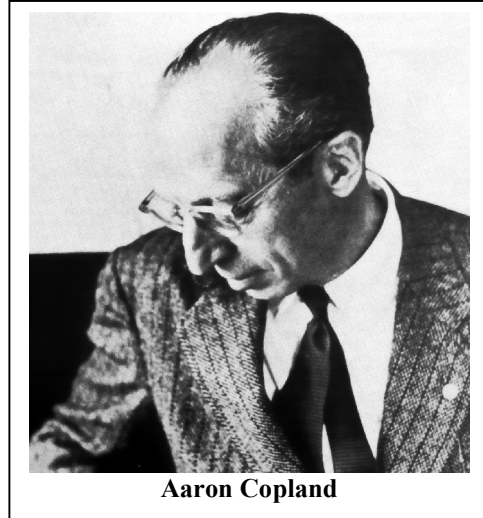


**AARON COPLAND** (1900-1991) To musicians around the world, Aaron Copland represents all the best characteristics of America in the twentieth century. His music reflects the activity of urban life on one hand, and the vastness of open spaces on the other. His use of folk songs, jazz elements, and aggressive dissonances of a machine age are all natural expressions of the man who felt he must be the definition of a twentieth century composer. He was, after all, born in 1900.



Aaron Copland

In 1941, Martha Graham, an innovative modern dance choreographer, contacted Copland regarding a ballet commission. They corresponded for two years before Copland accepted the offer to compose a ballet recounting the experiences of a young couple starting a new life together on a farm. The score, originally for 13 instruments, was finished in 1944 and the ballet, entitled *Appalachian Spring*, premiered on October 30 of that year. Below are the original program notes:

“Part and parcel of our lives is that moment of Pennsylvania spring when there was ‘a garden eastward of Eden.’

“Spring was celebrated by a man and a woman building a house with joy and love and prayer; by a revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the Promised Land.”

*Appalachian Spring* was an instant success, bringing fame to both composer and choreographer. As the ballet’s popularity grew, so did the demand for a full orchestral version of the score. In 1945, Copland arranged a suite from the ballet for orchestra, allowing him access to more grandeur and brilliance. He created three additional arrangements, but the 1945 version is by far the most popular, winning the Pulitzer Prize for music that year. The wonderful new colors heard throughout the 1945 version give new life to the music, and the last three notes (for glockenspiel and harp harmonics) make the closing of the suite one of Copland’s most magical endings.

—Silas Nathaniel Huff