky, from the 1890s to works composed shortly (sometimes just months) before Copland first heard them.

In his autobiography cowritten with Vivian Perlis, Copland reminisced that at the age of eight and a half, he began his earliest attempts at composition. Copland's biographer, Howard Pollack, documents that by the age of twelve Copland had begun notating melodies. By the time he began study with Wolfsohn, Copland had begun an opera, a setting of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, but lacked the skill to complete more than just a few bars. As Copland neared the end of his studies with Wolfsohn, he also began a Schubert-influenced piano work, *Valse Impromptu* (1916). Realizing he had a limited knowledge of harmony, he first attempted to improve his compositional technique through a mail-order harmony course. Despite following this course of study, Copland began but was unable to complete an ambitious *Capriccio* for piano and violin. He also worked on an early *Theme and Variations* for piano; a Victor Herbert-

style nostalgic song; and planned a biblical oratorio. By spring 1917 Copland completed a solo piano work, *Moment Musicale—a Tone Poem*, influenced by Beethoven, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky, and Jewish music. Copland's primary deficiency was his inability to modulate, which prompted him to seek a composition teacher. Wolfsohn referred him to Goldmark.<sup>6</sup>

Copland found Goldmark an excellent teacher of the fundamentals of musical composition (harmony, form, and counterpoint) and stayed with him for four years. He consistently praised Goldmark's sound mastery of Common Practice styles and techniques. His studies progressed, but Copland experienced the same problems with Goldmark that he had with his piano teachers. Goldmark was limited: he had little use for new music and openly discouraged Copland from playing such works and composing in this style. Rather than resigning himself to studying exclusively the works of past masters, Copland pursued the study of modern music and the latest works coming from Europe on his own rather than with the assistance of an instructor.<sup>7</sup>

Through independent study of scores and reading contemporary music criticism, Copland began to shape his own modernist aesthetic. His first efforts to discuss modern music dates to a student performance in Adler's studio. Before performing Ravel's *Sonatine*, Copland explained the work to his audience of fellow students. "It was my first talk about a musical 'modernist.' Without being aware of it, I was embarking here for the first time on the role of musical commentator."<sup>8</sup> His earliest ideas about modern music can be gleaned from his articles on the music of his contemporaries. One appeared in Cowell's groundbreaking *American Composers on American Music*, in the section "Composers in Review of Other Composers." In "Carlos Chávez—Mexican Composer," a reprint of an article first published in the *New Republic*, Copland wrote about another composer who would be identified with both international modernism and national and ethnic, self-conscious cultural definition, or nationalism. Praising several features of Chávez's music, Copland, by then a member of the League of Composers, placed his peer among a small group of "forward-looking musicians" that included composers who were not known beyond the modern music concerts of the International Composers' Guild.<sup>9</sup> Not only did Copland describe Chávez's style, but in the course of the article he also indirectly explained the new musical developments generally applicable to all composers. In doing so, Copland attempted to define the new music in general.

Copland was direct and to the point: Chávez's music exemplified "the complete overthrow of nineteenth-century ideas which tyrannized over music for more than a hundred years."<sup>10</sup> Copland saw all twentieth-century music as this departure from nineteenth-century romanticism. "The entire history of modern music, therefore, may be said to be a history

of the gradual pull-away from the Germanic musical tradition of the past century.”<sup>11</sup> This led eventually to two revolutions, one aesthetic and one technical, thereby delimiting definitions of modernism along these two lines, aesthetic and stylistic.<sup>12</sup> Copland characterized the technical revolution, via a departure from music of the past, as an aesthetic of innovation, which had led to new techniques, new harmonic languages, and new styles. As the years progressed and Copland assessed the developments of the thirties, his writings became more specific and moved beyond general references to “nineteenth-century Germanic ideals.” He presented considerations of style, theory, chronology, and aesthetics upon which to base his definitions.

Copland’s later ideas on modernism remained consistent with those formed during his twenties and early thirties. One unifying thread he wove through his music criticism in articles written in the 1930s and early 1940s was the innovation of French modernists. He later specifically referred to German romanticism as the ideal that composers had rejected. Copland cogently summarized the Romantic aesthetic as one of the composer striving for emotional expression. “The German Romantic was highly subjective and personal in the expression of his emotions. The 20th-century composer seeks a more universal ideal. He tends to be more objective and impersonal in his music.”<sup>13</sup> The “subjective” was the primary feature of romanticism—a subjective/objective dichotomy often also articulated by other writers. Modern music was “objective”—it sought no deep philosophical meaning. It did not strive for metaphysical transcendence or the *prima facie* expression of the artist, but was “matter-of-fact, more concise—and, especially, less patently emotional.”<sup>14</sup> It was, to borrow from Stravinsky, autonomous and expressed only the musical idea itself. Copland identified two composers who had inaugurated the move away from the styles and aesthetics of Wagner: “Modernism is generally taken to mean the Debussy-Ravel aesthetic.”<sup>15</sup>

Copland accepted the then-current new music categories “ultramodern music” and “modern music,” noting that many different styles of music were pigeonholed as ultramodern by critics and audiences. He wrote, “A great many different kinds of music were grouped indiscriminately together, and especially today the newer music may be said to include an unusually variegated experience.”<sup>16</sup> Modern and ultramodern music, however, were not synonymous, though the terms were often used interchangeably. Both trends did spring from the same source—the rejection of the aesthetics and styles of the German Romantic past—but there were aesthetic, stylistic, and chronological differences that permitted Copland to differentiate between them. He devised a chronology, separating the way the terms were used at the beginning of the century from their use from the mid-twenties to World War II. In a 1928 article, “Music Since 1920,” Copland summarized new musical developments

that had taken place in the United States, acknowledging that there was no crystal-clear, precise meaning of the term *modern music*.

It is important, first, to point out that the term modern music has a variety of meanings. We can distinguish at least three different classes of so-called modern music. The oldest generation think of Strauss and Debussy as the last examples of a long line of great composers. As revolutionists they paved the way for the complete overthrow of nineteenth century harmonic laws. Their tonal innovations, so startling when *Salomé* and *Pelléas* were new, are now entirely assimilated and universally accepted. For the large mass of music-lovers these two men represent modern music; after them, all is chaos. This takes us no further than the decade 1900–1910.<sup>17</sup>

Copland identified the period 1910–20 as belonging to Schoenberg and Stravinsky.

Copland had additional criteria for differentiating between modernism and ultramodernism. In defining ultramodernism, he retrospectively identified innovation and iconoclasm as supplanting the Romantic aesthetic during the early 1920s. Ultramodern music of the first three decades of the century was “an attempt to free music from the conventions and ideals of Romanticism—rhythmical, harmonic, formal—that had gradually been stifling all freshness.”<sup>18</sup> The ultramodern music of the 1920s was self-consciously experimental.

The very word “modern” was exciting. The air was charged with talk of new tendencies, and the password was originality—anything was possible. Every young artist wanted to do something unheard of, something nobody had done before. Tradition was nothing; innovation everything.<sup>19</sup>

In the article on Chávez, Copland further characterized this ultramodern music:

Among many other kinds of interest, the ironic and grotesque seemed to exert a particular fascination. No combination of instruments was too outlandish to be tried at least once. There were experiments in jazz, in quarter-tone music, in music for mechanical instruments. Composers vied with one another in damning all conservative music.<sup>20</sup>

An article on George Antheil published in *Modern Music* in 1925 along with various articles published during the late 1920s and in the 1930s further illuminate what Copland saw as the difference between ultramodernism and modernism.<sup>21</sup>



The watchword in those days was “originality.” The laws of rhythm, of harmony, of construction had all been torn down. Every composer in the vanguard set out to remake these laws according to his own conceptions. And I suppose that I was no exception despite my youth—or possibly because of it.<sup>22</sup>

Ultramodern music possessed a certain “shock value” through the use of rhythmic techniques borrowed from outside art music; it invented new instruments and explored microtonality. Ultramodern composers sought new tonal systems or procedures other than functional tonality, new ways of constructing and handling of harmony, and new forms. They formulated new “laws” for the treatment of all conventional musical parameters. Aggressively avant-garde and innovative in the handling of conventional musical parameters, the formulation of new musical systems, the use of non-diatonic scales, twelve-tone techniques, or nonfunctional harmony or polyrhythms, ultramodern music questioned very basic assumptions about the aesthetic and technical nature of music. In other words, ultramodern music sought to redefine music as sound and experiment.<sup>23</sup> In Copland’s own method of categorizing the new music according to its systems, Schoenberg’s atonality and twelve-tone method and Stravinsky’s tonal techniques (what theorists have identified as octatonicism) and the style of his “Russian” period would make them composers of ultramodern music.

In his critique of Chávez’s style, Copland obliquely defined modernism: “Without consciously attempting to be ‘modern,’ his music indubitably succeeds in belonging to our age.”<sup>24</sup> His idea of the variety of styles subsumed under modernism is suggested by the composers he considered modern: Scriabin, Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky. In Copland’s view, the modern music movement was born in Europe; specifically, in Paris with Debussy and Ravel and the impressionists, in Vienna with Schoenberg, and in St. Petersburg with Stravinsky.<sup>25</sup> In retrospect, Copland saw both ultramodernism and the modernism of Stravinsky’s neoclassicism as a reaction against impressionism. Stylistically different from ultramodern music, modern music featured harmonic and rhythmic innovations that could return to older forms or even use conventional-sounding harmonies. Copland believed it was even possible to compose atonal or polytonal music, to use polyrhythms and unconventional forms, yet not be an ultramodernist. In other words, modernism did not necessarily bar the conventional. The modern composer dispensed with functional tonality and relied on no theoretical harmonic system, yet retained the supposition that harmony was still a viable musical parameter that could be stretched but not completely broken. The composer dispensed with all preconceived theories, making “his ear the sole judge of right and wrong in harmonic wisdom, whether or not the theorist were

able to explain the resultant harmonies logically.”<sup>26</sup> Modern music’s second major stylistic innovation, in Copland’s schema, was polytonality that did not bar triadic harmony.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, for Copland, modernism lay in both stylistic innovation and a shift in musical aesthetics. He linked modern music with both exploration of new styles and techniques *and* the desire to break from Romanticism and imitation of past conventions. So when at midcentury Copland offered a concise, summary definition of modern music, it represented how he conceived both ultramodern and modern music:

Modern music in a word, is principally the expression in terms of an enriched musical language of a new spirit of objectivity, attuned to our own times. It is the music of the composer of today—in other words—our music.<sup>28</sup>

Music could sound conventional harmonically or melodically, but still be deemed modern if composers treated harmony and melody in ways that did not adhere strictly to previous styles and exhibited innovative traits in other areas.

### Study with Rubin Goldmark and Beyond

Copland’s ideas about modern and ultramodern music were formed during the years he completed secondary school and after graduating in 1921. Although he decided against attending college (a decision he later regretted), during these private studies in theory and composition with Goldmark from fall 1917 to spring 1921 Copland “essentially charted out his own three-year program roughly comparable to a conservatory education.”<sup>29</sup> Published accounts of what Copland studied with Goldmark remained sketchy for years; Copland never provided details about these lessons. His most extensive writing about his former teacher is found in a tribute, but he reveals nothing about what he learned.

Archival sources document some of what Copland learned from Goldmark. The primary source materials dating from these years are a series of seventeen notebooks, each labeled “Music Composition Notebook,” and a second set of seven Schirmer manuscript books spanning the years 1916 through 1921 in the Aaron Copland Collection at the Library of Congress. The first, “Music Composition Notebook 1: Exercises and Early AC Compositions, 1916–1917,”<sup>30</sup> contains exercises, sketches, and compositions, as do the remainder of these notebooks (except 6 and 14 through 16, which primarily contain sketches and complete compositions).

According to Copland’s own account, Goldmark primarily provided

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him with thorough instruction in harmony, species counterpoint, eighteenth-century counterpoint, and classical forms, especially sonata form.<sup>31</sup> He started Copland on a systematic course of study, beginning with the basics—bass clef, scales, intervals, triads and their inversions, modulations, and harmonic exercises. Notebook 1 also has thematic ideas and melodies, some with Goldmark's blue-pencil corrections. Sketches for several short pieces are also found here: a Chopinesque "Nocturne" in G minor; the vocal line of the song, "My Heart is in the East"; the text for "Burial of Moses"; a second theme in G minor; and, a sketch for "Amer-tune." This notebook contains finished as well as uncompleted compositions: a "Theme and Variations in B minor" (dated November 23, 1917, four variations on a five-measure theme); "Romance-Barcarolle"; and *Valse Impromptu* (February 6, 1916, predating study with Goldmark). The title at the head of page 12v is "Selections from an Imaginary Oratorio," Copland's biblical oratorio. He worked as far as planning two movements. As seen in Notebook 2, marked "Scrap Book, Fairmont Hotel, Aug. 1916," Copland continued learning his minor scales and studying modulation (most of the remainder of Notebook 2 is filled with modulation exercises).<sup>32</sup>

These notebooks chart Copland's progress with Goldmark as both theory student and composer. Goldmark thoroughly trained him in sixteenth- and eighteenth-century counterpoint, and Copland produced didactic two- and three-part inventions, fugues, song forms, and a sonata. Notebook 3 (1918–19) contains counterpoint exercises: a "Theme (Experiment in Ground Motive)," a fugue, and double fugues. Notebook 4 is filled with fugues, showing Copland's progress from two-voice to three- and four-voice fugues. By September 19, 1919, Copland had mastered the rudiments of a fugue for three voices; by October, 28, 1919, he had completed a fugue for four voices. He also continued harmony exercises. The Schirmer manuscript books are undated, but like the notebooks, contain Goldmark's corrections. Schirmer Manuscript Book 1 contains notes on species counterpoint and parallel thirds and sixths; Schirmer Manuscript Book 2 contains more species counterpoint and free counterpoint. By this stage Copland was capable of writing canons and applying the techniques of diminution, augmentation, double counterpoint, contrary motion, and stretto. Goldmark continued drilling Copland in modulating through the circle of fifths and the use of various cadences (Notebook 12). These exercises are the equivalent of the first two years of conservatory studies in harmony and counterpoint.<sup>33</sup>

Goldmark further trained Copland through model composition. By the next year, as documented in Notebook 5, dated 1919–20, Copland had progressed to composing simple and rounded binary forms, all the while continuing his counterpoint studies. Goldmark also had Copland compose binary dances. He began to prepare Copland to write a piano

sonata, beginning with the first movement, “Allegro.” Goldmark further drilled Copland in the basics of harmony and counterpoint, with Notebook 8 (undated) containing exercises in harmony, figured bass, chorale harmonizations, and four-part writing. The Schirmer manuscript books more extensively document Copland’s progress at this point. He made a diagram of what he called “2 part binary form,” showing simple binary form as having two parts of sixteen measures and rounded binary as twenty-four measures. Rather than understanding rounded binary as a two-part form, Copland seems to have understood it as “3 part primary” form or A–B–A, a precursor to the ternary forms he later used for many pieces, A–B–A or A–B–A’ (see table 1.1). Copland continued writing more binary dances and a scherzo and trio for string quartet. Schirmer Manuscript Book 5 shows Copland mastering rondo form. He also began sonata form, understanding it as a three-part structure (see table 1.2). Next, Copland completed an extended first movement of a sonata, found in Schirmer Manuscript Book 7; he had also progressed to composing in four parts, as seen in a slow movement for string quartet (notated on a piano grand staff!). This notebook spans his final months with Goldmark and the beginning of his studies in France: page 16v is dated “Fountainbleau, JUNE 1921,” clearly marking the end of his American studies.<sup>34</sup>

Goldmark taught from two harmony books, *Richter’s Manual of*

TABLE 1.1 Copland’s Diagram of Rounded Binary Form (3-part primary form in 24 measures)

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
8	8	8
[Period w. phrase]	New	Repetition

Source: Schirmer Manuscript Book 3, n.d., Box 117C, Folder 4, ACC, p. 22v.

TABLE 1.2 Copland’s Diagram of Sonata Form (“Notes On Sonata Form”)

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4?
Exposition	Developments	Recapitulation	(Coda 2)
1. Theme in tonic	or	of	
2. Repetition of theme (flowing) or Episode, leading to	free fantasia	part 1	
3. Dominant of dominant, return establishment takes place	or Durchführung	with harmonic modification	
4. <i>Second or lyric theme in dominant</i> or relative major			
5. Closing theme in key of second theme			

Source: Schirmer Manuscript Book 5, n.d., Box 117C, Folder 5, ACC, p. 25v.

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*Harmony* and the Foote and Spaulding *Modern Harmony in Its Theory and Practice*. The latter, published in 1905, encompassed nineteenth-century chromatic harmony. It also included theoretical treatment of many harmonic advances associated with music from the turn of the twentieth century, such as the use of ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths, explaining their theoretical construction. Examples from the contemporary repertoire included excerpts from Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in a discussion of the thirteenth.<sup>35</sup> Copland's early notebooks contain evidence that Goldmark used these texts with him. Notebook 11, "Exercises in Harmony" (undated), contains a note, "see Richter Table." This notebook also contains notes on chromatic and extended harmonies. Copland continued studying free counterpoint and was learning the use of suspensions and anticipations.<sup>36</sup> These studies from 1917 to 1920 covered basic compositional styles and techniques of the Common Practice, while those from 1920 to 1921 covered chromatic and extended harmony. Thus, from Goldmark Copland received a thorough grounding in music from Bach to Debussy.

In Copland's view, Goldmark represented the outmoded American nationalist composer. The elder composer had written works based on Native and African-American themes, a superannuated musical nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Copland felt he was working in a vacuum. Although the new music of Europe was performed in the major American musical centers—New York, Boston, Chicago, and Rochester—Copland thought the United States then lacked a substantial modernist art music repertoire. He knew little of the American music that had preceded him and apparently was not influenced by the nationalist or Americanist styles of earlier composers, even Goldmark himself. "My own generation found little of interest in the work of their elders: MacDowell, Chadwick or Loeffler; and their influence on our music was nil. (We had only an inkling of the existence of the music of Charles Ives in the Twenties.)"<sup>38</sup> Goldmark was sympathetic to the idea of identity—national or ethnic—in musical composition, and many of his works bear Americanist titles: Pollack lists *Hiawatha Overture*, *Negro Rhapsody*, *The Call of the Plains*, and his best-known composition, *Requiem*, suggested by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.<sup>39</sup> Goldmark studied at the Vienna Conservatory and had been a student of Dvořák at the National Conservatory. He followed Dvořák's lead in using Native American and African-American musical materials, rather than being motivated by a broader consciousness or deeper understanding of the musical traditions they represented. Goldmark did not influence Copland to write Americanist music, but rather instilled in him technical mastery as defined in the German Romantic tradition.

A musical conservative, Goldmark espoused conventional tonal music, forms, and genres, leading Copland to describe Goldmark's compositional style as "in the familiar idiom of his day."<sup>40</sup> An admirer of

German Romantic music and the more contemporary, Strauss, Ravel, and Debussy, Goldmark rejected the modernism of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Ives, warning Copland to avoid modern music lest he become “contaminated.” Copland’s style of his student days, by his own account, was beginning to show traces of the moderns. Goldmark had no interest in Copland’s more modern pieces. Copland remarked, “I had a little trouble with him because I was beginning to write pieces that, from where he sat, seemed rather avant-garde and he couldn’t apply any of his conventional harmonic ideas to them because they didn’t have any conventional ideas in that sense.”<sup>41</sup> Goldmark refused to critique these independently composed “radical” pieces, as he called them, admitting he did not understand the new language.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, Copland pursued the newer styles that Goldmark considered “modernistic experiments” or “avant garde.”<sup>43</sup> So during the Goldmark years Copland produced two types of compositions, conventional model compositions submitted for lessons and modernist ones pursued independently.<sup>44</sup>

Several “modern” works from these years survive, mostly two-page songs and piano pieces.<sup>45</sup> Goldmark little influenced Copland’s stylistic development in them. As Howard Pollack’s recent overview of Copland’s juvenilia shows, Copland had already begun developing his own style and compositional voice during high school. The music composition notebooks from Notebook 2 on are filled with sketches and completed compositions dating back to at least 1917. They contain sketches for art songs (Notebooks 2, 3, 6, 7), solo instrumental works (for cello, violin, piano, “B<sup>b</sup> instrument” and piano) (Notebooks 3, 6, 5, 13), and a trio (Notebook 7). They also contain several finished compositions, showing that Copland was quite prolific and ambitious at an early age. Obviously drawn to Chopin, the teenager made transcriptions of two etudes for cello and piano (Chopin, op. 10, no. 4 and op. 25, no. 7), though only the cello parts are found in Notebook 3 (transcribed June 27, 1919). Copland also made another arrangement for piano and cello, *Schumanniana*, a medley of *Papillons*, *Carnival*, and *Kreisleriana* themes, presumably for Copland and his friend Arne Vainio, who was both a cellist and clarinetist. It is probable that Copland arranged the Chopin etudes as duets for himself and Vainio.

These early works show the youth influenced by composers ranging from the Europeans, Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin, and Bloch, to Americans such as Carpenter and Griffes. His solo piano work, *Moment Musicale—a Tone Poem* (inspired by a poem by his new friend, Aaron Schaffer), shows the influence of Beethoven, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and what Pollack describes as “Jewish-sounding meanderings” that illustrate Schaffer’s text.<sup>46</sup> Stylistically, these early works show Copland beginning to move beyond functional tonality and triadic harmony and exploring seventh chords and chromatic harmony along with the tritone. Furthermore,

these works are often tonally ambiguously, with unexpected harmonies, cadences, and frequent modulations.

Although struggling to find his own compositional voice, by fall 1917 (shortly after his studies with Goldmark began) Copland clearly showed signs of having assimilated techniques borrowed from Debussy and Liszt. His first accomplished works from this fall—three songs—are influenced by Debussy: “After Antwerp” (text by Emile Cammaerts), “Spurned Love” (text by Thomas Bailey Aldrich), and “Melancholy,” subtitled “a Song a la Debussy” (text by Jeffrey Farnol). Copland progressed rapidly in his next art songs composed over the next three years: *Three Songs* (1918; text by Aaron Schaffer); “Simone” (1919; text by Remy de Gourmont); “Music I Heard” (1920; text by Conrad Aiken); “Old Poem” (1920; translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley); “Pastorale” (1921; translated from Kafiri by Edward Powys Mathers); and “My Heart Is in the East” (text by Schaffer). His early instrumental works, *Waltz Caprice* for piano (1918) and *Poème* for cello and piano (1918), *Sonnets I and II* for piano (1919, 1920), and *Preludes I and II* for violin and piano (1919, 1921) show the influence of both Liszt and Debussy.<sup>47</sup>

## Night

By the time Copland left for Paris, he had composed numerous pieces, varying from juvenilia to technically accomplished works.<sup>48</sup> One student work, the art song “Night,” shows a teenaged Copland composing in an Impressionist style à la Debussy. Although Goldmark could inculcate in Copland his admiration for the German Romantics, he did indeed impart to his student solid grounding in harmony and counterpoint, as “Night” attests. Beginning it on July 1, 1918, in Marlboro, New York,<sup>49</sup> Copland finished it on December 16 back home in Brooklyn.

“Night” shows how far and how quickly Copland had progressed during less than a year’s study with Goldmark. Only in the previous year had he reached the point where he could actually complete short works, rather than abandon them for lack of technique. Goldmark, versed in French Impressionism, had taught Copland the use of ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths (as per Spaulding’s *Modern Harmony*). He had also drilled Copland in chromatic harmony. Both are evident in “Night,” which begins on a D<sup>b</sup>, and features the liberal use of ninths and parallel harmony. A letter from his friend Aaron Schaeffer, who wrote the poem Copland set, makes numerous references to traces of Debussy and Scriabin in the piece, such as the whole-tone scale.<sup>50</sup> Analysis of the short piece supports Schaeffer’s observations and reveals the influence of Debussy. Copland introduces the whole-tone scale (which returns throughout the song) in the right-hand piano motive appearing at the outset and

when the voice enters. With its dominant ninth harmony, whole-tone scales, and harmony built thereupon, “Night” is rather conventional and imitative of the French composer.<sup>51</sup> Yet Copland’s own musical personality had begun to emerge, for this work displays more than extended harmonies and half-diminished sevenths used as harmonic color rather than functionally. By this time, Copland had finally learned to modulate and makes a bold shift from D<sup>b</sup> to A major, a whole tone away. Again, this suggests Debussy, for example, *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*, with its exploration of melodic and harmonic whole-tone relationships.

Copland displays sensitivity to the text in supplying a burst of thirty-second-note pianistic figuration to paint the phrase “gentle murmur of the lake / is silvered by a fountain’s play.” Yet he is awkward and inexperienced when writing for voice. The principal vocal motive requires an upward leap of octave followed by a downward leap of a diminished fourth, chromaticism, and a descending augmented second at its close. Pollack interprets the prominent use of augmented seconds as suggesting a Jewish musical influence, but regardless, the vocal melody is rather difficult to sing. Nonetheless, the work compares favorably with the songs of Debussy and shows that the eighteen-year-old had made striking progress under Goldmark. Copland had developed a strong, French-influenced musical personality of his own. Unpublished for seventy years, “Night” never garnered public recognition for Copland.

### Copland’s “Ultramodern” Style: *Scherzo humoristique* (*The Cat and the Mouse*)

The piano works *Scherzo humoristique: Cat and Mouse*<sup>52</sup> and “Jazzy” from *Trois Esquisses (Three Moods)* further exhibit Copland’s exploration of an unconventional harmonic style as a teenager and during his twenties. With its extensive dissonance and atonality, *Scherzo humoristique* fits Copland’s description of ultramodernism and can be taken as an example of his beginning exploration of the style in 1920. Composed during the final year of his study with Goldmark, the work undoubtedly reflects Copland’s interest in the moderns about which he wrote so many of his articles and whose scores he studied on his own during high school. Like many of his early instrumental works, *Cat and Mouse* is based on a poem, Jean de la Fontaine’s “Le Vieux Chat et la Jeune Souris” (“The Old Cat and the Young Mouse”). Full of symbolism, the poem is about the vain attempts of a young mouse in the grasp of an old cat to convince the feline to release him.<sup>53</sup> Whether interpreted as programmatic or impressionistic, *Scherzo humoristique*, nonetheless, is one of Copland’s first “ultramodern” works, that is, one in which he explored new tonal procedures and new means of tonal organization. The



piece uses nondiatonic scales, nonfunctional harmony, and new rhythmic techniques, and departs from classical forms. Bridging youthful study and early public success, it shows Copland's highly sophisticated and personal modernist style at the end of his studies with Goldmark and at the beginning of his professional career.<sup>54</sup>

### Debussy's Influence: Pentatonicism and Whole Tones

The influence of Debussy is seen primarily in Copland's pentatonic and whole-tone scales, formal organization, and the means by which he establishes tonality. In *Scherzo humoristique*, Copland moved beyond the sonata form Goldmark required of all his students and used a tripartite form similar to Debussy's. The work divides into three major sections, A–B–A', plus an Introduction and Coda (see table 1.3, cf. table 1.2).

### Scale Systems

Copland's *Scherzo* exhibits pentatonicism and whole tones as alternate scale systems to escape the tyranny of diatonicism. In the Introduction, he immediately establishes the overriding architectonic principle of the work: the alternation of the minor pentatonic scale with the whole-tone collection. The work begins with an ascending pentatonic scale, the source of the melody (see example 1.1). The generative principles of the work all derive from the opening two measures. Pentatonic melodies and ostinati return throughout, first in mm. 21–30 in the left hand (see example 1.2) and later in mm. 38–39, both times starting on G<sup>b</sup>. The left-hand ostinato of mm. 21–30 begins with a G<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup> dyad in the bass for the first three measures of this passage before expanding to encompass the complete pentatonic scale in mm. 38–39. The pentatonic scale also occurs

TABLE 1.3 *Scherzo humoristique (The Cat and the Mouse)*, Overall Form

	Section				
	Introduction	A	B	A'	Coda
Melody	Pentatonic/ whole-tone alternation	x–y–x– chromatic	x–pentatonic– y–diatonic–x	x–y–x– x–whole tone	Whole tone– simultaneity
Collection	4-24/5-35	4-24/5-35	5-35/7-35	4-24/8-28/ 5-35	4-24/5-35
Measures	1–4	5–20	21–39	40–72	73–end
Harmony		I–I	<sup>b</sup> V–IV	V–I	I
Tonal center	D	D	C	D	D

EXAMPLE 1.1 Copland, *Scherzo humoristique (The Cat and the Mouse)*, mm. 1–4

EXAMPLE 1.2 Copland, *Scherzo humoristique (The Cat and the Mouse)*, Pentatonic occurrences in section B, mm. 21–30

in mm. 25ff., on  $A^b$ , and is also found in m. 29, beginning on  $C^\sharp$ , enharmonically  $D^b$ . Copland also uses the whole-tone scale, as discussed below.

## Harmony

Copland does not just create melodies with the whole-tone and pentatonic scales; they are also the sources of his harmonies. Immediately following the introduction of the pentatonic scale in m. 1, the F whole-tone collection appears, and Copland uses it to generate a vertical sonority, a whole tone “chord” 4-24—or, if thought of diatonically, an augmented triad to which is added an augmented sixth (enharmonically, minor seventh; see example 1.1). In m. 4 Copland draws upon the other whole-tone collection, the one built on C-natural (6-35,  $t = 0$ ). Unlike the second

measure, where Copland uses tertiary harmonies, here he *seems* to create quartal harmonies: using D as the root, he “stacks” an augmented fourth above it, and a diminished fourth above that. However, his harmonies are in reality tertiary, for C—rather than D—is the root of the chord, with E occurring as a major third above. The D is introduced as a pedal tone. It is this sonority in m. 4, 4-24, t = o, I = o, or a whole-tone triad built upon C, that serves as the harmonic pedal in mm. 5-8. Whole-tone passages recur throughout the piece: mm. 14-18, 31-37, 40-48, 55-58, 70-72, and 73-79 (again alternating F and C whole-tone collections).

This organizational principle—the alternation of the pentatonic scale and the whole-tone collection—not only generates both melodies and harmony, but also guides the overall formal scheme (see table 1.4). Each of these primary divisions is further subdivided into sections that are predominantly pentatonic or whole tone. Copland strives for symmetry and balance, reversing the order in which the pentatonic and whole-tone collections follow each other from section to section. Although in the Introduction Copland begins with the pentatonic scale, he begins the first subsection of A with the C whole-tone collection (see table 1.5). This section closes with a collection that is a superset of the whole tone (6-35) and the pentatonic scale (5-35): the chromatic scale (12-1).

## Octatonicism

*Scherzo humoristique* features Copland’s first use of the octatonic scale in a finished composition. Section A’ begins like section A, with the whole-tone collection, 6-35 in mm. 59-62. He quickly introduces the octatonic collection (see table 1.6; cf. table 1.5). The outer X subsections frame a single internal octatonic y subsection. Copland closes A’ with the

TABLE 1.4 *Scherzo humoristique*, Introduction

Melody Collection	Pentatonic 5-35	Whole tone 4-24	Pentatonic 5-35	Whole tone 4-24
Measure	1	2	3	4
Tonal center	ambiguous	ambiguous	ambiguous	ambiguous

TABLE 1.5 *Scherzo humoristique*, Section A

	Subsection			
	x	y	x	
Melody Collection	C whole tone 4-24/6-35	Pentatonic 5-35	C whole tone 4-24/6-35	Chromatic scale
Measures	5-8	9-14	15-18	19-20
Harmony	I, D pedal	I, D pedal	I, D pedal	I, D pedal
Tonal center	D	D	D	D

TABLE 1.6 *Scherzo humoristique*, Section A'

	Subsection				
	x	y	x	x	
Melody	F whole tone	1212 octatonic	F whole tone chromatic	A <sup>b</sup> pentatonic	C whole tone
Collection	4-24	8-28	4-24	5-35	4-24
Measures	55-58	59-62	63-67	68-69	70-72
Harmony	V	IV-V <sup>#</sup>	V <sup>#</sup>	<sup>b</sup> V	V-I
Tonal center	D	D	D	D	D

return of the pentatonic and the C whole-tone collections. Copland's interest in scale types extends to section B, where he briefly juxtaposes pentatonicism with diatonicism (see table 1.7). Each scale type is associated with characteristic melodic and thematic motives. There are two basic melodic figurations, X and Y, each tonally, rhythmically, and texturally distinct. The melodic ideas help to delimit both the form and the tonal system undergirding a particular section. The X material first occurs in mm. 5-8; characterized by a sixteenth-note rhythm that traverses three octaves, it recurs throughout the piece, appearing in either a pentatonic configuration (as it does at mm. 21-30, see example 1.2; mm. 51-54; mm. 68-69), or an F whole-tone configuration (mm. 55-58; see example 1.1). Rhythmically static rather than propulsive, the Y material is characterized by sustained pentatonic sonorities.

Copland eschews functional tonality, establishing nonfunctional tonal centers by other means. In sections A and A', he establishes D as the tonal center, first by using the whole-tone and pentatonic scales, whose properties defeat the pitch centricism of diatonicism. The pentatonic scale lacks the half-step between scale degrees 3 and 4 and the pitch-defining centricism of the leading tone of the major scale; Copland's pentatonic is comprised of alternating whole steps and minor thirds. Similarly, the whole-tone scale, comprised solely of successive whole steps, also lacks a leading tone. By using the pentatonic and the whole-tone scales, Copland

TABLE 1.7 *Scherzo humoristique*, Section B

	Subsection				
	x	Pentatonic scale	y	Diatonic	x
Collection	5-35	5-35	4-24	7-35	5-35
Measures	21-37	38-39	40-44	45-50	51-54
Harmony	<sup>b</sup> V	<sup>b</sup> V	I-IV <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup> alternation C-A dyad	I D major harmonic pedal	VI B major harmonic pedal
Tonal center	C	C	C	D	D

*Scherzo humoristique (Cat and Mouse)*

can escape the gravitational pull of diatonicism and avoid functional tonality.

Copland fully exploits the atonal implications involved in using the whole-tone scale by basing his harmonies upon it, particularly the 4-24. He also generates harmonies from the pentatonic scale, as he does in subsection Y (see example 1.1, mm. 9-12). The final two measures of the piece confirm that the whole-tone collection and the pentatonic collection are the sources of his harmonies. In m. 81 the left hand plays the pentatonic scale solely on the black keys; the right hand plays a portion of the diatonic scale in parallel thirds. In the final two measures of the piece, Copland combines the pentatonic dyad comprised of C# and D# with the pair of thirds F-A and G-B to complete the F whole-tone collection. Thus, the pentatonic and whole tone are sounded simultaneously, yet distinctly, following a passage where diatonicism and pentatonicism are sounded together.

Throughout *Cat and Mouse*, Copland avoids the V-I progression by establishing tonal centers by other means, first through the use of pedals, which establish tonal poles to further subvert functional tonality. He establishes D and C as tonal centers in A and B, respectively. The overriding tonal center of section A is D, which is confirmed in m. 5, where D is introduced as a rhythmic pedal. Copland repeats this pitch in mm. 5-6 in the left hand as he introduces whole-tone sonorities built on C. A similar figure reappears in mm. 40-48. The primacy of D as tonal center is later asserted in mm. 9-12 and returns in mm. 47-51 and the Coda (mm. 73-79). The Coda returns to the pedal, now D<sup>1</sup>, the lowest note in the piece, occurring in the lowest octave of the piano. Above this, Copland reintroduces whole-tone harmonies. In section B (beginning m. 21), Copland establishes C as the tonal center, but more subtly. Rather than use a single unambiguous pedal point, section B uses ostinati that oscillate between two pitches or two pairs of pitches, thereby shifting from one tonal center to another. This section also contains discernible harmonic progressions, in contrast to the outer sections. Copland initiates this section with the dyad G<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup>, which suggests <sup>b</sup>V of C; this changes in mm. 22-25 to B<sup>b</sup>-A<sup>b</sup>. Simultaneous with the left-hand dyad, pairs of thirds alternate in the right hand, F-A and C-E, and later C-E and E-G, suggesting an F-major seventh chord, or IV<sup>7</sup> of C major. Over the span of mm. 29-31, Copland even alludes to the dominant of C major (see example 1.2). The diatonic thirds above the pentatonic scale of the left hand fill in the perfect fifth, G and C, thereby setting up these two pitches as two diatonic poles, the dominant and the tonic, the pillars of the tonal system. Yet functional tonality is absent. Neither a functional tonic nor dominant appears in this work—just the piling up of dyads ripe with tonal implications, including bitonality. While C major is the overarching tonal focal point, the G<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup> ostinato suggests G<sup>b</sup> as a tonal center at the micro

level, with G<sup>b</sup> as the tonic and D<sup>b</sup> as the dominant. The ostinato involving the pairs of thirds F-A and C-E alludes to F major (which itself lies a fourth above C major).

### The Provenance of Copland's Tonal Experiments

One may wonder about the precocity of a nineteen-year-old composer who developed not only a personal style before reaching the age of majority, but also a means of controlling tonal flow and organization that has at its basis extremely sophisticated theoretical thinking. Is it possible that Copland, like Athena, sprang from the head of a compositional Zeus? No, rather, at this stage in his development, Copland aspired to be the spitting image of his hero, Stravinsky. We know that Copland had enthusiastically and independently studied the music of a French Impressionist and the Russian “modernist” Scriabin. Copland clearly knew of Stravinsky’s music: he regularly read music critic Paul Rosenfeld’s articles in *The Dial*. Rosenfeld wrote of the new European composers and readily championed their music, including Stravinsky. As Carol Oja has shown, Stravinsky enjoyed popularity in the United States during this time.<sup>55</sup> We can now say with certainty that Copland knew the music of Stravinsky. He had ample opportunity to hear the elder composer’s music while he was in high school. Regularly commuting into Manhattan for his Saturday morning lessons with Goldmark, the teenager also took a subscription to the Metropolitan Opera. Pollack has documented that Copland attended performances by the Ballets Russes, which presented both *Firebird* and *Petrushka* in New York in January 1916 under the auspices of the Metropolitan Opera. Copland would have had a second opportunity to see the ballet in 1919, when the Metropolitan Opera again presented it. Furthermore, one of Copland’s unfinished efforts, “Sketch for Song ‘Music I Heard with You,’” which displays a brief octatonic scale in the right hand of the piano accompaniment, shows that Copland had begun experimenting with octatonicism as early as 1919.<sup>56</sup> By the time he composed *Cat and Mouse*, Stravinsky had replaced Debussy and Scriabin as the composer after whose music Copland modeled his own.

Noting the extensive and deep influence French music had on Copland’s contemporary Virgil Thomson (whose ideas were shaped by exposure to the music of composers such as D’Indy, Debussy, and Satie), Carol Oja challenges the original conventional wisdom that the first generation of American twentieth-century composers were *tabulae rasae* when they went to Paris, to be shaped almost exclusively by their experiences there. “Often writers have assumed that American composers of Thomson’s generation presented Paris with a clean slate, that there they gained sophistication and encountered contemporary musical developments.”<sup>57</sup>

When he went to Paris, Copland, too—like Thomson—had ideas of his own. However, rather than D’Indy and Satie, Copland, in contrast to Thomson, was influenced by the Russian-in-Paris Stravinsky.

Previous Copland scholars have generally accepted that Copland was influenced by Stravinsky, exposed to his music by Nadia Boulanger. In a 1950 article David Matthews noted that Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* influenced Copland’s *Dance Symphony*, and the elder’s neoclassical Octet influenced the younger’s large orchestral works and musical development.<sup>58</sup> In his germinal article “Stravinsky and the Younger American Composers,” Arthur Berger argues from his personal experience as a composer that Stravinsky exerted a strong influence on American composers of the second and third quarter of the twentieth century and that the influence on Copland was particularly strong, witness Copland’s sobriquet “the Brooklyn Stravinsky.” Berger writes, “It was Nadia Boulanger, no doubt, who was a key figure in solidifying the kinship between Copland and Stravinsky, and my account of the parentage of our school would be very incomplete, indeed, if she were not mentioned.”<sup>59</sup> But Copland was first influenced by Stravinsky independently of Boulanger. In this work he created while still studying with Goldmark, Copland borrows directly from the second tableau of Igor Stravinsky’s ballet *Petrushka* in four specific and telling ways.

### Octatonicism

Richard Taruskin, in *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through “Mavra”*<sup>60</sup> and several recent articles on Stravinsky’s Russian music, has identified a Russian modernist style. It is characterized by a harmonic language developed by Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and his students (Stravinsky among them), whom Taruskin refers to collectively as the St. Petersburg school of composers—those associated with the conservatory. Although *Scherzo humoristique*’s harmonic foundation rests on the pervasive use of the whole-tone scale and pentatonicism to generate both melodic and harmonic formulations, octatonicism is present. As shown in table 1.6, it is found in the single internal octatonic Y subsection of section A’. However, octatonicism alone is not conclusive proof of a connection between Stravinsky and Copland in this work.

### Black Key/White Key Division

In numerous places in *Scherzo humoristique*, as we saw, Copland assigns the left hand and right hand specific duties. Evidence suggests that the

model for this piece was the second tableau of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. With respect to figuration and pianistic idiom, *Scherzo humoristique* reflects the black-key/white-key division found in the second or *Konzertstück* tableau. At [50] and at [51], the famous "Petrushka chord" occurs. Stravinsky assigns the left hand and right hand of the solo piano specific duties: the left hand plays the black keys and the right hand the white keys. The effect is more than visual, it is also aural: playing on the black keys (left hand) forms pentatonic scales, and playing on the white keys (right hand) forms diatonic scales. In numerous passages in *Cat and Mouse*, Copland's assignments are identical: the left hand plays on the black keys and the right hand on the white keys in the passages at mm. 21–31 and mm. 81–end.

### Tritone

Copland's interest in octatonicism extends beyond melodic application. In *Cat and Mouse* he also explores the tritonic properties of octatonicism. The black-key/white-key division has harmonic implications identical to those in Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. It stresses the tritone as more than a dissonant sonority: the tritone serves a harmonic and architectonic purpose. In his article "*Chez Pétrouchka: Harmony and Tonality chez Stravinsky*," Taruskin calls the tritone "octave bisecting"<sup>61</sup> because it divides the whole-tone scale (and the diatonic scale). The black-key/white-key division in *Petrushka* reflects the importance of the tritone as the midpoint dividing the octatonic scale, a means by which the octatonic scale may be organized into tetrachords. This "common tritone" also has bitonal implications in *Petrushka*. The black-key/white-key bifurcation throughout the second tableau, for example, at [50], and at [51], the "Petrushka chord," anchors around the tritone C-F# (enharmonically G<sup>b</sup>). Copland borrows this common tritone and uses it in a similar fashion. This "octave bisection," or the use of tritonic organization, occurs in *Cat and Mouse* in section B, where tritones are formed by the G<sup>b</sup> of the dyad and the C of the pair of thirds (reinforced by the key change to C major!) in m. 21; B<sup>b</sup>-E in m. 25 and m. 27; and D-A<sup>b</sup> in m. 26 and m. 28.

### Tonal Coherence

Copland also borrowed from Stravinsky harmonic progressions that use tonal relationships other than tonic-dominant or tonic-subdominant. In "*Chez Pétrouchka*," Taruskin discusses tonal coherence in the second tableau, pointing out the importance of the ii-I and VII-I harmonic progressions as Stravinsky's Russian modernist harmonic alternatives to the



V–I progression of the conventional tonal system first identified by Rameau. True, similar scales (whole tone and pentatonic) are also found in the works of French impressionist composers, whose works Copland also studied. But the likelihood of *Petrushka* being the model for Copland’s *Scherzo humoristique* increases when one takes into consideration the tonal coherence (Taruskin’s term) of both works. The tonal organization of Copland’s piece closely resembles that of this ballet’s second tableau. First, both works have D and C as tonal centers. Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* moves from C to D, and eventually E and F#. Copland’s work reverses the polarity, moving from D to C and back to D (C being the tonal center of section B, with a C triad in the right hand and use of the C whole-tone collection). In section B, while the left hand plays G<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup> or B<sup>b</sup>-A<sup>b</sup>, the right hand is anchored about the C-E pair. Furthermore, the whole-tone sonorities that close the first subsection of B are built on C. Taruskin has identified the vii<sup>7</sup>-I progression, along with ii-I, as an important cadential progression in *Petrushka*.<sup>62</sup> Copland’s *Scherzo* also features the VII-I progression. Although the Introduction is tonally ambiguous, D is established as the tonal center of both sections A and A'. Section B is cast in C. The overall tonal flow (again Taruskin’s term) is D–C–D, or I–VII–I, a mirror or inverse of the ii–I *Petrushka* progression. The simultaneous use of the whole-tone and pentatonic scales, the juxtaposition of octatonicism with diatonicism, the prominence of the tritone, the black-key, white-key bifurcated roles assigned to the left and right hands, and the use of VII–I as a modification of the vii<sup>7</sup>-I to provide tonal coherence lend overwhelming support to the thesis that Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* served as a direct model for Copland’s *Scherzo humoristique* (*The Cat and the Mouse*).

### Assimilating Stravinsky

*Scherzo humoristique* shows the extensive early influence of Igor Stravinsky on the young Copland. One of the works Goldmark would not critique, *Cat and Mouse* is representative of both Copland’s individual musical voice and his relatively mature style. It shows complete control over form and over what were astonishingly new techniques for American composers in 1921—certainly for someone just out of his teens! It shows Copland at the age of twenty composing a work with clear tonal centers yet free of functional tonality. He fully realizes rhythmic, programmatic (that of a mouse being chased by a menacing cat across the piano keyboard, in the manner of Zez Confrey and his popular song “Kitten on the Keys”), harmonic, and formal ideas.<sup>63</sup> The work shows Copland as autodidact: he has clearly advanced beyond the teachings of Goldmark and his requisite sonata form. This dissonant, whole-tone/pentatonic al-

ternation represents Copland's ultramodern style from the period he finished his studies with Goldmark, antedating his study in Paris. Thus, not only is *Scherzo humoristique* a work from Copland's first maturity, it also represents one of his earliest encounters with ultramodern music as he later identified it in his article of the mid-1920s, associated with the music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.

We know that Copland had enthusiastically and independently studied the music of Debussy and Scriabin. We know that Copland knew of the music of Stravinsky from reading Rosenfeld's *Dial* articles. We know from Oja's research that Stravinsky had won over New York and American audiences by 1920, and that *Petrushka* proved to be popular in New York. Pollack has shown that Copland attended performances of Stravinsky during those years he studied with Goldmark, thereby encountering his music directly in New York before departing for Paris. Stravinsky replaced Debussy and Scriabin as the composer after whose music he modeled his own. Analysis of *Scherzo humoristique (The Cat and the Mouse)* illuminates what Copland considered ultramodernism and reveals the techniques he explored during his study with Goldmark just prior to his trip to Paris. Throughout this work, Copland explores the fundamental nature of the tonal system and of diatonicism. The young composer used the whole-tone and octatonic scales not only to create melodies but also to fashion nonfunctional, nondiatonic ambiguous harmonies. Copland combined these scale systems and nontertian harmonies with other techniques such as the use of tonal poles, pedals, and ostinati to establish tonal centers. Copland also uses the tritone as dominant, and uses subdominant substitution. All these techniques allow Copland to establish a tonal center without resorting to the conventional means of diatonicism or functional harmony.

It is true that in his *Scherzo* Copland uses techniques derived from Debussy, particularly the suggestive, impressionistic title and the melodic and harmonic interaction of pentatonic-whole-tone formations. However, evidence shows that *Petrushka* must have been the model for the *Scherzo*. The tonal organization of Copland's piece closely resembles that of *Petrushka*'s second tableau. Copland's *Scherzo* clearly shows the black-key/white-key division, with dedicated roles assigned to the left and right hands. As did his model Stravinsky, Copland juxtaposes octatonicism with diatonicism, and uses tonal pedals, prominent tritone, tritonic octave bisection, and nonfunctional harmonic progressions that provide the tonal coherence that models the Russian modernist Stravinsky's harmonic alternative to the V-I progression, either ii-I or VII-I. All these allow Copland to construct a piece that is highly dissonant, atonal, and based on a system of tonal organization other than diatonicism. It is within these parameters, alternative harmonic progressions and innovative means by which to establish tonal centers—

the use of pedals, avoidance of leading tones—that one can see the influence of Stravinsky.

Clearly, the similarities between *Scherzo humoristique* and the second tableau of *Petrushka* are too striking to be ignored. But the implications extend beyond this single piece. Copland composed this work while he was studying with Goldmark and took it with him to Paris. The harmonic and tonal organization of this work suggests that by 1921, when Copland departed New York, he had already come under the influence of Stravinsky in his independent search for a new system of tonal and harmonic organization, and that the discovery of Stravinsky and his influence upon Copland's style began prior to the American's study with Nadia Boulanger.