

*My Fifth Symphony, "Land", emerged from the act of driving (repeatedly) across the American midsection, in particular from the central prairie to the Rocky Mountains. The scale and drama of this landscape has inspired me as I've become familiar with it. The prairie and High Plains are not at all flat; they are the rolling waves of the base of a prehistoric sea, and their geography has a drama equal to that of the mountains upon whose shore they crash westward. The work's five movements reflect this terrain-progression, and the central (and largest) movement further subdivides into a series of different mountain vistas and landscapes.*

*But the work is not meant to be a literal portrait or tone poem. It takes this geography as a starting point to evoke images and sensations that can only come from music, and point beyond the physical surface towards something "other". The entire piece is clearly a sort of ascension: in register, timbre, harmony. By the time the final movement is reached, we've gone beyond land into somewhere different and transcendent. I like to think of it as a cross between the Buddhist Pure Land and the Celestial Country of Charles Ives.*

*---Robert Carl*