

Post-Modernism
and
Music
of the
Post-Modern Period

The term **“Post-Modern”** is used by historians to refer to the period of musical history that followed the Modern Period.

Some historians place the beginning of the Post-Modern period of music at approximately **1930**, while others place the date at **1960**.

Either way, the roots of the Post-Modern period can be traced back to the 1930s, a period in world history in which many people felt **a great sense of anxiety about the modern world**.

Unlike the music of previous periods in musical history, **Post-Modernism in music is not a particular musical style or trend, but is more particularly a period of time in which an extremely wide variety of new and innovative music developed.**

The Post-Modern period **did not come about as a revolution or reaction** away from the previous period, the Modern Era.

The Post-Modern period is instead the result of the **fragmentation of many aspects of 20th century culture.**

The period of social turmoil which grew in the decades following World War Two was **mirrored in the arts and music.**

Experimentation with **new ideas,**
newly-developed media and
new philosophies of art
led to an expansion of the definition
of what actually constitutes art and music.

Still, many composers of the late 20th-century stayed with the **more conservative** (and generally more "listenable") 20th-century traditions established by composers such as **Aaron Copland**.

This is especially true of most contemporary **film composers**, who write music for a mass audience, in contrast to the **avant-garde composers**, whose audiences are usually quite small by comparison.

As with the other periods of musical history,
Post-Modernism is a period that has parallels
in **painting, sculpture, literature, architecture**
and most other forms of art.

Post-Modern Art



“Search”

Jackson Pollock - 1955

Post-Modern Art

"Campbell's Soup I"

(1968)

by

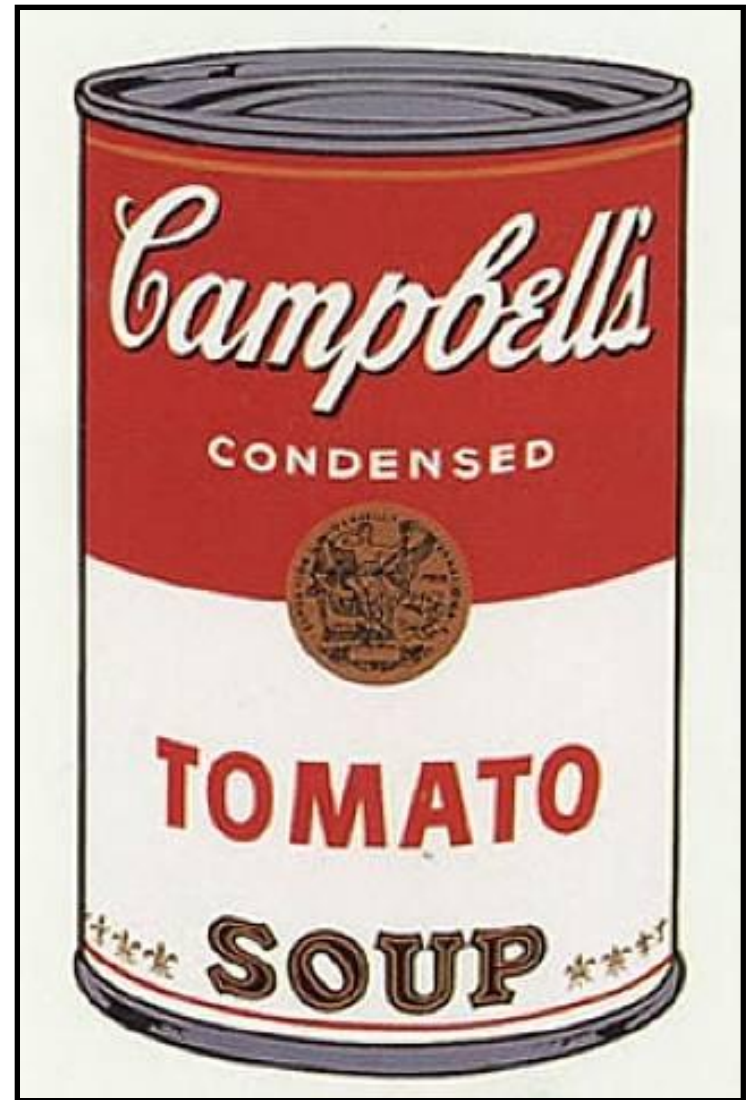
Andy Warhol

(1928-1987)

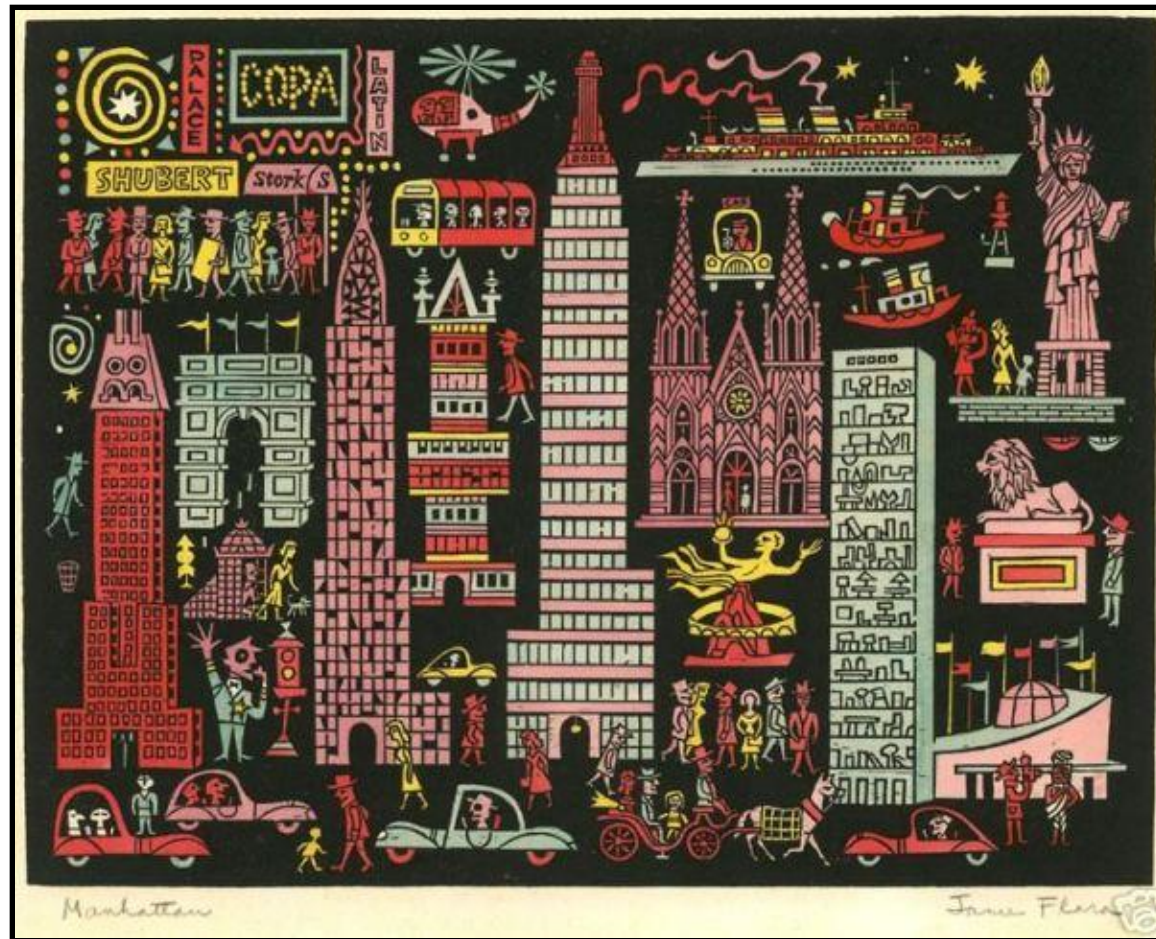
American

"Pop Art"

Painter



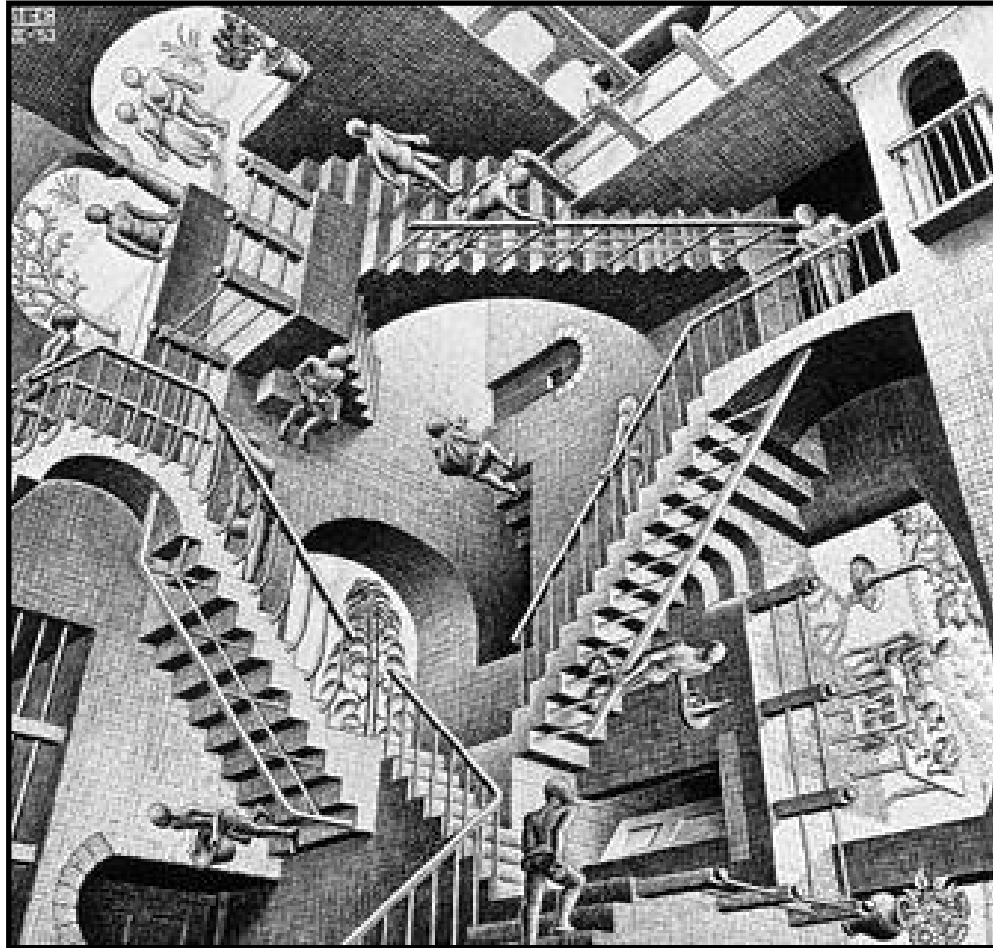
Post-Modern Art



“Manhattan”

Jim Flora - 1954
Hand Tinted Woodcut Print

Post-Modern Art

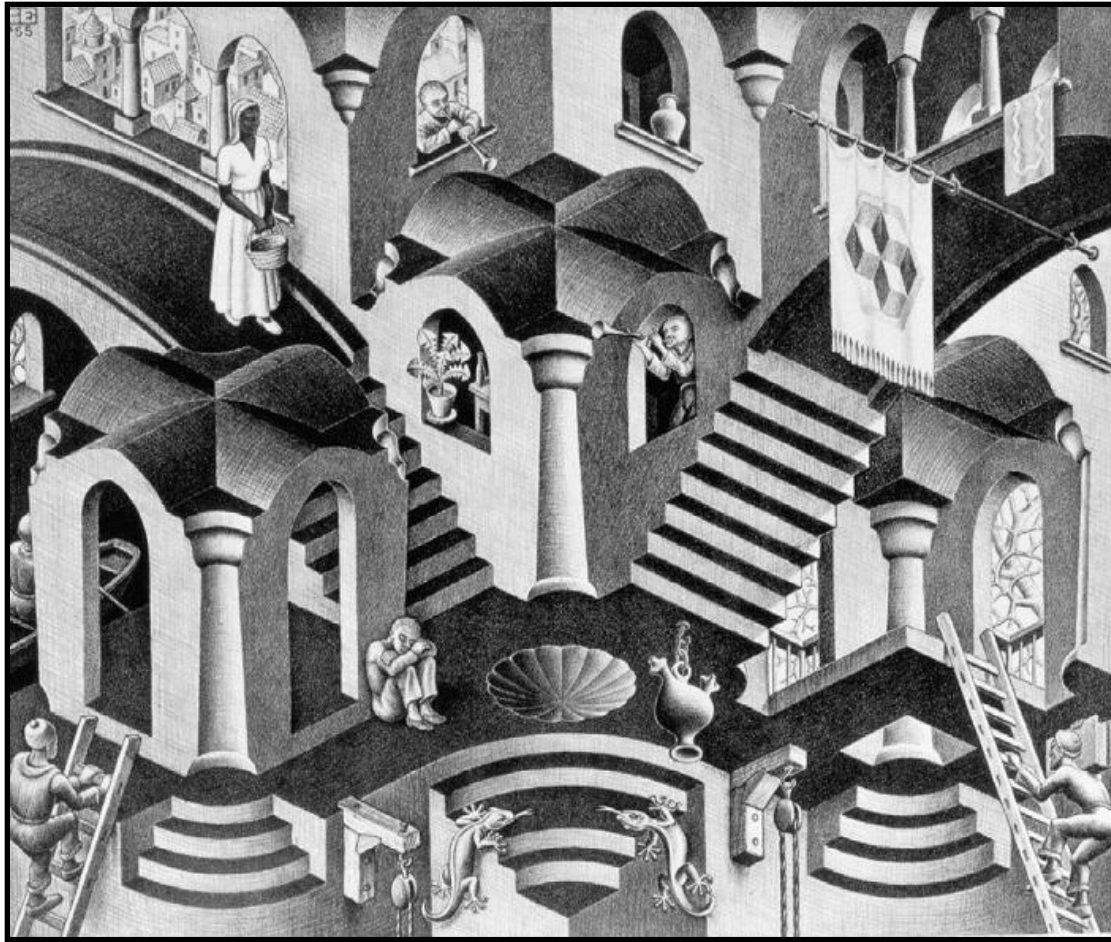


“Relativity” (1953)

M.C. Escher (Dutch; 1898-1972)

Lithograph Print

Post-Modern Art

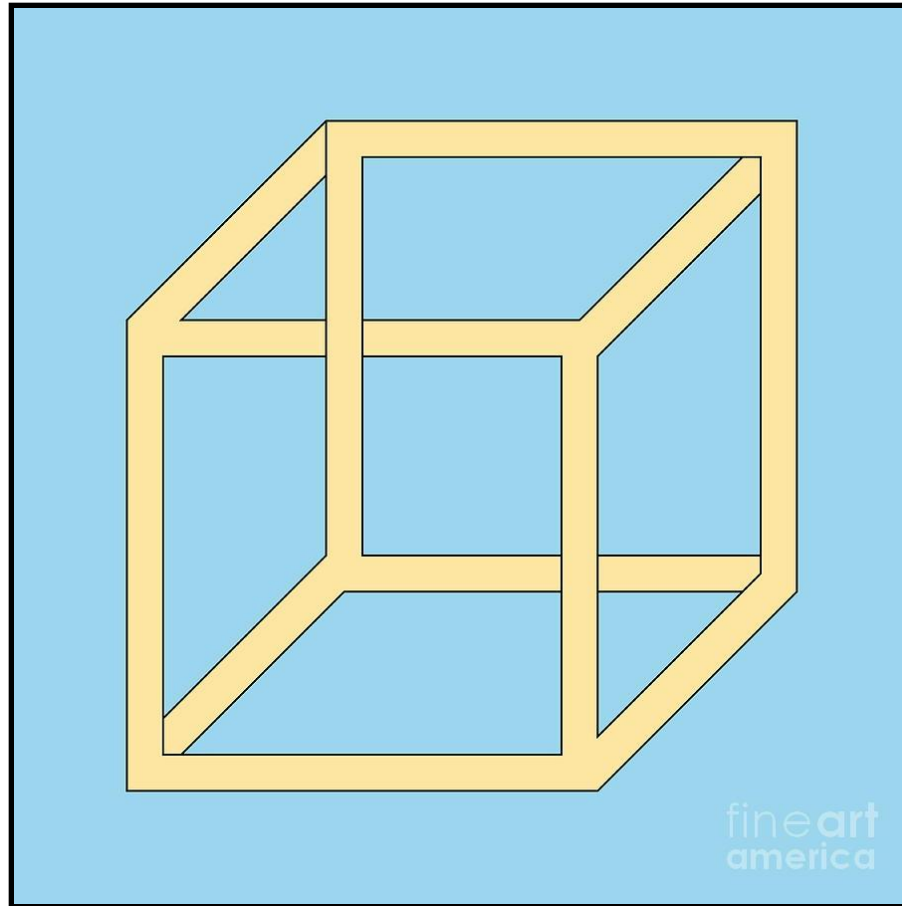


“Convex and Concave” (1955)

M.C. Escher (Dutch; 1898-1972)

Lithograph Print

Post-Modern Art

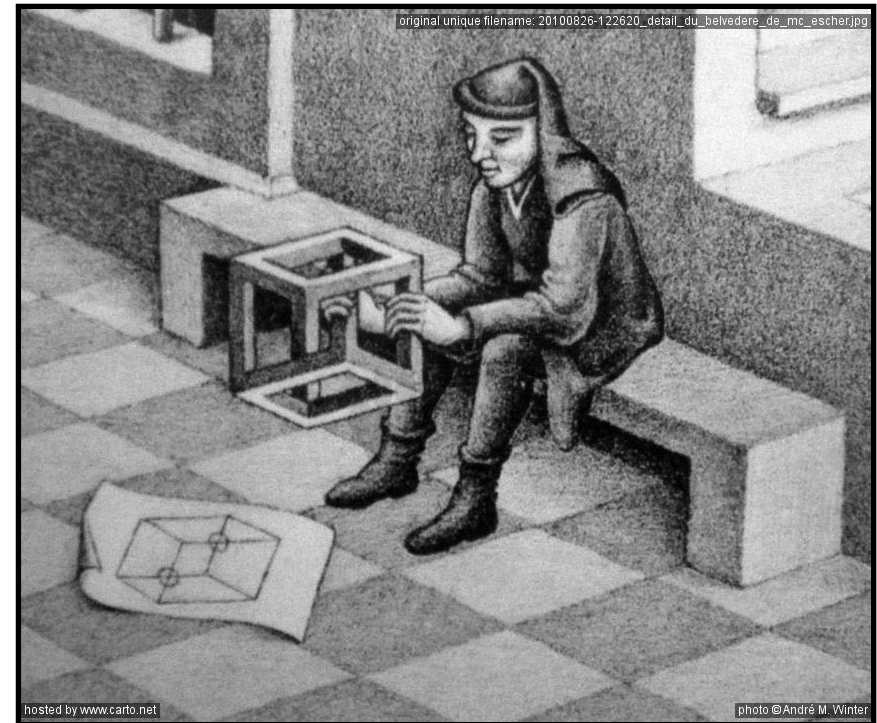
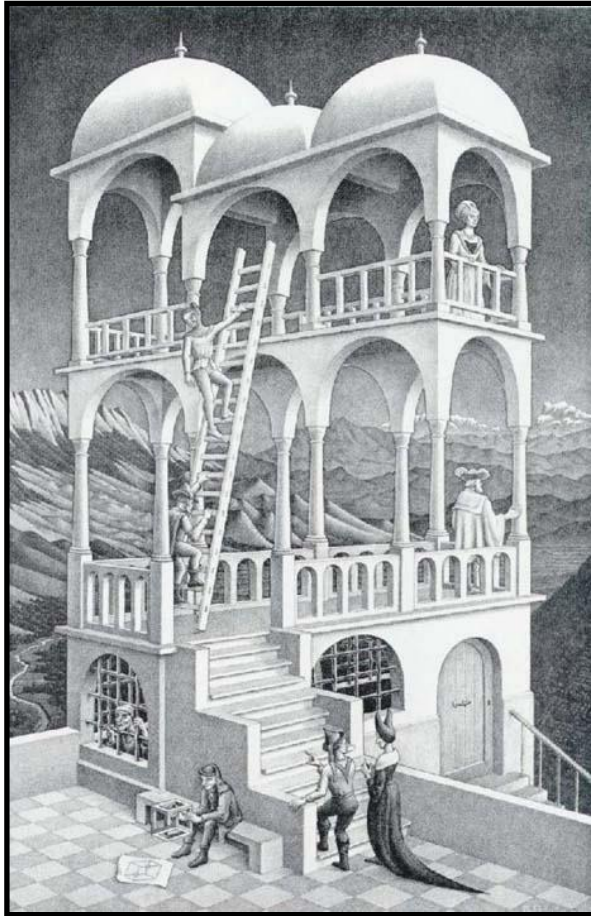


Freemish Crate (1955)

M.C. Escher (Dutch; 1898-1972)

Lithograph Print

Post-Modern Art



This enlarged detail made from Escher's ***Belvedere*** shows a boy holding a Freemish Crate (impossible object)

Belvedere (1958)

M.C. Escher (Dutch; 1898-1972)

Lithograph Print

Post- Modern Architecture



Habitat 67

Montreal, Canada. 1967

Post- Modern Architecture



Sydney Opera House

Sydney, Australia, 1973



“Fictions”

A series of digitally altered photographs of “impossible architecture”
by Belgian photographer Filip Dujardin

Philip Glass

American composer
born in 1937

Philip Glass is one
of the leading
composers of the
Minimalist School
of music in the
Post-Modern period.
His works include
operas, symphonies,
concertos,
chamber music
and film scores.



Musical Example: (video link in this
week's assignment folder)

"Rubric" from Glassworks
(chamber music work)

Scored for: flute, soprano sax, tenor sax,
2 French horns and electronic organ

Gunther Schuller

American Composer
(1925 – 2015)

Gunther Schuller was an influential American composer who pioneered a type of music in the 1960s known as **"Third Stream"** music, a combination of jazz and classical music.

His works include many orchestral compositions, chamber music and opera/musical theatre works.



Musical Example: (video link in this week's assignment folder)

"Conversations"

("Third Stream" chamber music work)

Scored for: string quartet, string bass, piano, vibraphone & drums

George Crumb

American Composer
born in 1929

George Crumb is an American composer who is noted as an explorer of unusual timbres, alternative forms of notation, and extended instrumental and vocal techniques. His works include orchestral, choral, chamber and solo piano works. His **"Echoes of Time and the River"** won the Pulitzer Prize in 1968.



Musical Example:

"Ancient Voices of Children"
(chamber music work)

Scored for: soprano, boy soprano, oboe, mandolin, harp, amplified piano, and percussion

Aspects of Post-Modernism

Subversion:

undermining of authority or established conventions,
especially **subversive humor**

Subversion refers to an attempt to transform the established social order and its structures of power, authority, and hierarchy.

Subversion (Latin subvertere: overthrow) refers to a process by which the values and principles of a system in place are contradicted or reversed.

Post-Modern Literature

Postmodern literature is literature characterized by a heavy reliance on techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, and questionable narrators, and is often (though not exclusively) defined as a style or trend which emerged in the post–World War II era.

Postmodern literature is seen as a reaction against Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature.

Popular examples of Post-Modern literature include:

- **Catch-22** (1961) by Joseph Heller
- **Slaughterhouse-Five** (1969) by Kurt Vonnegut
- **Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas** (1971)
by Hunter S. Thompson.

Examples of Post-Modernism in Contemporary Culture

Post-Modern Films

- Blade Runner (1982)
- Fight Club (1999)
- The Matrix (1999)

Post-Modern Animated TV Programs

- The Simpsons
- South Park
- Family Guy

Examples of Post-Modern Music

Ballerina on the Boat (1969) by Alfred Schnittke

Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) was a Soviet and German composer. Schnittke's early music shows the strong influence of the great Russian Modernist composer **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906-1975). Schnittke was one of the leading composers of the Soviet school of composition, having composed many symphonies, concertos, operas, ballets and choral and chamber music.

Today, Schnittke is best remembered outside of Russia for his music for an award-winning avant-garde animated short film entitled **“Ballerina on the Boat.”**

Part One: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_jadLaFtMY (7'45")

Part Two: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XISrcrh3Nw> (8'56")



Karl Jenkins

Welsh Composer
born in 1944

Karl Jenkins is a Welsh composer who spent a great deal of his career performing as a jazz musician. As a composer, his works include orchestral, band and choral works. His best-known work is entitled **Palladio**, (named after the famous Italian Renaissance architect **Andrea Palladio**) for string orchestra in a Neo-Baroque style highly influenced by style of the great Baroque composer **Antonio Vivaldi**.

Musical Example: (video link
in this week's assignment folder)

Palladio

(chamber orchestra work)

Scored for: string orchestra