

# AARON COPLAND

b. November 14, 1900

d. December 2, 1990

## COMPOSER

*“To stop the flow of music would be like the stopping of time itself, incredible and inconceivable.”*

**Copland's compositions are famous for rejection of the neo-Romantic form and his creation of a unique American style.**

Aaron Copland was a world-renowned composer, teacher, writer and conductor. He was a key figure in forming the early 20th century American style of music and composition.

The youngest of five children, Copland was born in Brooklyn to Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Encouraged by his mother, he became interested in music. His older sister taught him to play the piano. At 16, Copland began lessons with composer Rubin Goldmark, who introduced him to the American style of music.

After graduating high school, Copland played and composed works for dance bands. Inspired by modern European music, he moved to France and attended the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. There he studied under Nadia Boulanger, who was his muse throughout his time in France.

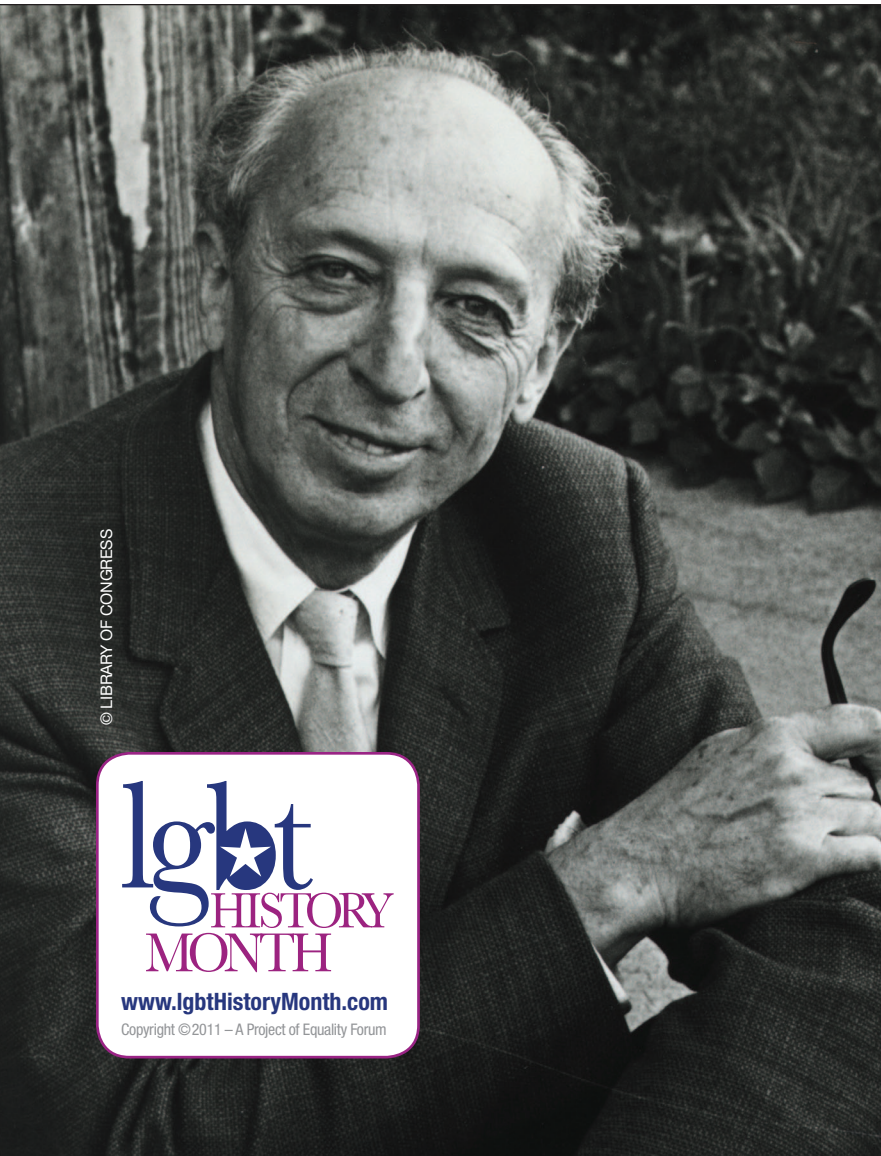
Copland's compositions are famous for rejection of the neo-Romantic form and his creation of a unique American style. He composed a wide variety of music, including piano and orchestral arrangements, ballets, and Hollywood film scores.

His compositions for film include “Of Mice and Men” (1939), “Our Town” (1940) and “The Heiress” (1949), which won him an Academy Award for best score. His score for Martha Graham's ballet “Appalachian Spring” (1944) earned him a Pulitzer Prize.

During the communist witch hunts of the 1950's, Copland was brought before Congress and questioned about whether he was affiliated with the Communist party. Although he was cleared of charges, Hollywood blacklisted him. His composition “A Lincoln Portrait” was withdrawn as part of the inaugural concert for President Eisenhower.

Copland dedicated the remainder of his life to composing, conducting and teaching. He had a major influence on the style of the next generation of American composers. His protégé, Leonard Bernstein, is considered the best conductor of Copland's work.

Copland died in Sleepy Hollow, New York. His estate established the Aaron Copland Fund for Composers, which annually bestows over \$500,000 in grants.



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