

Aaron Copland

1900-1990



Aaron Copland was an American classical composer, composition teacher, writer, and orchestral conductor.

He was instrumental in forging a distinctly American style of musical composition, and is often referred to as “The Dean of American Composers.”[[]



The awards and honors he accumulated during his lifetime are too numerous to mention, but they included the **Pulitzer Prize** in Music, an **Academy Award**, **26 honorary doctorates** from institutions of higher learning including Columbia, Harvard, and Princeton Universities....



...a **National Medal of Arts**,
the **Kennedy Center Award**
and the nation's two highest
civilian honors: the
Congressional Gold Medal
and the **Presidential Medal**
of Freedom.

He is the only musician in
American history to be so
honored.



**The Presidential
Medal of Freedom**

Aaron Copland's great achievement as a composer was to break free from European musical influence to create a musical sound that is distinctly American. He accomplished this with his three famous ballet scores for **Rodeo, Billy the Kid** and **Appalachian Spring**; with his settings of **"Old American Songs,"** his **Lincoln Portrait** and his **Fanfare for the Common Man**. Today, Copland's name and his music are synonymous with the sound of America.

Included among Copland's greatest works is excerpt called
“The Promise of Living” from
his opera, *The Tender Land*.

The setting for the opera is the 1930s
in the mid-western United States,
at the time of the harvest.

This music is highly evocative of the
American tradition of Thanksgiving.

This excerpt demonstrates one of the most distinctive features of Copland's music: the ability to create music that begins with great simplicity, grows organically and in the end, transforms to a level of great power.

Though Copland's music is not unique in this way, many of his works are, in this respect, perhaps the most powerful of any Modern composer.

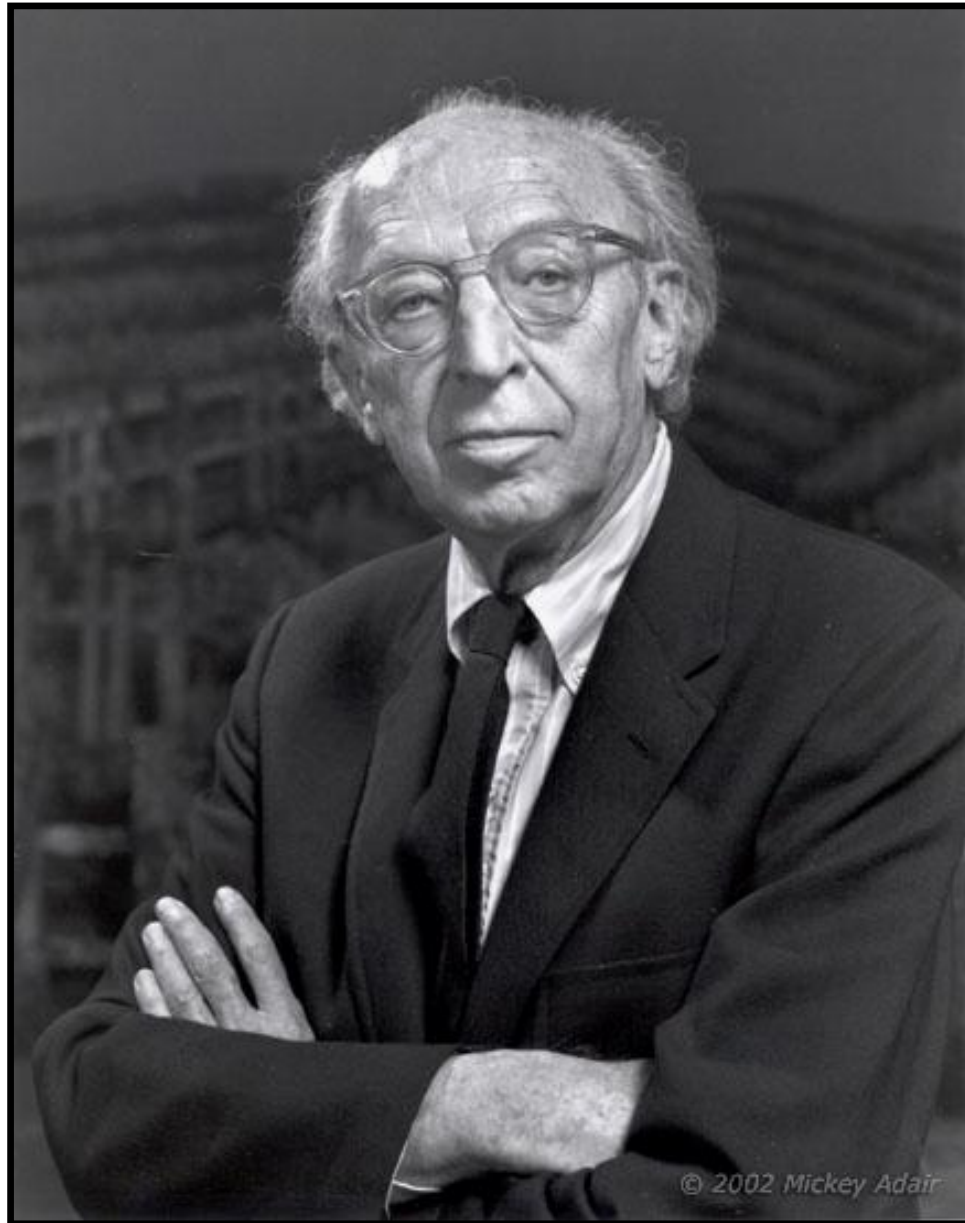
Please listen now to the performance
(linked below) of **Aaron Copland's**
“**The Promise of Living**” in a performance with the
Tanglewood Festival Chorus
and the **Boston Pops Orchestra** under the direction
of conductor and composer **John Williams**.

Please follow the words on the YouTube
video screen along with the performance
or on the following slides.

The Promise of Living:

https://youtu.be/bLM_YTnmLto?t=22

(The music begins 21 seconds into the video.)



The promise of living
with hope and thanksgiving
is born of our loving
our friends and our labor.

The promise of growing
with faith and with knowing
is born of our sharing
our love with our neighbor.

The promise of living,
the promise of growing
is born of our singing
in joy and thanksgiving.

For many a year we've known
these fields and known all the
work that makes them yield.
Are you ready to lend a hand?

We're ready to work,
we're ready to lend a hand.

By working together
we'll bring in the harvest,
the blessings of harvest.

We plant each row
with seeds of grain,
and Providence sends us
the sun and the rain,
by lending a hand,
by lending an arm.

Bring out,
bring out from the farm,
bring out the blessings
of harvest.

Give thanks there
was sunshine,
give thanks there was rain.
give thanks we have hands
to deliver the grain,

O let us be joyful,
O let us be grateful to the Lord
for His blessing.

The promise of ending in right
understanding is peace in our
own hearts and peace with
our neighbor.

The promise of living,
the promise of growing,
the promise of ending is labor
and sharing and loving.



