

Montgomery Philharmonic 2017 - 18 Our 12th Season : Old Friends ... New Friends

Concert 5 Sunday, May 20, 2018: Old Friends ... New Friends

Mozart | Copland | **Fauré**

About Aaron Copland –

Aaron Copland was an American composer, composition teacher, writer, and, later in his career, a conductor of his own and other American music. At the age of 21, he went to France to study with legendary composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. Best known for his natural treatment of American music with simple melodies and buoyant rhythms, Copland developed a system of harmony that was based upon the musical interval of a fourth; this interval, called quartal harmony, gives his music a sense of openness. He composed several famous ballets for the Martha Graham Dance Company and spent the final years of his life conducting his music all over the world.

- **Born:** November 14, 1900, Brooklyn, NY
- **Died:** December 2, 1990, Sleepy Hollow, NY
- **Nationality:** American
- **Compositions:** *Appalachian Spring*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, *Billy the Kid*, *Appalachian Spring* (1945 Pulitzer Prize), *The Tender Land*, three symphonies, *An Outdoor Overture*, several sonatas for solo instrument, a string quartet.
- **Awards:** Academy Award for Original Music Score, Pulitzer Prize

Old American Songs Set 1 and Set 2 (1950 and 1952) – Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

The composer Benjamin Britten asked Copland to arrange a set of American folk tunes for his Music and Art Festival in Aldeburgh, England. Copland wrote five songs for male soloist and piano for the occasion: “The Boatmen’s Dance,” “The Dodger,” “Long Time Ago,” “Simple Gifts,” and “I Bought Me a Cat.” The first set of Old American Songs was written in 1950 and premiered in June of that year by the famous tenor Peter Pears, with Britten at the piano. In 1951, the work premiered in America, with Copland himself playing the piano and baritone William Warfield singing. Warfield went on to become the singer most identified with the songs and spoke often on his collaborations with the composer. The songs were met with such success that Copland composed a second set in 1952 consisting of “The Little Horses,” “Zion’s Walls,” “The Golden Willow Tree,” “At the River,” and “Ching-a-Ring Chaw.” The second set premiered in 1953, again with the Warfield/Copland pairing. Copland transcribed both sets for vocal soloist and orchestra in 1957, and many of the songs have been arranged for chorus and piano or chorus and orchestra.

Instrumentation: SATB Choir and Piano

Old American Songs, Set 1 (1950) – Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Text: Traditional

The Boatmen’s Dance from Old American Songs, Set 1 (1950) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional

The Dodger from Old American Songs, Set 1 (1950) – Aaron Copland Text: Traditional

Long Time Ago (1950) – Aaron Copland Text: Traditional

Simple Gifts from Old American Songs, Set 1 (1950) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional (Shaker Song)

I Bought Me a Cat from Old American Songs, Set 1 (1950) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional

Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: Various

The Little Horses from Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional

Zion’s Walls from Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: John Gordon McCurry

The Golden Willow Tree from Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional Anglo-American

At the River from Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: Robert Lowry

Ching–A–Ring Chaw from Old American Songs, Set 2 (1952) – Aaron Copland

Text: Traditional

Artifacts –

[Aaron Copland Collection at the Library of Congress](#)

[Old American Songs, second set \(sketches\) from the Library of Congress](#)



A Copland Celebration, Vol. III



All-American New Year’s Eve 2009 New York Philharmonic, Alan Gilbert & Thomas Hampson



Simple Gifts Vancouver Chamber Choir & Jon Washburn

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YouTube.com Links –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfPpJYi9KG0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a13HB6iBveE>

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