



AARON COPLAND

**AND THE
AMERICAN
VERNACULAR**

An historical overview created for The Philadelphia
Orchestra by Michael M. Cone.
To be used for educational purposes.

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Aaron Copland and the American Vernacular

Tracks and clips

Duration

1. Introduction

6:10

- a. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, RCA Victor LSC-3184 recorded 1/8/1969.
- b. Copland, Aaron, *Our Town*, London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia MS-7375 recorded 10/2/1967.
- c. Copland, Aaron, *Billy the Kid Suite*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Columbia ML-5157 recorded 12/18/1955.
- d. Copland, Aaron, *Symphony No. 3*, London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Everest SDBR-3018 released 1959.
- e. Copland, Aaron, *Sonata for Violin & Piano*, Romuald Tecco, violin, and Dennis Russell Davies, piano, MusicMasters MMD6 0220 M recorded 7/10/1989.
- f. Copland, Aaron, *Symphony for Organ & Orchestra*, NY Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, E. Power Biggs, organ, Columbia MS-7058 recorded 1/3/1967.
- g. Copland, Aaron, *Threnody No. 2: In Memoriam: Beatrice Cunningham*, Copland House Ensemble, Arabesque Records Z6794-2 released 2006.

2. Copland & 'Appalachian Spring', Pt. I

23:09

- a. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring*, Columbia Chamber Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia M-32736 recorded 9/11/1973.
- b. – e. Piano.
- f. Copland Rehearses *Appalachian Spring*, Columbia Chamber Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia BTS-34 recorded 9/11/1973.
- g. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring, orchestral version*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Columbia ML-5157 recorded 11/28/1954.
- h. *Ibid.*
- i. Piano.
- j. Beethoven, Ludwig van, *Piano Sonata No. 21 in C, Op. 53*, Richard Goode, Nonesuch 79391-2 released 1992.
- k. & l. Piano.

- m. Copland, Aaron, *Scherzo humoristique: le chat et la souris*, Leo Smit, Columbia M2-35901 recorded January, 1978.
- n. Copland, Aaron, *Piano Concerto*, NY Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, piano, Columbia MS-6698 recorded 1/13/1964.
- m. Copland, Aaron, *Concerto for Clarinet, Piano & Harp*, Columbia Symphony, Aaron Copland, Benny Goodman, clarinet, Columbia MS-6497 released 1963.
- o. Copland, Aaron, *Music for a Great City*, London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia M-30374 recorded 6/13/1964.
- p. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite*, *op. cit.*
- q. – s. *Ibid.*
- t. Copland, Aaron, *Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo*, London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia M-30114 recorded 10/26/1968.
- u. Copland, Aaron, *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!*, London Sinfonietta, Oliver Knussen, Argo 0289 443 2032 9 ZH released 10/1/2007.
- v. Copland, Aaron, *Piano Quartet*, Juilliard Quartet, Aaron Copland, piano, Columbia M-32110042 recorded 10/28/1966.
- w. Columbia Chamber Orchestra, *op. cit.*
- x. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring*, *op. cit.*
- y. Columbia Chamber Orchestra, *op. cit.*
- z, aa. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite*, *op. cit.*

3. History, Folk Song & Copland

15:20

- a. Haydn, Franz Joseph, *Piano Trio No. 39 in G, Hob. XV:25*, Beaux Arts Trio, Phillips 422 831-2 recorded 1969 .
- b. Haydn, Franz Joseph (arr.), *Auld Lang Syne*, Hob. XXXIa:218, Jamie MacDougall & the Haydn Trio Eisenstadt, Brilliant Classics 93769/16 recorded 2006.
- c. Beethoven, Ludwig van (arr.), *Auld Lang Syne*, WoO. 156, Felicity Lott, John Mark Ainsley, Allen Thomas, Elizabeth Layton, Ursula Smith, Malcolm Martineau, Deutsche Grammophon 02289 477 5128 1 GB 7 released 9/15/2004.
- d. Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek, *Mazurka Op. 67, No. 4 in a, B. 163*, Stanislas Niedzielski, HMV C 2008/10 recorded 10/6/1930.
- e. Vaughan Williams, Ralph, *Six Studies in English Folk Song*, Lloyd Smith, cello, Davyd Booth, piano, Wister Quartet Private Label recorded 10/12/2008.

- f. Bartók, Béla, *Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 68*, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon 415 668-2 released March, 1985.
- g. Copland, Aaron, *Old American Songs, Set 1*, Peter Pears, tenor, Benjamin Britten, piano, EMI RLS 748 recorded 9/29/1950.
- h. *Ibid.*, but William Warfield, baritone, Aaron Copland, piano, Columbia ML-2206 recorded 9/16/1951.
- i. Copland, Aaron, *Old American Songs, Set 1, orchestral version*, Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, William Warfield, baritone, Columbia MS-6497 released 1963.
- j. Copland, Aaron, *The Tender Land*, NY Philharmonic, Aaron Copland, Columbia MS-6814 recorded 7/31/1965.

4. Copland & 'Appalachian Spring', Pt. 2

11:57

- a. – e. Piano and voice clips.
- f. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite, op. cit.*
- g. Bach, Johann Sebastian, *Canonic Variations on 'vom Himmel hoch'*, BWV 769, Simon Preston, Deutsche Grammophon 427 668-2 released September, 1988.
- h. Stravinsky, Igor, *Chorale Variations on 'vom Himmel hoch'*, J. S. Bach, CBC Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, Sony SM2K 46301 recorded 3/30/1963.
- i. – m. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite, op. cit.*

5. Copland as Performer

14:24

- a. Copland, Aaron, *Piano Variations*, Aaron Copland, New World Records NW-277 originally released in 1945.
- b. Copland, Aaron, *Appalachian Spring Suite*, London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Columbia M-30649 recorded 11/9/1970.
- c. Copland, Aaron, *Lincoln Portrait*, Philadelphia Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Philadelphia Orchestra Centennial Edition recorded 8/5/1976.
- d. *Ibid.* but London Symphony Orchestra, Columbia M-30649 recorded 10/26/1968.
- e. *Ibid.* but Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Adlai Stevenson, speaker, Columbia MS-6684 released 1965.
- f. Chávez, Carlos, *Symphony No. 2*, Stadium Symphony Orchestra of NY, Carlos Chávez, Everest SDBR-3029 released 1959.

- g. *Ibid.*, but Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, Minnesota Orchestra Centennial Edition recorded 1/6/1976.
- h. Schubert, Franz, *Symphony No. 5 in B♭, D. 485*, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, broadcast recording of 7/24/1970.
- i. Copland, Aaron, *Lincoln Portrait*, *op. cit.*
- j. Copland, Aaron, *Old American Songs, Set 1, orchestral version*, *op. cit.*

Thanks, Comments, Bibliography

This cd is dedicated to Fanny Scordilis, 1923 – 2012.

Once again, I am indebted to Alan Lesitsky, his trove of wonderful recordings has to be experienced to be believed. He was able to supply just the brick that I needed to complete the edifice. Seth B. Winner deserves no fewer thanks, and for the same reason. For what must have seemed like an eternity, Connie had to listen to my complaints that I couldn't shut off the recording of 'Long Time Ago' that kept playing in my head. She didn't even threaten to divorce me: a miracle. Had Corey Field not told me about the rehearsal disc of *Appalachian Spring*, I might not have remembered that it existed (at one time, I did know that): how much poorer this would then have been. Al Lesitsky joined Brian McShea and Stan Scordilis in my review panel; what you hear would not have been the same without them. Finally, I might not have done this at all, had not Lynette Zimmerman suggested it.

When I was of an age to have heroes, I had three: Igor Stravinsky, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Aaron Copland. To some extent, the preparation of this cd has expunged one of those demons, while making my appreciation of his consummate artistry all the more acute. Copland seemed to me a triple threat: composer, conductor, and author. I was lucky enough to hear him conduct, and to listen to him speak. As to the writing, I'm not certain that I realized quite what a strong influence he had on my musical taste until I re-read *What to Listen for in Music* while preparing this cd. Practically every idea that I've had, that I thought at all trenchant — and with which I've bludgeoned my musical friends for nearly a half-century — proves to have come from there. At least it was one of the first books on music that I read. Oh, well.

Howard Pollack, in *Aaron Copland: the Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (Illinois University Press, 2000), places Copland squarely at the center of American arts, letters and music. Hart Crane's poem, *The Dance*, is to be found in the *Powhatan's Daughter* section of his epic, *The Bridge*. This unbelievably musical work has been reprinted by the Library of America. To better understand Copland, one could do no better than to read the two volumes of his autobiography compiled with Vivian Perlis: *Copland, 1900 through 1942* and *Since 1943*; both volumes were published by St. Martin's Press. I've already mentioned *What to Listen for in Music*, but I should add that the admission that I just made concerning it must apply no less to *Our New Music*, *Music and Imagination*, and *Copland on Music*, all of which I read at what was obviously an impressionable age. Boosey and Hawkes miniature scores of the orchestral and chamber versions of the *Appalachian Spring Suite* were invaluable.

I was quite literally up the creek, when Connie suggested that Emily Tepe could save me. Not only did she do so with great skill, but with wonderful grace as well. Her suggestions as to how to present the never easy technical material on music — that I believed everyone needed to know — were also valuable. I'm not at all certain that she agrees with me that music is math, but she helped me to show its bones. Having some idea of musical structure — almost no matter how little — I believe to be a necessary part of gaining a full enjoyment of this rhapsodic abstract art.

I have always thought music to be strongly referential. One cannot hear Stewart Goodyear play a Beethoven sonata lyrically without thinking of another pianist presenting it as a knotty intellectual puzzle. I have come to believe that both approaches are valid. As long as the piece *sounds*, it is good. A disproportionate part of Copland's output is orchestral; my suspicion is that it is as much a reflection of the times as of the artist. He always made his living from his music: he wrote what would sell. The orchestral interpretations that one heard when he lived tended to be grounded in his own conducting style. Since his death, I perceive some diversion. That is not a negative. Think of the difference between his and Chávez's performances of the *Sinfonia India*. The Philadelphia Orchestra and its precise, lush timbre presents another point of reference. We who hear it must always remain grateful.

To close: I am serious about coming by and talking to me in seat K-101. It's not just a tag line. Connie and I try hard to attend every different program that the Orchestra performs. If we're in town, we go. I've collected recorded music all my life — I came to classical music more in that way than through my dismal pianism. Those recordings stick in my head and make cd's like this one thinkable. Figuring out how to present the material is another matter. This is the third in a series of educational cd's that I've made and cracking the nut of presentation has been the most difficult task every single time. Talking with you just might help. If Thursday evenings do not mean Philadelphia Orchestra to you, as they have to me for thirty-five years, and you still want to take me up on my offer, you can contact me through the Orchestra.

Mike Cone

Track Summary

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5. Copland as Performer	14:24

Cover: Shaker Chair, John Keith Russell Antiques

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