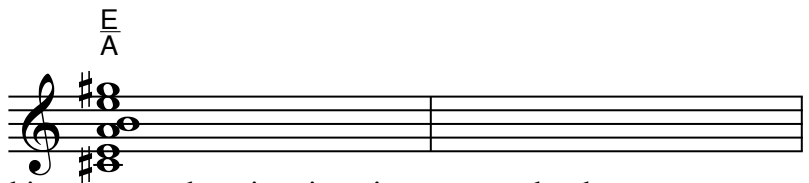


Some ideas about the harmony in the first movement of Appalachian Spring.

The harmony seems to be based on an E major triad in 2nd inversion stacked on top of an A major triad in 1st inversion. Stacking the triads this way puts them in mirror image to each other.



The interval of an ascending 3rd in the A triad (C# to E) is "reflected" in the E triad by the descending 3rd (G# to E). Likewise the interval of an ascending 4th in the A triad (E to A) is "reflected" in the E triad by the descending 4th (E to B).

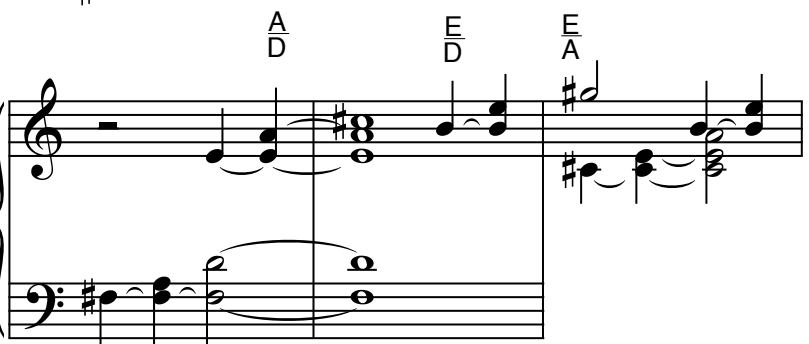
The triads A and E are two of the three primary triads (I and V) in the key of A major. The third primary triad, D major (IV), comes in a little later. So Aaron Copeland uses only the I, IV and V chords in the key of A in this movement..... well almost..... there are a couple of substitutes for IV close to the end.

All of the melodic and harmonic material in the first 10 bars is derived from the E/A chord.

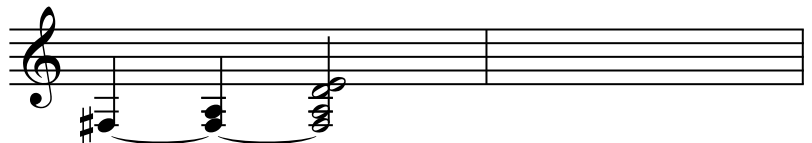
In bars 11 - 12 the strings and bassoon introduce A/D from the bottom up while the piano plays a pedal A, making it clear that we have not changed key.



Beginning in bar 13, we hear a series of stacked chords gently rocking back and forth between I and IV on the bottom of the stack and I and V on the top. The triads on the bottom are always in 1st inversion while the ones on top are always in 2nd. At various points we hear A/D, E/A and briefly E/D. The melodic motive which is first stated by the flute and strings in bars 3-5 is used for every change of harmony in this section. It continues on this way through to rehearsal #5 (bar 40).



Each of these "polychords" contains a major second where the two triads join e.g. the notes D and E in the A/D chord above. Starting in bar 41 Copeland pares down the polychord to a triad with an added note, mostly a D triad with E as the added note.



Bars 40 to 46 present a prolonged plagal cadence, I (bar 40) to IV with added notes (bars 41 to 45) resolving to I in bar 46. The Bmin and Bsus chords are "like-function substitutes" for IV.

The musical score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a grand staff brace on the left. The music is in G major. Bar 40 is in 4/4 time, marked with a fermata over the treble staff and the chord 'A'. Bar 41 is in 3/4 time, with chords 'Dadd2 Bm7' above the treble staff. Bar 42 is in 3/4 time, with the chord 'B7sus' above the treble staff. Bar 43 is in 4/4 time, with the chord 'Dadd2' above the treble staff. Bar 44 is in 4/4 time, with the chord 'Dadd2' above the treble staff. Bar 45 is in 5/4 time, with the chord 'Bm(add4)' above the treble staff. Bar 46 is in 4/4 time, with a fermata over the treble staff and the chord 'A' indicated by a circled 'A' below the bass staff.

Such beautiful music! Thank you Aaron Copeland!