

Chapel Hill

Philharmonia

3 p.m. Sunday
December 11, 2016
Carrboro High School

Music Director
Donald L. Oehler

American Voices

"Buckaroo Holiday" from *Rodeo*

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

"Oh, Happy We" from *Candide*

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Jeanne Fischer, Timothy Sparks

"Somewhere" from *West Side Story*

Leonard Bernstein

Arsenia Brickley

"Steal Me, Sweet Thief" from *The Old Maid and the Thief*

Gian Carlo Menotti (1911-2007)

Melissa Martin

"Bob's Aria" from *The Old Maid and the Thief*

Gian Carlo Menotti

Marc Callahan

Old American Songs

Aaron Copland

"The Boatmen's Dance" - Timothy Sparks

"Long Time Ago" - Emily Wolber Scheuring

"I Bought Me a Cat" - Jay Pierson

"Zion's Wall" - Eugene Galvin

"A Promise of Living" from *The Tender Land*

Aaron Copland

Ensemble

Intermission

Adagio for String Orchestra, Op. 11

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

New England Triptych

William Schuman (1910-1992)

Three Pieces for Orchestra after William Billings

Be Glad, Then, America

When Jesus Wept

Chester

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N.C. Arts Council, a division of
the Department of Natural and
Cultural Resources.



American Voices

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear...

Walt Whitman

In the 125 years from Independence to the dawn of the 20th century, American arts and science made amazing strides, equaling or surpassing European culture in such areas as engineering, literature, and public education. Classical or “art” music, however, lagged behind. In 1892 the National Conservatory of Music in America brought Antonín Dvořák to New York for a three-year stint as Director, hoping the Czech composer would help define a characteristic music for the United States, as he had for his homeland. Dvořák counseled that inspiration should be sought in “the voice of the people,” that is, in “Negro melodies, the songs of the creoles, the red man’s chant, or the plaintive ditties of the homesick German or Norwegian” and “the melodies of whistling boys, street singers and blind organ grinders.” (Biographer John Clapham) African-American spirituals and Native American drumming became key sources for Dvořák’s Symphony “From the New World” and his “American” String Quartet. Still, more than four decades elapsed before this nation’s own composers found a distinct musical identity.

As the acknowledged leader in shaping that identity, the mantle of “Dean of American Music” came to rest on the slim shoulders of an unlikely candidate. He was Aaron Copland, born at the turn of the 20th century into a Lithuanian-Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York. Copland and the four other composers featured on today’s program of the Chapel Hill Philharmonia, in partnership with the vocal faculty of the Music Department of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, were iconic figures in music of the United States. The five were born within an 18-year span. They were populists who intentionally composed concert and stage works accessible to broad audiences in an era when this ran counter to academic and critical trends. Each also lived through social and personal upheavals. At a moment when divisiveness in our country forces us to examine closely the meanings of democracy and national culture, these musicians stand out as unifying American voices. Moreover, they achieved this stature despite all being outsiders from the national mainstream with respect to political leanings, religious affiliation, immigrant status, and/or sexual orientation.

Buckaroo Holiday

Paradoxically, Copland began to develop his national style while in Paris at the *Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau* where he studied with Nadia Boulanger from 1921 to 1924. A major influence there was the hot new idiom of jazz, brought from New York’s Harlem by artists less subject to racial prejudice in France than in their home country. In Boulanger’s view composers from the United States “show[ed] certain characteristics in common. I would say they are distinguished by a very marked feeling for the rhythmic element of composition and for the cultivation of individuality...These things lead to...composition which will eventually be recognized as distinctly American.” Returning home, Copland continued to develop his own style and encouraged compatriots via his leadership of the American Composers’ Alliance and the League of Composers, and through concerts he organized with Roger Sessions (another Brooklyn-born prodigy) to highlight works of young composers.

By the mid-1930s, living through the crucible of the Great Depression, Copland embraced both leftist politics and the goal to create music relevant to a wide public. He incorporated folk elements in many works and composed extensively for film and ballet. For *Rodeo*, subtitled “The Courting at Burnt Ranch,” he collaborated with choreographer Agnes de Mille of the *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo*, a company recently relocated to the United States. She conceived a love story set in the American Southwest, jokingly calling it “*The Taming of a Shrew*—cowboy style.” The ballet,



Agnes de Mille as Cowgirl

first performed in New York in 1942 to great applause, includes five major sections. Copland adapted four of them as the movements of an orchestral suite premiered the next year by the Boston Pops Orchestra.

The story centers on the Burnt Ranch's lone Cowgirl, originally danced by de Mille. She is a tomboy feeling the first stirrings of attraction for the opposite sex. In the first movement, "**Buckaroo Holiday**," she shows off her bronco-busting skills in front of the Head Wrangler, who she fancies. In de Mille's words, "She acts like a boy, not to be a boy, but to be liked by the boys." Her awkward efforts fail to impress. Anyway, the ranch hands show greater interest in the pretty Rancher's Daughter and her passel of friends in frilly frocks. "Corral Nocturne" reveals the Cowgirl's lovesick melancholy and her shyness as she fails to press forward in a chance night meeting with the Wrangler. In "Saturday Night Waltz" she finds herself a wallflower at a dance until approached by the Champion Roper, who has lost out to the Wrangler in their competition for the affections of the Rancher's Daughter. In "Hoe-Down" the Cowgirl, sporting a new dress and a bow in her hair, along with new-found self-confidence, out-dances the other girls and finally catches the Wrangler's eye. But she chooses the Roper and seals the deal with a climactic kiss.

Beth Levy in *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West* asks whether Copland, as a homosexual man, identified with the Cowgirl's "blatant disregard for gender roles and her unwillingness to conform to social norms." It is not far-fetched to believe that, beyond the folksy cowboy mystique, he used the locale to symbolize American society as a whole, and shared in the protagonist's rebellion against "a site where patriarchal visions of social and moral order could be vigorously upheld."

"Buckaroo Holiday" begins with a bright fanfare. The rhythms are jazzy, but contextually transported from sophisticated inner-city clubs to the hinterland. The music transitions into the Cowgirl's quiet theme. Next, the "Rodeo" theme evokes trotting horses. The cowboys enter "like thunder" to "Sis Joe," a robust railroad work call. Their exploits on horseback and the Cowgirl's flawed mimicry are set to "If He'd Be a Buckaroo." The song's first verse is, "If he'd be a buckaroo by his trade / I'd have him a hondoo ready made / And if he throws his turns on right / He'll have my hondoo every night." Note that a hondoo is the loop or eye of a lariat. The other verses are similarly suggestive. Copland energetically conveys the earthy spirit of the folk song and of the American people.

Candide and West Side Story

Leonard Bernstein's talent and charisma loomed larger than life. He was an extraordinary musician and educator, but also a lightning rod for criticism. The son of Jewish immigrants, he grew up in Lawrence, MA and studied at Harvard University and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In 1943 at age 25, he set what still ranks as the all-time Richter Scale peak for an earthshaking conducting debut when, as a last minute substitute for a flu-stricken Bruno Walter, he led the New York Philharmonic in an acclaimed nationally broadcast concert. Fifteen years later he became that group's principal conductor, the first American-born individual to serve in this capacity for a leading symphony orchestra.

However, Bernstein's seemingly unlimited gifts came at a cost. Terry Teachout, critic-at-large for *Commentary*, wrote: "It was a cliché, even a joke, that he could never decide what to do with himself: compose, conduct, play the piano, write Broadway shows, do TV. But what Bernstein really wanted was to be a great composer. . . It was a theme to which he returned days before his death in 1990: 'The obvious fear is that I'll be remembered—however vaguely—not as a composer but as a conductor.'"

Copland, whose close relationship with Bernstein began at Harvard (the two were lovers for a time), "was for all intents and purposes [his] composition teacher." (Teachout) He wanted "Lenny" to excel in both domains, once reminding him, "Don't forget our party line—you're heading for conducting in a big way—and everybody and everything that doesn't lead there is an excrescence on the body politic." Yet, he also lavished praise on his protégé's "music of vibrant rhythmic invention, of irresistible élan, often carrying with it a terrific dramatic punch." Copland predicted accurately "that some form of stage music will prove to be Bernstein's finest achievement."

By 1953 Bernstein had two successful Broadway musicals under his belt, *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. The playwright Lillian Hellman suggested they collaborate on a musical version of *Candide*, the French philosopher Voltaire's novella

from 1759 that skewered the “best of all possible worlds” optimism of Gottfried Leibniz. The operetta opened in 1956 but went through many revisions until a definitive 1989 production. Like a number of stage works of the period (e.g., Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* about the Salem witch trials), *Candide* delivered a counterpunch to Senator Joseph McCarthy and his followers, especially the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Hellman, Bernstein, Miller and Copland were among the 151 artists and entertainers singled out in *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television*, a right-wing tract published in June 1950, and all were subpoenaed to testify before Congress.

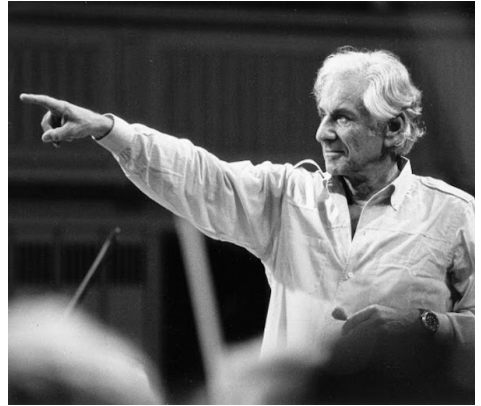
In *Candide* the Inquisition selects the naïve hero and his Leibnizian tutor Dr. Pangloss as scapegoats after the horrendous Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Klaus-Dieter Gross explains, “In McCarthy fashion they’re searching for wizards and witches...Pangloss is a foreigner and *Candide* carries earthquake germs in his sack...[They] are the quintessential aliens to be gotten rid of...Realizing that a public burning is good for business, the shop-owners of Lisbon explode into a happy tune: ‘What a day, what a day, / For an auto-dafé.’” (“McCarthyism and American Opera”)

At the operetta’s outset the duet “**Oh, Happy We**” establishes *Candide*’s unworldly optimism. A bastard nephew to the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh in Westphalia, he has the temerity to fall in love with the baron’s virgin daughter Cunégonde. The desire for pure knowledge spurs the couple to imitate Pangloss’s “experimental physics” exercises with a lusty maid. The baron’s son spies the amorous coupling of his sister and cousin, and tattles to his father. Before *Candide* is booted out of the castle, he and Cunégonde rhapsodize on their future together. Sadly, the couple’s notions of bliss seem slightly misaligned. Cunégonde dreams of living luxuriously aboard a yacht: “We’ll round the world enjoying high life, / All bubbly pink champagne and gold.” *Candide* envisions a bucolic ménage: “We’ll lead a rustic and a shy life, / Feeding the pigs and sweetly growing old.” The social consciousness of Hellman, Bernstein, and their co-writers thus extends beyond attacking McCarthyism to satirizing class differences and the plain vanilla “Ozzie and Harriet” world of 1950s America.

West Side Story (1957) features Bernstein’s best-known score. The musical retells Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. The feud between Montagues and Capulets morphs into an ethnically charged turf war of street gangs in the melting pot of New York’s Upper West Side. The Jets, white Polish-Americans, and the Sharks, recent immigrants from Puerto Rico, vie for neighborhood control. Riff, the Jets’ leader, persuades his friend Anton (Tony), a former gang member now working at Doc’s Drugstore, to join him at a neighborhood dance where Riff will challenge the Shark’s leader Bernardo to “rumble.” Tony and Maria, Bernardo’s sister, meet at the dance and instantly fall in love. At Maria’s behest Tony tries to stop the gang fight. All goes wrong, and when Bernardo fatally stabs Riff, Tony retaliates. Maria forgives her beloved for her brother’s death, and the couple plans to run away together. They imagine a safe haven, “**Somewhere**” their love will be accepted. In theater productions an offstage cast member sings the number during a dreamlike dance. In the film (1961) it appears as a duet between Tony and Maria.

Chino, once Maria’s betrothed, hunts Tony with a gun. Maria convinces Anita, Bernardo’s girlfriend, to carry a warning message to Tony. But Anita encounters the other Jets who taunt and threaten to rape her, until Doc intervenes. Furious, she spits out the lie that Chino has killed Maria. Tony seeks Chino, wanting to escape this world as well. He finds Maria alive, but at that moment Chino appears and shoots him dead. Maria cradles Tony’s body in her arms and sings a brief reprise of “Somewhere.”

Teachout catches an extra resonance in *West Side Story*. He calls it “a parable of forbidden love as unabashedly homosexual in its subtext as any Tennessee Williams play.” He notes further, “Bernstein was part of the informal network of gay artists which played a key institutional role in American classical music and dance during the 30’s and 40’s.” However, while acknowledging



Leonard Bernstein conducting *Candide*

this sexual orientation did not pose extraordinary difficulties for any like Copland, Barber, or Menotti who “wished merely to be a composer...It was his additional desire to be a public figure [holding the music directorship of a major American orchestra]—a community leader, as it were—that made it impossible for Bernstein to be openly gay.”

Whatever his inner conflicts and despite legendary self-indulgences ranging from his melodramatic conducting to the personification of “Radical Chic,” Bernstein’s music constitutes a remarkable legacy. John Mauceri, formerly the chancellor at the UNC School of the Arts, eulogized his mentor: “Leonard Bernstein projected a simple message of understanding and hope employing both complex and simple forms and styles—yet always sounding like ‘Bernstein’...All of [his music] is wrapped in the rhythmic propulsion of a great American urban landscape. He has left an aural image of his time and place and, at the same time, an eternal voice of humanity.”

The Old Maid and the Thief



Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Gian Carlo Menotti

Gian Carlo Menotti wrote his first opera at age 11 for a puppet theater in his hometown in Italy. He entered Milan’s Verdi Conservatory the next year. At 17, recommended by the great conductor Arturo Toscanini, a family friend, Menotti immigrated to the United States to study at the Curtis Institute of Music. While retaining Italian citizenship, he came to consider himself an American composer. His English language skills, at first rudimentary, soon enabled him to write his own librettos. He also wrote those for two operas by Samuel Barber, with whom he developed a life partnership when they were students at Curtis. The two shared a home in Mount Kisco, NY for three decades. Menotti later returned to Europe, living in a baronial-style mansion in Scotland.

Advocates of the avant-garde derided Menotti’s music as “maudlin and unadventurous.” Yet, “his impressive lyric gifts, his deft touch with orchestral sound and his talent for making opera comprehensible and enjoyable for people who had previously shunned it” (Bernard Holland, NYTimes) proved successful; the blend of Italian lyric opera with American populism filled Broadway theaters. Menotti felt the source of his music’s appeal was its “metaphysical heart...I try to make my people as human as possible, as believable as possible. But they are a metaphor for a bigger idea.”

The composer also brought art music to a wider audience by founding in 1958 the summer Festival of Two Worlds with branches in Spoleto, Italy and Charleston, SC. His contributions were widely recognized, and he received two Pulitzer Prizes for his operas and a Kennedy Center Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts.

Amahl and the Night Visitors, the first opera produced for television, emerged as a Christmas classic from its first showing in 1951. It was broadcast by NBC annually for 16 years and became the most frequently staged opera in America with more than 2,500 performances during Menotti’s lifetime, often in school or community settings.

Menotti also wrote and NBC broadcast the first opera produced for radio. ***The Old Maid and the Thief*** premiered on-air in 1939. It is the story of a strange love triangle set in a small town near the end of the Great Depression. A handsome hobo, Bob, appears one stormy afternoon at the back door of Miss Todd, a middle-aged spinster. The young maid Laetitia persuades her reluctant mistress to allow Bob into the house. They soon learn that a thief matching his description has escaped the nearby county jail. Still, they concoct a mad plan to bribe Bob to hideout with them, at first using money “borrowed” from the Women’s Club treasury. Bob seems content to bask lazily in the two women’s care, sleeping late, listening to ball games, and getting paid regularly for doing nothing. But to Laetitia’s dismay, he remains frustratingly chaste. She sings, “What a curse for a woman is a timid man, he has had plenty of chances but he makes no advances...**Steal me sweet thief**, for time’s flight is stealing my youth and the cares of life steal fleeting time.”

A gossipy neighbor informs Miss Todd of a wave of robberies in the town, unaware that she is speaking to the actual culprit, who has resorted to petty crime to continue providing Bob with spending money. In the meantime Bob tires of a life of confinement and breakfasts in bed, and his restlessness reawakens. He bundles his clothes, preparing to depart, and croons, **"When the air sings of summer I must wander again.** Sweet landlord is the sky, rich house is the plain." Laetitia begs him to stay, and he allows that an occasional drink might make things more bearable. Miss Todd, who is a Prohibitionist, and Laetitia break into a liquor store and score some bottles of gin. Bob gets drunk but doesn't seem especially grateful. Having realized that Bob is not the escaped convict, and that he is a thief only of hearts, Miss Todd finally demands his love. His brusque rejection infuriates her. She tries to blackmail him to stay, then goes for the police. Laetitia convinces Bob to elope with her. They ransack Miss Todd's house, steal her car, and head for the open road. Returning home to find herself abandoned and stripped of possessions, Miss Todd collapses.

Old American Songs

Copland arranged two sets of American folk songs, each comprising five selections, for baritone or mezzo-soprano and piano, and later orchestrated them. Benjamin Britten requested the first set for his Music and Art Festival in Aldeburgh, England. The African-American singer William Warfield premiered them with Copland at the piano at New York's Town Hall in 1951.

"The Boatmen's Dance," a minstrel show tune by Daniel Decatur Emmett, composer of "Dixie," is a lively tune with imitation banjo playing in the accompaniment. ..."Long Time Ago" is a setting of a lyrical nostalgic ballad discovered by the composer in the Harris Collection at Brown University. "I Bought Me a Cat," a children's nonsense song, repeats a refrain adding a farm animal as it proceeds. The harmony and accompaniment simulate barnyard sounds. (Vivian Perlis)

The second set dates to 1952. Copland again accompanied Warfield in their premiere. "Zion's Walls" is a religious revivalist tune originally from a Georgia farmer, John McCurry. Copland quotes this song in the first act finale of *The Tender Land*.

A Promise of Living from *The Tender Land*

Copland's only full-length opera, a ninety-minute work in two acts, received a critical thumbs-down when it opened at the New York City Opera in April 1954. To extend the evening the new work was paired, to Copland's displeasure, with *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Negative reviewers found *The Tender Land* lacking in typical operatic drama. While generally praising Copland's "homespun" musical score, they expressed disappointment with the libretto by Erik Johns, a young dancer who was the composer's partner and live-in secretary from the mid 1940s to the early 50s.

New York's large City Center proved a poor venue for a work intended for a more intimate medium. NBC had commissioned *The Tender Land* for television but the network's producers later rejected it, likely because Copland was blacklisted. A breakthrough production at the cozy Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, CT in 1987 restored interest in the work.

A major inspiration for *The Tender Land* came from the stark daily lives of poor sharecropping tenant farmers in Alabama, portrayed in Walker Evans's photographs and James Agee's text in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Johns responded particularly to images evoking both cyclic renewal of the land and the transitions between generations. To focus on psychology and emotions rather than socio-economics, he set the opera on a mid-Western farm owned by a lower middle class family in the 1930s.



Sunday Singing from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*
photograph by Walker Evans

The story begins the day before Laurie Moss's high school graduation. The postman delivers her dress, mail-ordered for the occasion. He also warns that two strangers have been molesting teenage girls in the nearby town. Laurie dreams of new horizons and complains to her mother of the strict control her patriarchal Grandpa exerts over her life. Ma Moss loses control and slaps her daughter. The same day Martin and Top, two drifters, ask Grandpa for work. He hires them for the spring harvest and agrees that Laurie can invite them to the celebration that evening. By the end of the party, Laurie and Martin declare love for each other. "But it is clear that the two have fundamentally different needs. Laurie sees Martin as an opportunity for freedom, while Martin sees Laurie as an opportunity to settle down." (Christopher Patton, "Discovering *The Tender Land*: A New Look at Aaron Copland's Opera")

A drunken Grandpa spots Laurie and Martin kissing. Ma Moss accuses the new hands of being the men who have sexually assaulted local girls. A neighbor arrives at the party and reports that the actual perpetrators have now been caught. This should clear Martin and Top, but Grandpa cannot let go. He chastises Laurie for loose behavior and mutters, "They're guilty all the same." Laurie and Martin agree to run off together in the morning. However, Martin gets cold feet and he and Top disappear before dawn. "When Laurie comes down at daybreak and finds them gone, she is initially shattered, but pulls herself together and resolves to set out on her own. After a brief, mutually uncomprehending exchange with her mother, Laurie departs, in search not of Martin but of her own destiny." (Patton)

Some now consider *The Tender Land* an innovative masterpiece. To Patton "The music is heartbreakingly beautiful...[The opera] speaks clearly to a remarkably broad range of people...It has proven relevant to young women struggling in a male-dominated society, homosexuals coping with the strictures of a straight culture, people facing the collapse of the family farm, and parents of all backgrounds whose children turn their backs on home to seek their own way in the world."

The most memorable moment in Copland's opera may be the finale of the first act, an ensemble piece known as "**A Promise of Living**," when the drifters and the family pledge to work together through the harvest. It provides *The Tender Land*'s most accessible music, "written in a tonal, melodic, frankly emotional idiom" and celebrating "a grand, utopian ideal—the politically outmoded, progressive vision of community as a diverse collective forged through common experience and shared labor." (Elizabeth Crist in "Mutual Responses in the Midst of an Era: Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* and Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*") Crist sees parallels with "Make Our Garden Grow" at the end of *Candide*. She views these songs as "communitarian" responses to the paranoia of McCarthyism and the Cold War culture of fear, symbolized in Copland's opera by the false accusation and continuing suspicion directed at the drifters, and in Bernstein's by the Inquisition. Noting that Copland, Bernstein, and Hellman sided with the left-wing Popular Front in the 1930s, Crist believes that these two musical ensembles hark back to the values of that progressive "red decade" in idealizing "the civic and the social, the communal and collective."

Soloists from UNC-Chapel Hill Voice & Choral Faculty

Arsenia Soto Brickley – Lecturer, soprano. Dr. Brickley holds degrees from Cornell University and the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University. She has appeared as a soloist with the Henderson Symphony, the Green Valley Chamber Music Festival, the Kennett Square Symphony, the Richmond Philharmonic, and the Cornell University Symphony. She has presented solo recitals in venues such as Weill Recital Hall and Monticello under the auspices of the La Gesse Foundation. Prior to moving to North Carolina she performed in *Phantom-The Las Vegas Spectacular*. She is a member of the Actors Equity Association, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and Phi Beta Kappa.

Marc Callahan – Assistant Professor, baritone. Dr. Callahan holds degrees from Oberlin College, the College-Conservatory of Music University of Cincinnati, the *École Normale de Musique de Paris* and the Schola Cantorum. He has performed around the world at major opera houses in London, Paris, Versailles, Lyon, Montpellier, Marseilles, Santa Fe, and others. *Opera* magazine praised his "wickedly glamorous tone." As an opera director he produced Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* and has worked on productions at the Royal Opera House, the Aldeburgh Festival, the Holland Festival, and the Théâtre du Capitole. Recent productions include *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Blue Forest* at Oregon State University.

Jeanne Fischer – Senior Lecturer, Area Head of Voice, soprano. Dr. Fischer holds degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill, the Royal Academy of Music in London, and the University of Maryland. She has performed as a soloist throughout the US and Great Britain in venues ranging from the nearby Magnolia Baroque Festival to London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Recent appearances have included the title role in Handel's *Serse* in the NC HIP Festival, and the world premiere and recording of Stephen Anderson's *Isaiah*. Her many recognitions include a First Place award in the Voce Young Soloists Competition, the Royal Academy of Music's Ethel Bilsland Award, and the Diploma of the Royal Academy of Music.

Eugene Galvin – Lecturer, UNC Opera Director, bass-baritone. Dr. Galvin holds a D.M.A. from the University of Maryland. He has performed widely in the major roles with groups including the Washington, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Sarasota, and National Operas, Opera New England, and the New York Grand Opera in roles such as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* and the title character in *Le nozze di Figaro*. He played Marshall opposite Patti Lupone in the Kennedy Center production of *Regina*, and created two roles in Wolf Trap Opera's world premiere of John Musto's *Volpone*. Recent engagements include roles with the Washington Concert Opera and Opera Lafayette, the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* with InSeries in Washington, and Ariodate in Handel's *Serse* with the NC HIP Festival.

Melissa Martin – Lecturer, soprano. Dr. Martin holds degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Mason Gross School of the Arts of Rutgers University. She has shared her "powerful, fully-developed, and glorious voice" with audiences throughout the US and abroad. Representative operatic repertoire includes roles such as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, and Gertrude Stein in *The Mother of Us All*. In addition to recital and operatic repertoire, she remains committed to promoting contemporary music ranging from musical theater to UNC's Talking Music Series, premiering compositions by Allen Anderson and Stefan Litwin. She also was featured in the world premiere of James Legg's *The Power of Xingu*.

Jay Pierson – Lecturer and Adjunct Professor, bass-baritone. Dr. Pierson holds degrees from Olivet College and the Eastman School of Music. His distinguished career of singing and teaching spans more than three decades, including service as Head of the Voice Department and Opera Workshop at Bucknell University. He has appeared as soloist with the NC Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, Washington DC Bach Consort, Rochester Philharmonic and several opera companies. He made his New York debut in the role of "Argenio" in the world premiere of Handel's *Imeneo* at Merkin Hall and performed a solo recital in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. He is also a published composer, and a pianist, harpist, and conductor.

Emily Wolber Scheuring – Lecturer, mezzo-soprano. Ms. Scheuring holds degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill and the University of Virginia. She is working towards her D.M.A. degree at UNC-Greensboro, where she appears regularly in recitals and on the operatic stage. Recent roles include Madame de Croissy in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She was a regional finalist in the 2016 Mid-Atlantic NATSAA young artists competition. Ms. Scheuring serves as a clinical speech-language pathologist for the Duke Voice Care Center, where she specializes in rehabilitation of the injured singing voice. She is also Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at UNC-Greensboro.

Timothy W. Sparks – Lecturer, tenor. Mr. Sparks holds degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill and the Eastman School of Music. His performing career includes opera, oratorio, and concert work. He has appeared in Europe and throughout the US with opera companies including The Israel Vocal Arts Institute, *Operafestival di Roma*, Jacksonville Lyric Opera, First Coast Opera, North Carolina Opera, Triangle Opera, National Opera Company (A. J. Fletcher Opera Institute) and Durham Savoyards. Committed to contemporary music, he has participated in the premiere of several stage works by noted American composers. His 2011 recording of the Arnold Schönberg chamber version of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* was released by Centaur Records.

Adagio for Strings

Samuel Barber grew up in a comfortably well-off Irish-American family in West Chester PA. His father was a physician, his mother a pianist. Barber maintained lifelong contact with his roots, and was buried in the town where he was born. Like

his long-time partner Menotti, Barber displayed conservative musical tastes at a time when these went against the grain of serialism and other new-music trends. Menotti characterized Barber as even “a bit more sentimental than I am.” Together, they “formed a two-man antimodernist front, disparaging the music of their immediate elders as experimental and cerebral.” (Howard Pollack, “Samuel Barber, Jean Sibelius, and the Making of an American Romantic”)

While the most important influence on his music was probably Johannes Brahms, the last great 19th century Romantic, Barber’s language also aligns with that of early modernists whose work epitomized the shift into the 20th century. These included such composers as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Richard Strauss, and, especially, Jean Sibelius. By contrast, many contemporaries of Barber felt it essential to find another way forward. Regarding Sibelius, in particular, Copland wrote in 1941, “The attempt to set [him] up as the great modern composer of our day is certain to fail...for the simple reason that he does not grapple with the problems of our own world...[.]Insofar as his followers use him as justification for escaping the problems of their own time and place, their work is certain to awaken nothing but echoes of a past era.” It was thus predictable that, as Barber’s career progressed he became alienated from the cutting edge. Conversely, as neo-Romanticism and tonality made a comeback in the late 20th century, Barber’s stature as an important American voice became more secure.

Remarkably, the composer’s best-known work, the *Adagio for Strings*, has taken on a life of its own, transcending debates about romanticism versus modernity. Barber composed his three-movement *String Quartet in B minor*, Op. 11 in the summer of 1936, at the age of 26, while staying with Menotti in a house on Lake Wolfgang near Salzburg, Austria. The first movement opens with a fast, spikey section followed by a smoother melody and sophisticated development. The second movement, the “exquisitely beautiful *Adagio* is constructed around one long, sinuous theme that moves slowly and deliberately. The beginning is calm and tranquil and then Barber carries the theme to an intense, exciting climax.” (Muir Quartet Program Notes) The music transitions without pause into a brief reprise of the first movement, giving the quartet a cyclical structure.

Barber felt immediately that the *Adagio* “is a knockout!” New York Times critic Howard Taubman commented that this movement, “the finest of the work...was deeply felt and written with economy, resourcefulness and distinction.” Barber arranged the *Adagio* for string orchestra and sent the score to Toscanini. The famed conductor became its champion. He first led a performance in a nationally broadcast program of the NBC Symphony in November 1938.

While early commentators on the *Adagio* often responded to it as “sincere” or “deeply felt,” there is no evidence that Barber intended sadness as a prevailing emotion. Yet, in 2004 when the BBC conducted an online questionnaire asking listeners to name the saddest song or piece of music they knew, Barber’s movement was chosen overwhelmingly; among five “finalists” it outpulled the other four combined. This strong association of the piece with sadness reflects the growth of a tradition to perform the *Adagio* at somber public moments. When President Franklin Roosevelt died in April 1945, the work was played repeatedly over the radio. Suddenly, Barber’s name was known across the nation by people who generally cared little about classical music. The choice of the *Adagio* as memorial music continued, becoming virtually an engrained response. It was played at the funeral of Albert Einstein, a serious amateur violinist, and after the passings of South African anti-apartheid leader Jan Smuts and of Senator Robert Taft, and at the funeral of Princess Grace of Monaco. It marked the announcement of another presidential death with John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, and the death of Princess Diana. The *Adagio* was heard frequently to commemorate victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks, including a performance at the Last Night of the Proms in London, in other years a wildly festive event.

The *Adagio* also has found a place in cinema, perhaps most significantly in Oliver Stone’s *Platoon*, and in numerous pop versions and remixes far removed from the original string quartet movement. In his article “The Popular Reception of Samuel Barber’s ‘Adagio for Strings,’” Luke Howard asks if Barber’s piece is “enhanced or damaged by this process?” He concludes, “A defining feature of the *Adagio*’s reception history is that crossing over into popular culture has added meaning to the work... While the *Adagio* continues to be performed often in the concert hall, and continues to be recognized as a masterpiece of twentieth-century American music, retaining its inherent ‘program,’ it is the audience—a massive and diverse global pop audience—that has created a new program for this work as powerful and meaningful as anything the composer could devise.”

New England Triptych



Bill Schuman

Had William Howard (Bill) Schuman never written a single musical phrase, his impact on American culture still would have been enormous. He served a crucial role as a teacher and administrator, even while composing over one hundred works.

In *Candide* Bernstein's hilarious song "I am Easily Assimilated," with the lines "Do like the natives do. / These days you have to be / In the majority," captures some of the experience of arriving in a new country. Like Copland and Bernstein, Schuman descended from European Jewish immigrants to the United States. But unlike them, Schuman benefited from an extra generation of assimilation before his birth in New York City. His American-born father Sam began work as a bookkeeper and rose to vice president in a printing company. This "was the classic Republican success story in a day of progressive Republicans—Theodore Roosevelt and, initially, [William Howard] Taft—so Sam's decision to name his son after the then-current president was both a nod to his nation and to the policies its leaders pursued." (Steve Swayne, *Orpheus in Manhattan: William Schuman and the*

Shaping of America's Musical Life) Schuman grew up loving baseball. In high school he formed a dance band, "Billy Schuman and the Alamo Society Orchestra," playing string bass. For a time he had serious aspirations to write music for songs aimed at Broadway's "Tin Pan Alley," the path to wealth and fame taken by George Gershwin.

Surprisingly, Schuman's first exposure to a classical music concert came only at age 19 when he heard Toscanini conduct the New York Philharmonic. It rocked his world. He became "obsessed with both Carnegie Hall and the Philharmonic" to feed "his keen hunger for the sound of the orchestra." He started summer classes at the Juilliard School of Music in New York and began to pursue a degree in music education at Teachers College of Columbia University. From 1935-1945 he taught music and arts at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY. He continued to compose and study, especially with Roy Harris, a "writer of 'prairie music'...of a distinctly American cast." (J.R.C. Adams) Schuman's music began to attract attention from leaders such as Copland, Bernstein, and the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, a major supporter of contemporary music. In 1938 Copland lauded *Pioneers!*, a setting of poems by Walt Whitman: "Schuman is...the musical find of the year. There is nothing puny or miniature about this young man's talent...[T]his is music of tension and power..."

In 1945 Schuman became a surprise choice as new president of the Juilliard School. In sixteen years in this position he helped to modernize the school, broadened its view of the arts, elevated its academic and musical standards, founded the Juilliard String Quartet, and passionately persuaded the leadership of the newly forming Lincoln Center to make Juilliard the complex's educational wing. This united Juilliard with the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera. According to a subsequent Juilliard President and Schuman biographer, Joseph Polisi, "Of all his Juilliard achievements, that is the greatest. The opportunities, the synergy involved with Lincoln Center, and Juilliard's international reputation would not have happened if the move hadn't taken place." In 1962 Schuman became the president of Lincoln Center and continued in that job for seven years, during the Center's formative period. He is credited with making major contributions to the commissioning and performance of new American music and dance, and to the initiation of popular festivals and concert series, and he helped found the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Schuman paid particular attention to education programs and outreach to public school students in his home city. He retired in 1969, after a heart attack, but remained active on boards and committees while focusing more attention on composition.

Even while holding some of the most demanding arts administrative positions in the world, Schuman composed an average of about two hours daily. Both his service to American culture and his music were widely recognized by contemporaries, although only *New England Triptych* is performed frequently today. He received the first Pulitzer Prize awarded for composition in 1943, a second special Pulitzer Prize honoring his contributions to music in 1985, and the National Medal of Arts in 1987.

William Schuman wrote *New England Triptych* in 1956 as a commission from conductor Andre Kostelanetz, who led its premier at the University of Miami. The composer prepared his own Program Notes for his best-known work:

William Billings (1746-1800) is a major figure in the history of American music. The works of this dynamic composer capture the spirit of sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary period. Despite the undeniable crudities and technical shortcomings of his music, its appeal, even today, is forceful and moving. I am not alone among American composers who feel an identity with Billings and it is this sense of identity which accounts for my use of his music as a point of departure. These pieces do not constitute a "fantasy" on themes of Billings, nor "variations" on his themes, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language.

I. BE GLAD THEN, AMERICA

Billings' text for this anthem includes the following lines:

"Yea, the Lord will answer
And say unto his people--behold!
I will send you corn and wine and oil
And ye shall be satisfied therewith

"Be glad then, America,
Shout and rejoice.
Fear not O land,
Be glad and rejoice.
Hallelujah!"

A timpani solo begins the short introduction which is developed predominantly in the strings. This music is suggestive of the "Hallelujah" heard at the end of the piece. Trombones and trumpets begin the main section, a free and varied setting of the words "Be Glad Then, America, Shout and Rejoice." The timpani, again solo, leads to a middle fugal section stemming from the words "And Ye Shall Be Satisfied." The music gains momentum and combined themes lead to a climax. There follows a free adaptation of the "Hallelujah" music with which Billings concludes his original choral piece and a final reference to the "Shout and Rejoice" music.

II. WHEN JESUS WEPT

"When Jesus wept the falling tear
In mercy flowed beyond all bound;
When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear
Seized all the guilty world around."

The setting of the above text is in the form of a round. Here, Billings' music is used in its original form, as well as in new settings with the contrapuntal embellishments and melodic extensions.

III. CHESTER

This music, composed as a church hymn, was subsequently adopted by the Continental Army as a marching song and enjoyed great popularity. The orchestral piece derives from the spirit both of the hymn and the marching song. The original words, with one of the verses especially written for its use by the Continental Army, follow:

"Let tyrants shake their iron rods,
And slavery clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.

"The foe comes on with haughty stride,
Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their veterans flee before our youth,
And generals yield to beardless boys."