



AMERICAN CLASSICS



COPLAND

Appalachian Spring (Complete Ballet)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Detroit Symphony Orchestra • Leonard Slatkin

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! • Appalachian Spring (Complete Ballet)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! (1934)

This rarely-heard work is a ballet, first performed in Chicago in 1934, which takes place in a courtroom where three witnesses give conflicting accounts of a murder which occurred in a local night club. Copland wrote the work at breakneck speed, having been given less than three months to compose and orchestrate it, and for which he was paid the princely sum of \$250. It was written for Ruth Page (1899-1991), a very talented dancer and choreographer who had the great misfortune to have lived a good deal of her productive life in the shadow of the much better known Agnes de Mille, who helped to create another Copland ballet, the famous *Rodeo*. De Mille's name is still in the forefront of 20th-century American ballet, but nowadays Page is an almost forgotten figure; a great shame, because she was immensely gifted and created some very striking and influential dance works. A native of Indianapolis, she studied initially in New York, and after a tour of South America with the legendary Russian dancer Anna Pavlova, she went to Chicago to dance the leading rôle in a ballet version of Oscar Wilde's story *The Birthday of the Infanta*, with music by John Alden Carpenter. After a brief stint on Broadway, she returned to Chicago in 1924 as principal with the Allied Arts Ballet. In 1925 she danced with the world-famous Ballet Russes, the first American dancer to perform for the legendary impresario Sergei Diaghilev. From 1926 to 1931 she was principal dancer and choreographer for the Ravinia Opera Company, then worked with the Chicago Opera Company off and on from 1931 to 1945 as a dancer and choreographer. From 1954 to 1969 Page served as ballet director for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, at the same time touring the United States with her Opera Ballet, presenting full-length ballets based on opera stories. In 1965 she choreographed a major production of *The Nutcracker* which was presented every December through 1997 under the auspices of the Chicago Tribune Charities. Perhaps her most famous, influential and

frequently-performed ballet was the 1938 *Frankie and Johnny*, with music by Jerome Moross. Upon retiring from her work as a choreographer she created the Ruth Page Foundation, which in turn developed the Ruth Page Foundation School of Dance, later known as the Ruth Page Center for the Arts. A pioneer in creating works on American subjects, she added movements from sports, popular dance, vaudeville, musical comedy and everyday gestures to the vocabulary of classical ballet. Among her many credits are having danced at the coronation of Emperor Hirohito in Japan in 1928, and arranging the great Rudolf Nureyev's New York début in 1962. She was considered by many to have been the Grande Dame of American ballet; her contributions to the dance in this country were enormous, and her tireless efforts certainly put Chicago on the map of international ballet. According to Agnes de Mille, Page's Chicago studio became "the focal point for all ballet training in the Midwest." Along with *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!* and *Frankie and Johnny*, she is also known for *An American Pattern* (1937), a feminist protest against conformity, and *Billy Sunday* (1948), based on that fiery evangelist's sermons.

Page probably met Copland in 1930, when John Alden Carpenter invited him to give a series of lectures at the Chicago Arts Club. Four years later Page proposed a collaboration of some sort, and asked for a ballet in the spirit of his jazz-influenced works. She then came up with a scenario about a murder in a Chicago nightclub and the ensuing trial. Copland agreed to this idea and set about writing the score. What was eventually titled *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!* combined contemporaneous disenchantment with the American judicial system with a view of life at the violent edges of American society. Among the ways Copland portrayed this was by purposely distorting part of our National Anthem at the start and the conclusion of the ballet, something which incurred heavy criticism in some quarters. In addition, he drew on some earlier pieces which were worked into the new score, among them the *Nocturne* and *Ukelele Serenade* from his 1926 *Two*

Pieces for violin and piano, a movement from his unfinished 1926 piano suite *Five Sentimental Melodies*, and parts of his earlier and equally little-known necromantic ballet *Grohg*. The serious nature of the scenario was lightened somewhat by Page by using a tango, blues numbers and Apache dances, highly dramatic and stylized dances which got their name from the slang word for the Paris underworld at the beginning of the 20th century. The premières were moderately successful, in Chicago in 1934 and New York in 1936, both productions using very striking backdrops of skyscrapers at unusual angles, presumably an attempt to convey the modern world seriously out of whack. Copland made a concert suite from the ballet which was performed in 1937, but after that he withdrew both the ballet and the suite. As he explained at the time, "The music was really incidental to the dance, and I discovered that some music is more incidental than others." Unfortunately, Page's original choreography was lost, and when she tried unsuccessfully in 1969 to remember what it was all about, she stated "I doubt now if it was a very good ballet."

The action concerns a trial in an unidentified courtroom in Chicago, during which three witnesses give completely different accounts of the murder of the male dancer in a cabaret act which took place in a local nightclub. The witnesses are a hostess from the nightclub, a waiter from the nightclub, and a pair of newly-weds just back from their honeymoon who were in the nightclub at the time of the crime. The hostess says that the female dancer shot her partner, the newly-weds say that a jealous chorus girl ran on stage and shot him, and the waiter claims that an unknown crazy man in the audience did the shooting. At the end, the jury, which has been bored to distraction during the trial, finds all three of the suspects guilty! The lawyers leave the courtroom very satisfied with the verdict, as three loud chords announce the next case.

Charles Greenwell

Appalachian Spring (1944)

Aaron Copland's ballet music for *Appalachian Spring*, originally scored for a theater ensemble of thirteen players, was first heard in connection with the première of Martha Graham's dance of the same title, on October 30, 1944, in Washington, DC. The composer subsequently recorded the piece for full orchestra to create a concert version. In this form, the work was performed for the first time on October 4, 1945, when the New York Philharmonic played it under the direction of Artur Rodzinski. The music is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani and miscellaneous percussion, harp, piano and strings.

Copland was and remains America's great national composer, a musician who found a way to speak clearly and eloquently to his fellow citizens and capture something essential about our country as few artists in any field have done. His work has become a permanent part of the American cultural landscape.

Copland's most famous work, *Appalachian Spring*, developed out of a collaboration with the choreographer and modern dancer Martha Graham. In 1943, Graham approached Copland about providing music for a new ballet. The scenario she had devised was unpretentious: a young pioneer couple, beginning life together in rural Pennsylvania, celebrates the building of a new farm house. Joining them are their neighbors and a revivalist preacher.

Modest as this seems, no subject could have better suited Copland at the time. Like many artists, and more than most, he had been strongly affected by the wave of populist sentiment that swept the country during the Depression. Responding to the growing sympathy for ordinary Americans, the composer moved in the mid-1930s to make his style more accessible, and turned to American folk music as a source of thematic material. His use of traditional dance tunes and song melodies was highly personal, however, for instead of quoting these literally, Copland usually transfigured them in subtle yet telling ways. Nevertheless, they imbued his work with a

distinctly national flavor. Moreover, the simplicity of these materials drew from him that rare eloquence reached only by a mature artist using clear and economical modes of expression. In *Appalachian Spring*, Copland found not only a vehicle for expressing a sturdy populist vision of America but the full flowering of a musical idiom for which he had been striving for nearly a decade.

From its initial performance in October 1944, *Appalachian Spring* has enjoyed a success unequalled by any American work of its kind. It remained for years a staple of Martha Graham's repertory, and Copland's music was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1945.

The music vividly suggests the setting and action of the ballet: the pastoral countryside, the gathering of the farm folk, their barn dance, the frightening admonitions of the preacher, the shy affection of the young couple. The final section presents a set of variations on the Shaker hymn *Simple Gifts*, which Copland made famous in this score, but an appealing frontier atmosphere is evoked throughout. In its drama, vitality and poignant tenderness, *Appalachian Spring* remains a true American masterpiece.

Guy Barast

Detroit Symphony Orchestra



The Detroit Symphony Orchestra is known for trailblazing performances, visionary conductors, collaborations with the world's foremost musical artists, and an ardent commitment to Detroit. As a community-supported orchestra, the continued success and growth of the institution is driven by generous giving by individuals and institutions at all levels. Esteemed conductor Leonard Slatkin became the DSO's twelfth Music Director, endowed by the Kresge Foundation, in 2008. Acclaimed conductor, arranger, and trumpeter Jeff Tyzik serves as Principal Pops Conductor while celebrated trumpeter and composer Terence Blanchard holds the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Jazz Creative Director Chair. With growing attendance and unwavering philanthropic support from the Detroit community, the DSO's performances include Classical, Pops, Jazz, Young People's, and Neighborhood concerts, and collaborations with high-profile artists from Steven Spielberg to Kid Rock. A commitment to broadcast innovation began in 1922 when the DSO became the first orchestra in the world to present a radio broadcast and continues today with the free *Live from Orchestra Hall* webcast series, which now reaches tens of thousands of children with the new *Classroom Edition* expansion. Making its home at historic Orchestra Hall within the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, one of America's most acoustically perfect concert halls, the DSO actively pursues a mission to embrace and inspire individuals, families, and communities through unsurpassed musical experiences.

For more information, visit dso.org.

Leonard Slatkin



Leonard Slatkin is Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He also maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting throughout the world and is active as a composer, author, and educator. Slatkin's more than a hundred recordings have received seven GRAMMY® awards and 64 nominations. His Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninov, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he has recorded the complete Beethoven and Tchaikovsky symphonies with

the DSO (available online as digital downloads). A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honour. He has received Austria's Decoration of Honour in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his book, *Conducting Business*. Slatkin has held posts as Music Director of the New Orleans, St. Louis, and National symphony orchestras, and he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He has served as Principal Guest Conductor of London's Philharmonia Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has conducted virtually all of the leading orchestras in the world, including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, all five London orchestras, Berlin Philharmonic, Munich's Bayerischer Rundfunk, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Slatkin's opera conducting has taken him to the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Santa Fe Opera, Vienna State Opera, Stuttgart Opera, and Opéra Bastille in Paris. Born in Los Angeles to a distinguished musical family, he began his musical training on the violin and first studied conducting with his father, followed by Walter Susskind at Aspen and Jean Morel at Juilliard.

For more information, visit leonardslatkin.com.

Aaron
COPLAND
(1900-1990)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! (1934)

34:32

1	Scene I	1:49
2	Scene II	0:35
3	Scene III	1:54
4	Scene IV	2:17
5	Scene V	0:43
6	Scene VI	3:51
7	Scene VII	3:18
8	Scene VIII	3:37
9	Scene IX	0:41
10	Scene X	0:42
11	Scene XI	2:28
12	Scene XII	3:51
13	Scene XIII	0:41
14	Scene XIV	0:36
15	Scene XV	1:44
16	Scene XVI	3:40
17	Scene XVII	0:17
18	Scene XVIII	1:46

19 **Appalachian Spring**
(Complete Ballet) (1944)

37:57

Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Leonard Slatkin

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AMERICAN CLASSICS

Aaron Copland wrote his rarely-heard ballet *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!* for Ruth Page, the dancer and choreographer who was to become the Grande Dame of American ballet. Its scenario is a murder in a nightclub and the ensuing trial in a Chicago courtroom. Copland infused the score with the spirit of his jazz-influenced pieces, controversially distorting part of the National Anthem, and infiltrating music from some of his earlier works. In complete contrast, *Appalachian Spring* is his most famous work, a true American masterpiece founded on transfigured dance tunes and song melodies. This is volume two of the Complete Ballet series. Volume One is on 8.559758.

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Playing
Time:
72:29