

Title:	Young People's Concerts Scripts: Aaron Copland Birthday Party [pencil on yellow legal pad paper]
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Thurspreview
24 Jan '63

(after overture)

My dear friends:



When I first announced that this program of Czech music would open with Smetana's Banters Bride Overture, some of my associates gaped in dismay. A frolicsome comedy overture to precede ^{holy} a mass? This was sacrilege! But actually, there could be no more appropriate overture, at least to precede this mass by Janacek - a work so nationalistic, so joyous, so full of fanfares, ~~and~~ swinging Bohemian tunes, lilting dance rhythms, & even fierce, savage rhythms, that it might almost be taken for a peculiar work instead of a sacred one. As our program notes tonight so intelligently relate, Janacek's basic aim was nationalistic, to write a mass in the old mother tongue of the Slavic peoples; ^{work} that would preserve that ancient ecstasy in its ^{most} radical character.

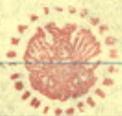
But not all the brilliance & excitement comes only from these nationalistic sources, nor even from the extraordinary orchestration, which is so characteristic and original with Janacek. Some of the thrust and drive of this work does actually stem from the liturgical style of the Eastern Orthodox Church - which makes Janacek not so secular after all. Any of you who have ever

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listened to a service at a Russian Church will instantly recognize certain stylistic features in this Mass - Those abrupt, ^{percussive} phrases, Those rapid repetitions - for example of the word Amen (which they pronounce Amin), almost shouted out at a wild tempo (Sing). This is all related to that special kind of ecstasy I mentioned before, rooted in the very nature of a warm, red-blooded people.

I guess that Janacek should have called this a Festival Mass, for that. Indeed, Janacek had three different titles for this work: Slavonic Mass, Glagolitic Mass (referring to the ~~ancient~~ old alphabet of the Slavonic Church language) and also Festival Mass. I like the last title best: it is a festive piece, celebrating his people & his land at least as much as it celebrates God. It begins & ends with a fanfare kind of movement for orchestra alone; & just before the end there is a whole movement for organ solo - a wild, demonic sort of piece that reminds one of that poor mad drunken organist in Thornton Wilder's "Our Town".

Janacek



Don't know why an all
Czech program is just a nice
idea. No explanation.
But I want about Janacek.

Rarely done - code deficient.
Just strangely unexcitingly conventional
standards. After the Agnus Dei, organ solo,
Then for the moment, then over. No chorus.
Yet fascinating. I've always loved the style of
Eastern church music - sharply percussive
phrases (omitted to words) - abrupt endings of
phrases - (Amen, Amen) - ecstatic stretching
for heights in range & power. All this is here,
plus Janacek's immense originality; difficult
as it is to decipher, it is very rewarding to the ear.

Janacek took every thing from words - even
in his instrumental music. Like Mussorgsky.
One Czech, one Russian. This language is somewhere
between Slavonic & Latin; & for those of you who know a
little Russian, a other Slavic things, this relationship
with the music will be apparent. For those of you
who don't, I think you'll find it thrilling just to
hear these exciting, explosive points. The familiar
5-part order of the Mass newly clothed in these exciting,
explosive points.

YP-TV #2 (12 Nov 1960)



Copland

Last year if you remember, we all had a
 birthday party ^{here} in ^{the} Carnegie Hall, in honor of the
 great composer Mahler, who ~~was~~ ^{would have been} 100 years old.
 Of course Mahler could not be with us ~~quite like~~
~~quite like~~ at the time, for obvious reasons; but
 today we are lucky enough to be having another birthday
 celebration in honor of a great composer who is not only
 very much alive, but a born and bred American, and
 who is also filled with the spirit of youth, in spite
 of his 60 years. That composer is our own beloved
 and admired Aaron Copland; and we're going to
 meet him in person later in this program. ~~And~~ When
 you do meet him, I think the first thing about him
 that will strike you is his ~~great~~ youthfulness —
 not only the youthfulness of his face, but also of
 his smile, ^{his almost boyish personality,} his conducting ^{and} especially
 of his spirit. It's almost impossible to list for you
 all the things Mr. Copland has done for the young
 during his ~~60~~ ^{years} lifetime: the dozens of
 young composers he has rooted for and brought success
 to; the even more dozens whom he has taught
 at Tanglewood and at Harvard and other places;
 the hard work he has done ^{at Tanglewood} as Associate
 Director of that wonderful school ~~the~~ called
 Tanglewood the Berkshire Music Center; and most of
 all, the many pieces he has written ^{mainly} ~~especially~~ to be

(2)

performed by young people. You may remember that last year we ^{also} devoted ~~an entire~~ a whole program of this series to his exciting young people's opera, The Second Hurricane, which was written to be sung & played by high-school students. Well, today we are going to open our Copland festival with a ^{young people's} overture - (of course you remember what an overture is from our last program) - an overture he wrote for The High School of Music & Art Orchestra, here in New York. It's called "An Outdoor Overture"; and I think you'll understand immediately why he called it "Outdoor" when you hear those athletic, marchy rhythms, and those long melodies filled with fresh air and light. Here is Aaron Copland's Outdoor Overture.

OK.

~~Or. Typical, but only one facet of many.~~

~~Easy vs. hard (to play & to hear)~~

~~Expl. Hard. modern elements (piano)~~

~~Statement.~~

~~Rest of pieces quite varied, but some hard, some easy, but all use elements of his style (personal); +~~

~~B'klyn. all have in common American roots. All kinds.~~

~~Jazz, hymn tunes, Broadway, folk songs, Latin-American.~~

~~Personal thanks to prof. Selon. Take in turn.~~

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Now that's what you call an outdoor overture — ~~stirring~~ it really gets your blood circulating, like a trot in the woods. And it's very typical of Copland — that easy, fresh style, so open-hearted and frank. But ~~it's only one~~ it shows us only one side of Copland's music, because the truth is that ~~of~~ his music is full of variety, like a flower-garden. There are big ^{big} white flowers, and little thorny ones, and great majestic bushes, & tiny, pretty little buds — all kinds. But perhaps the main difference in his music is between the big white ones — so easy to see and ~~to~~ appreciate and even love, like the overture we just heard — and those thorny ones that are not so easy to see, ^{and love} right off the bat, and are sort of ^{tricky} ~~tricky~~ to handle, especially at the first touch. Of course the easy pieces get played much more often than the thorny pieces, because ^{they're easier to play, and} they're more, let's say, popular in their style; but some of Copland's greatest pieces are the thorny ones, and I don't see why we shouldn't play some of them too. Especially for this audience of young people; you know how I've always believed that there is nothing you can't understand or appreciate, ^{and} ~~and~~ very often better than grown-ups can, because your minds are wide-open to everything, new or old. And besides, these thorny pieces aren't really so ^{frightening} ~~frightening~~ once you know a little about them.

(Tolman)

Here's a photo one, for instance, one of a

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series of six short pieces for orchestra called simply "Statements". Each of these statements has a name describing its own particular quality, & the one we're going to hear is called "Dogmatic". That's a very grown-up word meaning stubborn, believing firmly in something, and refusing to be talked out of it. Dogmatic. Now naturally, any piece named "Dogmatic" has got to be Thorny & a bit tough, because that's part of the whole idea of stubbornness & firmness. So this piece begins with ~~an~~ a musical idea that seems made of rock, it's so hard and firm.

[Piano]

Bravito! Iron. It's what we mean when we say of someone "He's a hard-headed son-of-a-gun" — meaning: he's got his ideas, & there's no changing them. Dogmatic:

[Piano] (repeat)

~~Well, that ^{hard-headed idea} accounts for some of the rocky, & Thorny sounds you will hear in this piece, but not for all of them. For instance, in the middle of this Statement, there suddenly appears this~~

Well, that hard-headed idea is the reason for some of the rocky, Thorny sounds you will hear in

①

This piece, but not for all of them. After all, don't forget that this is modern music, ~~the~~ music of our time; and we are living in some pretty rocky times. Besides, music changes & grows all through history; and what used to be considered right and normal is very different from what's right & normal these days. For instance that chord we just heard:

PLAY -

That's a rough one, isn't it? I guess Beethoven a Morat would have ~~some~~ thought that one impossible, what is called a ^{as it's called} dissonance. (PLAY again). ^{modern music} But these days, we're used to it; just see how easy it is to get used to it (PLAY 3 or 4 times, pp to ff). You see? Now it seems quite right and normal. ~~It's just~~ It's just a matter just being dogmatic about your musical ideas; ~~and~~ ~~enough~~ be open to the new ideas; because ideas about chords change all the time. In the same way, ideas change about what a melody ought to be. For instance, in the middle of this piece, the bass instruments suddenly blow out a very thorny, almost angry, theme:

PLAY.

Now that isn't exactly what our elders would have called a "melody", is it? And yet, it is a melody. Just look. If I change it just a little - not change

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The notes, but only the highness or lowness of them,
~~So~~ the theme comes out like this:

PLAY.

Now that sounds a bit less angry already, doesn't it?
 (without all that leaping around from low to high
 to low again.) But I can make it seem even more
 normal, ^{and} ~~old-~~ fashioned, by putting ~~old-~~ fashioned
 chords underneath it, like this.

PLAY.

That could have been written by Liszt or somebody
 100 years ago. But this is music of today; and so
 Copland doesn't use those ~~old~~ harmonies from
 long ago, and also he does make the theme
 jump ^{furiously} ~~abruptly~~ from one register to another,
 so that it comes out modern, angry, & dogmatic.

PLAY.

That's what he wants: that's the kind of musical
 thing Copland ~~wanted~~ ^{has} to say in this piece. And
 as we play it for you now — the whole thing is less
 than two minutes long — I'd like you to ~~think~~
~~not only~~ feel like iron, stubborn and dogmatic,
 and see if this little piece doesn't completely
 satisfy that emotion you're feeling. [And one more
 thing — when it's over, please don't clap; this piece
 is not intended for applause; that's one reason it's
 so dogmatic; it just says what it has to say, & then
 suddenly stops — bang, as if to say: that's my
 idea, & I don't care if you agree with me or not!

Poss.
 cut

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Work - Statement.

aren't dogmatic
at all.

"That's what I had to say, + I don't care if you agree with me or not". That's the dogmatic side of Aaron Copland. But, as I said before, Copland has many ~~sides~~ different sides; and ~~the~~ the rest of the pieces on this program will want you to clap for them - and what's more, I think you'll want to clap too. Some of them are part of ~~the~~ ^{the} Thorny flowers, but ~~many~~ ^{even they} are prettier and friendlier ^{ones}; and one thing they all have in common is American ^{roots} that go deep down into ~~American~~ the American soil of this ~~Copland~~ garden. These roots are also quite varied - they go from jazz to hymn-tunes to cowboy songs, to old well-loved folk-songs, and even to Latin-American rhythms and melodies. ^{But they're all American roots.} ~~The first one we're going to~~ Don't forget that Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, which makes him a 100% American; and also that he was born exactly in 1900, the first year of this century, which makes him 100% a composer of our time. (Besides, it makes it so easy to remember how old he is; he's always ^{just} as old as the year: in 1920 he was 20, in 1940 he was 40; and now he's 60 in 1960. Isn't that a lucky break?)

to Piano

Now the first of these American-roots pieces we're going to hear is a dance from a piece he wrote

(P)

way back in 1925, when he was first making experiments using jazz in symphonic music — and this was even before Gershwin wrote his famous Rhapsody in Blue. This piece ~~is~~ is called "Music for the Theatre"; + the dance we're going to hear from it is called — Dance. I'm sure I don't have to explain anything to you about the jazz elements in it; you'll hear them right off, plain as day; ~~But I do want~~ to as soon as those trumpets put on their jazz-mutes, and the drums start their rhythms, + the little high clarinet begins to squeak out this banellome tune:

That's real, tough, ^{PLAY} big-city music, and to make it even more 'big-city'ish, Copland has stuck the old tune East Side West Side ~~stick~~ into his music + you know it (PLAY + sing) — only he's modernized the rhythm ^{from a waltz to} ~~into~~ $5/8$ time, so that it comes out like this:

OKK -

Now did you ~~hear~~ also hear those funny little notes that were also going on over the tune? (PLAY) That's the ~~modern~~ another modern side to this music — sort of little on-purpose wrong notes that make you want to laugh. That's about as Tommy as this piece ever gets. It's all meant to be fun — kind of like Coney Island music, or clown music; + I hope you find it as much fun as we do.

(OKK -) 1st Break

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That
 Now, we've had a jazzy-flower, let's turn
 to one that's just the opposite - very quiet & serene,
 but just as American, in another way. In 19 -
 Copland wrote a ~~wonderful~~ beautiful and famous
 score for a movie called "Our Town" - I'm sure
 many of you have seen it, or seen the original play.
 It's about life in a small New Hampshire town called
 Grover's Corners, where life is quiet and sweet and
 unhurried and very close to Nature. We're going
 to hear the opening music ^{from} that film; and if it
 makes you think of church, & hymn-tunes from
 long ago, well - you're thinking right, because that's
 just what he meant. This is ~~that~~ another side
 of America, another sort, far from the ^{noisy} big city
 we heard about before: The simple, rural American
 life that is such an important part of our country.
~~That~~ Copland has often painted that side of
 America for us in his music - as in his famous
 Ballet, Appalachian Spring, or in his opera The
 Tender Land; but perhaps ⁱⁿ this little piece from
 the film "Our Town" he has painted it best of all,
 because it seems so real, so quiet, and so deeply
~~to~~ felt. (touching?) (moving?)

(P.O.R.K.)

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Isn't that a lovely picture of American life — so different from the one before! Now we move on to an even different picture, just as American in its roots, but thousands of miles away, in the great West of our country. Copland has long been fascinated by the West, by its history, its pioneer spirit, the tremendous size of its plains and its mountains. He has written two very famous ballets about the West; Billy the Kid, and Rodeo. We're going to hear now the final dance from Rodeo, which is called "Hoe-Down". I guess you all know what a Rodeo is, ~~and~~ but maybe you don't all know what a Hoe-Down is. It's a square dance, with all the trappings — fiddlers and callers + swingin' your partner. We don't have any callers here, or any partners to swing, but we sure do have fiddlers! Wait til you hear them —

[OK.]

Now we have a very special birthday surprise coming up. The great American baritone (bass?) William Warfield is going to sing three of Copland's songs for us. These songs are not really original compositions, since they are old

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American folk-songs that almost everybody knows. But Copland has arranged them with his special style and orchestration ^{and} with such a personal understanding & love for them that they seem to come out as brand-new pieces by him. ~~Copland~~. I don't know how he does it; it's part of the magic that goes on in this enchanted garden we're visiting today. Maybe we could say that that last He-Down is like a big cactus in this garden, with great ^{flashy} red flowers blooming on it; but these songs have other American roots, and they come out like little honey, familiar daisies or dandelions; only Copland's magic touch has ~~not~~ given them new color and shape. Mr. Warfield will tell you himself the name of each song he will sing. Here is William Warfield.

[Warfield + ORK]

Introduce Solo.
Personal tribute.
Introduce A.C.

Leonard Bernstein

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~~Our warmest thanks to you, P. All~~

At Piano

And now we come to the big climax of our party; we're going to meet Aaron Copland, ^{himself,} who will conduct ~~himself~~ one of his most famous pieces - The Salon Mexico - (a El Salón Mexico) - which is one of his ^{very} finest compositions. Of course, it also has little Thorns in it, here & there, - certain so-called "dissonant" chords, like these -

(PLAY)

or certain tricky modern rhythms, like these -

(PLAY)

But ~~that's~~ ^{they're} all part of it's being modern music; ~~the main~~ ^{they} ~~and~~ ~~you'd~~ ~~see~~ ~~them~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ when you hear them ~~along~~ ~~with~~ ~~some~~ ~~sweet~~ ~~Mexican~~ ~~melodies~~ like this one:

PLAY

You see, El Salon Mexico is the name of a dance-hall in Mexico City, ^{not at all like our Roseland -} which Copland visited once, & was so excited by what he heard & saw there that he wrote a piece about it.

And so I take tremendous personal pleasure in welcoming to this podium a great composer, a dear person, a ~~fine~~ true friend of youth, one who has ~~helped~~ ~~so~~ ~~many~~ ~~guided~~ & encouraged so many young people, including myself, ~~when I was just starting out~~ ^{when I was just starting} ~~just~~ ~~starting~~ ~~out~~. My thanks, our thanks, The Thanks

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of all musicians + music-lovers all over this
country, + all over the world. Happy birthday,
Aaron Copland!

(Academy
Ork - El Salon)



Leonard Bernstein
8 Nov 60