

Moby Dick

Bernstein – Overture to *Candide* - 5'

Barber - Adagio - 9'

Copland – *Appalachian Spring* - 23'

Herrmann – *Moby Dick* - 45'

Overture to Candide* *Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Bernstein burst onto the serious music scene as a prodigy and piano virtuoso. He ascended to his post as music director of the New York Philharmonic at a very young age. His symphonic mentor Serge Koussevitsky disapproved of his interests in popular music, but Bernstein would not be held back. He composed comic operas and musicals, performed jazz, conducted piano concertos from the keyboard, made educational TV shows about music, and more.

Bernstein based his 1958 operetta *Candide* on the novella by Voltaire, a satire of the fashionable philosophies of his day, the mid-18th century. Though written for Broadway, Bernstein used opera singers for the premiere. The overture may be the most-often played of Bernstein's compositions. The sparkling orchestration and odd time signatures make this an approachable and exciting piece for all.

Adagio for Strings* *Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Playing piano and cello at age 6, Barber got a good early start. By the age of 9, he knew he was meant to be a composer and not an athlete. He entered the Curtis School of Music at age 14 and studied composition, piano, and voice. In his twenties, he became well-known in the musical world and received commissions from famous performers such as Vladimir Horowitz, Leontyne Price, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. His awards include two Pulitzer prizes, the American Rome prize, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Barber sent his first Essay for Orchestra and Adagio for Strings (a 5-part arrangement of the second movement of his string quartet) to Toscanini, who decided to perform both. He memorized them, not to consult them again until the day before the performance. This concert was notable in that Toscanini thought enough of pieces by an American to perform them for a wide audience. Toscanini took the Adagio on tour to England and South America. Barber's music was the first work of a North American composer to be performed for Latin Americans. It was played at the funerals of FDR, Einstein, and Princess Grace of Monaco. It was broadcast in South Africa on the death of Jan Christian Smuts and in the U.S. on the death of JFK. It became so popular that Barber was identified with it, as with Rachmaninoff and the Prelude in c#. It's a purely emotional piece with no visible technique or artifice. Barber could tell it was good; when he finished composing the second movement of the string quartet, he said, "It is a knockout!"

The piece begins with a wandering, introspective melody. Each section plays the melody in turn, increasing in harmonic richness and dynamic to an intense climax. This is a piece that expresses an emotion in the most simple, direct, and powerful way imaginable.

Appalachian Spring* *Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Born in Brooklyn of Russian parents (his original last name was Kaplan), Copland was the first American composer whose music was widely appreciated in Europe and recognized as distinctly American. At age 17 he studied music theory with Rubin Goldmark. In 1921 he became the first full-time American student of the great French composition teacher, Nadia Boulanger, who also taught such

American greats as George Gershwin and Roy Harris. He made much use of jazz in his works between 1925 and 1930 to purge the "too European flavor" of his compositions. After a period of experimentation, he became conscious of the need for music that was more accessible to the public. From the years following came pieces such as *El Salon Mexico*, *Billy the Kid*, and *Appalachian Spring*, which are still concert favorites. If you wanted to pick a piece that personifies American orchestral music, you'd probably pick *Appalachian Spring*. The orchestral suite is divided into eight movements. Copland described them as follows:

1. Very slowly. Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light.
2. Fast. Sudden burst of unison strings in A major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.
3. Moderate. Duo for the Bride and her Intended – scene of tenderness and passion.
4. Quite fast. The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feeling – suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.
5. Still faster. Solo dance of the Bride – presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.
6. Very slowly (as at first). Transition scene to music reminiscent of the introduction.
7. Calm and flowing. Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme, sung by a solo clarinet, was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies compiled by Edward D. Andrews and published under the title "The Gift to Be Simple." The melody most borrowed and used almost literally is called "Simple Gifts."
8. Moderate. Coda. The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left "quiet and strong in their new house." Muted strings intone a hushed prayerlike chorale passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music.

***Moby Dick* Bernard Herrmann (1911-1975)**

Herrmann's father encouraged him to undertake musical activity, including learning the violin. When Herrmann won a composition prize at the age of 13, he began to take it seriously. He studied at New York University and Juilliard. He formed his own orchestra, The New Chamber Orchestra of New York, at the age of 20. In 1934, he joined CBS as a staff conductor and brought many new compositions to U.S. audiences. He is best known for composing music for movies, working with such luminaries as Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, and Ray Harryhausen. He wrote music for *Citizen Kane*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, and *North By Northwest*, just to name a few.

The cantata *Moby Dick* was written for for 2 tenors, 2 basses, male chorus, and orchestra. Herrmann completed it in 1938 and dedicated it to an earlier American composer, Charles Ives. The dramatic and sinister music brings the dangers of the whale hunt under the direction of an obsessed madman to life. The set of characters and the sequence of actions are reduced to a minimum to control the scope of the piece. Herrmann thought of the piece as great literature set to music.