COURSE GUIDEBOOK

The Symphony

Part III

Lecture 17: Nielsen and Sibelius
Lecture 18: The Symphony in Russia
Lecture 19: Charles Ives
Lecture 20: Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber
Lecture 21: Roy Harris and William Schuman
Lecture 22: The Twentieth-Century British Symphony
Lecture 23: Olivier Messiaen and *Turangalila*!
Lecture 24: Dmitri Shostakovich and His Tenth Symphony

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day
GREAT TEACHERS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.
1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412) ★ www.TEACH12.com
4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100 Chantilly, VA 20151-1232
7213

The Symphony, Part III
Professor Robert Greenberg

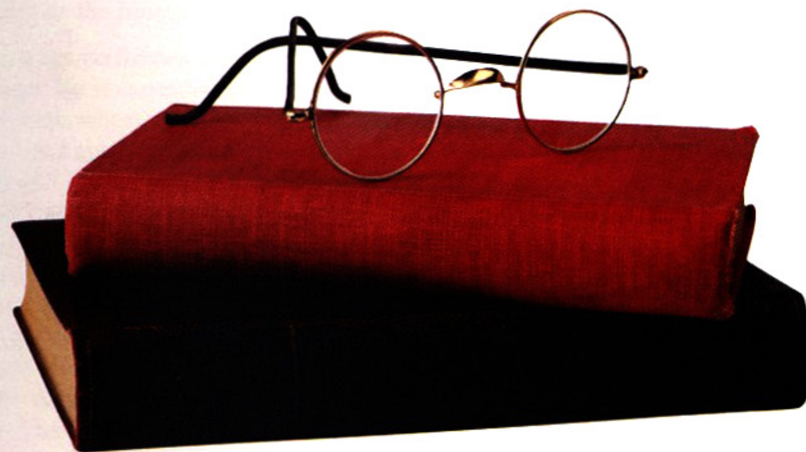
COURSE GUIDEBOOK

The Symphony

Professor Robert Greenberg

San Francisco Performances

Part III



THE TEACHING COMPANY®

Ripped by JB-24601

Table of Contents
The Symphony
Part III

Professor Biography i
Course Scope 1
Lecture Seventeen Nielsen and Sibelius 2
Lecture Eighteen The Symphony in Russia 10
Lecture Nineteen Charles Ives 18
Lecture Twenty Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber 24
Lecture Twenty-One Roy Harris and William Schuman 31
Lecture Twenty-Two The 20th-Century British Symphony 37
Lecture Twenty-Three Olivier Messiaen and *Turangalila*! 42
Lecture Twenty-Four Dmitri Shostakovich and His Tenth Symphony 48
Timeline of Works 54
Glossary 58
List of Symphonists 65
Annotated Bibliography 67
Full Bibliography 68

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

The Symphony

Scope:

The symphony is the most important genre of orchestral music. It evolved from certain instrumental practices of early opera—its two essential Baroque precursors were the Italian opera overture and the *ripieno* concerto. By the 1730s, Italian-style opera overtures had evolved as multi-section *sinfonias*, substantial enough to be performed independently of the operas they were originally created to precede. The influence of the Italian opera sinfonia was felt in Vienna, Austria, where, during the 1740s, composers began creating self-standing, three-part orchestral works. By the 1760s and 1770s, the Baroque Italian overture had evolved into the Classical-era symphony, the single most important orchestral genre of its time.

In the hands of its greatest practitioners—Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart—the Classical-era symphony became a transcendent art form. It was a work for a large instrumental ensemble (an *orchestra*) and consisted of four distinct sections, or *movements*, each with its own beginning, middle, and end. Generally speaking, the Classical-era symphonic template was the standard for 40 years or more, in thousands of symphonies written across Europe during the mid- to late 18th century—until Beethoven. For the iconoclastic Beethoven, neither the expressive restraint nor the symphonic template of the Classical era stood a chance. As far as the French composer, Claude Debussy, was concerned, the symphony reached its apogee with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (1824), and the ensuing 19th-century symphonic repertoire was a mere shadow of Beethoven—an opinion Debussy shared with many of his contemporaries.

Although many 19th-century symphonists were content to compose relatively conservative works based on the Classical-era template, others pushed the genre to the far limits of musical expression, from the autobiographical *Symphonie fantastique* of Berlioz to the multimedia symphonic extravaganzas of Gustav Mahler. As the symphony progressed across the span of the 20th century, it displayed originality, ambiguity, individuality, and variety, with a healthy number of masterpieces emerging from Moscow to Manhattan, by composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Charles Ives, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Roy Harris.

This course claims three criteria for its selection of composers and symphonies. First, our selection of symphonies will include only major works for orchestra. Second, we will study only works that are entitled "symphony" by their composers. Finally, with a couple of exceptions, we will study symphonies by composers who awarded the symphonic genre a major, if not pre-eminent position in their musical output, and made significant contributions to its development. Along with their compositions, we will also study the lives of these artists.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Seventeen

Nielsen and Sibelius

Scope: Thus far, we have spent most of this course in the "land of the symphony," central and west-central Europe: Bohemia, Austria, and Germany. The composers of central Europe dominated the genre of symphony for 150 years or more. As we move into the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, that dominance gives way, and the symphony becomes, increasingly, a global musical phenomenon. The remainder of this survey will take us out of central Europe to France, Russia, England, the United States, and Scandinavia. In this lecture, we explore the work of two Scandinavian composers, Carl Nielsen and Jean Sibelius, which is distinguished, in both, by a strong sense of place.

Outline

I. Scandinavia is a huge area of great physical variety, and this region has produced a significant artistic community that seems out of proportion to its relatively small population. As we'll see, the Scandinavian environment has had a direct impact on the music created there.

A. Scandinavia consists of the countries of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.

1. Iceland is the westernmost European state, an island nation with a total population of around 266,000.
2. Denmark is the southernmost of the Scandinavian countries, with a current population of 5.2 million people. It shares a 50-mile border with Germany and is more influenced by German art and culture than any other Scandinavian country.
3. Norway lies northwest of Denmark; it has a current population of approximately 4.5 million people. Despite being 10 times the size of Denmark, Norway remained predominantly Danish (and, therefore, German) in cultural sympathy through the beginning of the 19th century.
4. Sweden, immediately to the east of Norway, is both the largest and the most populous Scandinavian country. At 173,648 square miles, it's more than 20,000 square miles larger than California, and with about 8.5 million people, its total population is about the size of the greater Bay Area. Sweden was a great power in the 17th and 18th centuries, but it cultivated no concert music tradition of its own.
5. Finland, the northeastern-most of the Scandinavian countries, with a current population of about 5.2 million, shares a 400-mile border with Russia. Over the centuries, Finland's cultural orbit has vacillated between Sweden and Russia, depending on who the occupying power was at any given period.
6. Altogether, the Scandinavian countries boast a landmass 10 times larger than New York State and a total population about the size of the New York City metropolitan area; needless to say, there is a good deal of empty space in Scandinavia.

B. We can easily list the preeminent Scandinavian composers of symphonies during the late 18th and early 19th centuries: Johan Agrel, Johan Berlin, and Joseph Kraus in the 18th century; the Norwegian Niels Gade, the Danes Johan Hartmann and Johan Svendsen, and the Swedes Adolf Lindblad and Franz Berwald in the 19th century. What all these composers have in common is that their music sounds like their Austrian models.

C. The spirit of nationalism that swept through much of Europe in the years after 1848 swept through Scandinavia as well. Four Scandinavian composers emerged, each of whom is now recognized as the "father" of his respective national tradition: in Norway, Edvard Grieg (1843–1907); in Sweden, Hugo Alfven (1872–1960); in Denmark, Carl Nielsen (1865–1931); and in Finland, Jean Sibelius (1865–1957).

D. The Norwegian Edvard Grieg wrote no symphonies of consequence and will not be discussed in this course. Hugo Alfven wrote five symphonies, but because they have not become part of the international repertoire, we will move past him as well. Carl Nielsen and Jean Sibelius, however, are both major symphonic composers whose symphonies are part of the international repertoire.

II. Carl Nielsen is the central figure in Danish music from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His music and his writings about music exert a decisive influence over Danish music to this day and have been a source of inspiration for composers across Scandinavia. Among his most important and representative works are his six symphonies.

A. If Nielsen had worked in a major symphonic market, such as Vienna, his symphonies would be celebrated as being among the greatest in the repertoire. But he was born in a small village and worked in Copenhagen, and it wasn't until the 1950s, when the Danish State Radio Orchestra began touring with and recording his music, that his symphonies truly began to be heard outside of Denmark.

B. Nielsen's humble beginnings, as the 7th in a family of 12 children born to a housepainter, play a major part in his work. His concept of the "simple original," or what he also called "expressive simplicity," is the key to his music.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

1. The clarity, concision, and directness of expression Nielsen heard in the straightforward village music of his youth and in the music of Bach, Mozart, and Haydn remained the essential underpinning of all his work.
2. We might think of him as a Danish Brahms, but without the unhappiness. Like Brahms, Nielsen generally disliked the excess that marked so much late Romantic music.

C. Nielsen's promise as a composer won him a scholarship through the Copenhagen Conservatory, where he studied from 1884–1886, and from which he received a strict, German-style schooling in harmony, counterpoint, and musical form.
   1. After graduating, he took various jobs as a violinist while he continued to compose on the side. In 1901, having completed his First Symphony and first opera, entitled *Saul and David*, he was granted an annual state pension so that he might have more time to compose.
   2. His Second Symphony followed in 1902; his Third, in 1911; the Fourth, in 1916; the Fifth, in 1922; and the Sixth, in 1925. Nielsen died six years later, in October of 1931, at the age of 66.

D. We turn to Nielsen's Symphony no. 4, op. 29, "The Inextinguishable" (1916), his most famous work.
   1. The symphony was composed between 1914 and 1916 against the backdrop of the First World War. The vicious, dehumanizing horror of the war profoundly affected Nielsen and prompted him to conceive a symphony that affirmed and celebrated the creative spirit of life.
   2. In trying to capture the essence of the "life force" in one word, Nielsen came up with *inextinguishable*. He attempted to explain what he meant by *inextinguishable* in a preface appended to the score: "Under this title the composer has endeavored to indicate in one word what music alone is capable of expressing to the full: *the elemental will of life*."

E. The four movements of Nielsen's Fourth Symphony are played without a break. The opening allegro, in sonata form, begins explosively, with a brilliant effusion of rhythms, melodic lines, and harmonic areas. (For a moment, we hear D minor and C major simultaneously, superimposed one atop the other!) The opening is a wonderful musical metaphor for the explosive profusion and elemental force of life. Slowly, the energy dissipates. We listen to this opening, which taken together, constitutes theme 1 of the sonata-form structure. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 1, theme 1.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

F. With the beginning of the bridge, more lyric elements come to the fore, consisting of a series of alternating statements between low strings, medium strings, and winds. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 1, bridge.)

G. Theme 2 now begins. A sweet, rustic melody, heard initially in the winds, betrays, for just a moment, Nielsen's affection for Dvorak's music. As the theme proceeds, it develops, creating the impression of something lush and mysterious slowly unwinding or unfolding. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 1, theme 2.)

H. As the exposition draws to its conclusion, the brilliant and exuberant spirit of theme 1 returns, then dissipates, in preparation for the development section. We hear the conclusion of the exposition. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 1, exposition, conclusion.)

I. Obviously, this is not sonata form as we've encountered it before, where the delineation between themes, modulating bridges, development sections, recapitulations, and codas is relatively clear.
   1. Nielsen's themes are longer and less clearly articulated than what we generally associate with sonata form in the Classical-era style.
   2. Nielsen is subscribing to a process, not following a template. His expressive aim in this movement is to depict the ebb and flow of life itself, interpreted as a continuous progression of musical transformations and developments, a constant unfolding of materials; it's organized to follow sonata form but not dogmatically so.

J. The second movement (or the second large section of this otherwise continuous symphony) is marked *poco allegretto* (literally, "a little moderately fast"). It's a charming, woodwind-dominated intermezzo of extraordinary delicacy. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 2, opening.)

K. The third and slow movement begins with a broad and dramatic theme for the violins, which are accompanied by pizzicato lower strings and drums in the style of an operatic recitative. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 3, opening.)
   1. Originally, Nielsen had intended to seat all the violinists spread across the front of the stage, rather than bunch them together on the left, as has been the standard since the late 19th century.
   2. The effect, particularly at the onset of the third movement, would have had the sound of the violins coming from virtually every direction of the hall, enveloping the listeners.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

L. In terms of Nielsen's avowed purpose to portray the "inextinguishable" force of life, the fourth movement is the most explicitly programmatic in the symphony.

1. The movement opens with a driving, powerful theme in the strings. This theme represents "life"; its rhythmic drive and power are the "elemental will of life." The theme wants to run free, and it does so, until a gunshot-like explosion in the timpani brings it up short. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 4, opening.)
2. The four timpani, played by two timpanists and tuned to the extremely dissonant interval of a *tritone*, represent the forces of destruction over which life will triumph. That Nielsen chose the drums to play this role is no accident: Their explosive, canon-like articulation evoked for him the terrible sounds of battle.
3. The battle between life and destruction is waged across the span of the movement. We listen to the last third of the movement, during which the powers of destruction are vanquished and the "will of life" proves itself victorious. (**Musical selection**: Nielsen, Symphony no. 4 [The Inextinguishable], movement 4, conclusion.)

III. Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) was born a few months after the end of the American Civil War, at a time when Berlioz and Liszt were actively concertizing and Brahms had not yet completed his First Symphony; he died two weeks before the launch of Sputnik I, when the ultramodern music of Babbitt, Stockhausen, and Boulez was all the rage and Romanticism and nationalism were nothing but chapter titles in music history books.

A. Sibelius was born in the small town of Hameenlinna in south-central Finland. He studied violin as a teenager and, for a time, aspired to a career as a violin virtuoso. His family, however, had other plans for him, and in 1885, at the age of 20, he was enrolled as a student of law at the University of Helsinki.

B. Within a year, Sibelius had abandoned any pretense to a legal career and become a serious student of music composition. Two years of study abroad, in Berlin and Vienna, rounded out his education, and he returned to Finland in 1891, at the age of 26. At the time of his return, Finland was in the midst of great political turmoil, which would shape Sibelius's artistic vision forever.

C. Sibelius was born into an ethnically Swedish family in south-central Finland. It wasn't until he was 11 years old that Sibelius was enrolled in a Finnish-speaking grammar school, and he didn't master the Finnish language until he was a young man. Considering that Sibelius was a great Finnish patriot, this might seem odd, but not when we consider the imperial realities of Europe over the centuries.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

1. For example, Bedrich Smetana, the so-called "father of Czech music," was born in Bohemia, then part of the Austrian Empire. Smetana grew up speaking German and only learned to speak Czech as an adult. Gustav Mahler and Sigmund Freud, two other famous native Bohemians, grew up speaking German and considered themselves culturally German; neither of them ever learned to speak Czech, and, ultimately, both of them settled in Vienna, not in Prague. Finland, which had been part of the Swedish Empire since the 13th century, was culturally in orbit around Sweden, just as Bohemia was in orbit around Austria.
2. That situation changed in 1807, when Napoleon Bonaparte and Czar Alexander signed the Treaty of Tilsit, freeing Russia to invade Finland. The following year, Russia did just that, effectively ending the 600-year relationship between Sweden and Finland. Finland became an autonomous duchy of the Russian Empire.
3. For most of the 19th century, the Russians left the Finns alone. However, during the 1870s and 1880s, a Finnish nationalist movement slowly gathered strength, and by the 1890s, the tsarist authorities felt compelled to crush the movement. Censorship and political repression followed. Sibelius returned to this environment in 1891, prepared to do battle for Finnish nationalism and the Finnish language.

D. In 1892, Sibelius composed a huge cantata for chorus and orchestra entitled *Kullervo*, based on the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*. Such patriotic works as *Karelia* and *Finlandia* followed, which cemented Sibelius's status as Finland's leading composer, as well as his reputation as a great Finnish patriot and an artist of international celebrity, someone untouchable by the Russian authorities.

E. Sibelius composed the first of his seven symphonies in 1899, immediately after completing *Finlandia*. He completed his Seventh Symphony in 1924, and his last major work, the symphonic poem *Tapiola*, in 1926. After that, we have nothing.

1. It appears that Sibelius composed an Eighth Symphony in 1929, but he destroyed it sometime in the 1930s, apparently terrified that it would diminish the extraordinary international reputation he had at the time. Though Sibelius lived for almost another 30 years, he never composed again.
2. We do not know why Sibelius chose to give up composing; perhaps he lived so long that the world he knew and understood had simply ceased to exist. Time passed him by, and his only defense was to retreat into what became known as the "silence from Järvenpää," "Järvenpää" being the name of the town outside Helsinki where Sibelius lived.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

IV. As an example of Sibelius's symphonic craft, we turn to his Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, which was completed just months before Nielsen completed his Fourth.

A. In 1919, Sibelius revised his Fifth, merging what had been the first two movements—a first-movement sonata form and a second-movement scherzo—into a single movement. This "composite" first movement begins with characteristically Sibelian clarity and brevity, with a "daybreak-type opening" consisting of three gently rising horns heard over quietly rolling timpani, followed by a dialogue between the horns and birdlike flutes and oboes. (**Musical selection**: Sibelius, Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, op. 82, movement 1, opening.)

B. The "second half" of this first movement (originally, the second movement) begins with the same theme that opened the symphony. Slowly but steadily, the music speeds up, and as it does, it is transformed into a dance. (**Musical selection**: Sibelius, Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, op. 82, movement 1 [2], second half, opening.)

C. The second movement in G major has been described as a series of "variations on a five-note rhythm." It does, indeed, consist of a series of variations on a gentle and elegant theme initially presented by a flute and pizzicato strings.

D. The incredible third and final movement starts in the home key of Eb major with an agitated theme in the strings and winds. The rhythmic energy of this music is shocking after the relative quiet and stasis of the second-movement intermezzo. (**Musical selection**: Sibelius, Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, op. 82, movement 3, opening.)

E. Sibelius begins to stack new material on top of the scurrying opening theme. Next comes a magnificent, rocking theme in the horns, a melody that had first been heard as a bass line back in the second movement. On top of that, he adds a woodwind line, as the rocking theme moves into the bass and begins to sound as if it is breathing life into the layers of music above. (**Musical selection**: Sibelius, Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, op. 82, movement 3.)

F. The remainder of the movement consists of alternating, juxtaposing, and stacking these various thematic elements, even as they are developed and metamorphosed until, nearing the end, the music becomes blaringly dissonant. Michael Steinberg describes what happens next:

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

> There is an imperious command for silence. Then, four chords and two [orchestral] unisons enforce order, six sharp reports that, as the English writer Harold Truscott puts it, 'carry without effort the weight of the whole work.' No matter how often we hear [Sibelius's] Fifth Symphony, their sound and their timing can never cease to stun. (Steinberg, 601)

(**Musical selection**: Sibelius, Symphony no. 5 in Eb Major, op. 82, movement 3.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Eighteen

The Symphony in Russia

Scope: In Lecture Fourteen, we discussed the fact that before the mid-19th century, Russia did not have any appreciable symphonic tradition or, indeed, any appreciable concert music tradition. Before that time, concert music in Russia's urban centers consisted largely of Italian-language opera and Italian and Viennese instrumental music. This situation began to change in the 1830s and 1840s, when a powerful sense of Russian musical nationalism developed. Early Russian nationalist composers turned to folksong, dance, and the Russian language itself for their melodic and rhythmic inspiration. As we noted in an earlier lecture, Tchaikovsky was an "inadvertent" nationalist; in this lecture, we discuss Russian composers of the 19th and early 20th centuries who proudly and purposely cultivated a specifically "Russian" music and whose impact was felt well into the 20th century.

Outline

I. Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857) was the godfather of Russian music. Born to a wealthy, land-owning family, he joined the civil service at the age of 20 and worked in the Ministry of Ways and Communication in St. Petersburg. His private wealth allowed him time to dabble in his hobby of choice, music. In 1828, at the age of 24, he quit his job and moved to Milan for three years, then Berlin for a year, all the while taking music lessons and listening to opera.

A. Glinka was an amateur in the truest sense, a "lover of art" whose passion for music was never blunted by the necessity of having to make a living at it. As a composer, his training was spotty; certainly, by the time he returned to St. Petersburg in 1832 at the age of 28, he was not aware of how much he did not yet know.

1. Glinka got the idea to write an opera based on a Russian theme in the Russian language. Inspired by the nationalist writings of his friends Pushkin and Gogol and working with only a rudimentary knowledge of musical composition, he turned out an opera entitled *A Life for the Czar*, which was premiered in 1836.
2. This was the first opera on a Russian subject and the first to explicitly quote Russian folk music. *A Life for the Czar* and Glinka's subsequent opera, *Ruslan and Ludmilla* of 1842, sparked a musical revolution in Russia; they became the textbook examples for other composers who wanted their music to be proudly and distinctly Russian.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

B. In 1834, at just about the same time he began work on *A Life for the Czar*, Glinka decided to write a symphony. He used two Russian folksongs as themes 1 and 2 of the first-movement sonata form, then abandoned the piece after completing the first movement. Eighteen years later, in 1852, he tried and failed again to write a symphony and quit forever. In his memoirs, he wrote: "Not having the strength to get out of the German rut in the development, I rejected my effort." (Layton, 262).

C. Glinka actually says two important things in this quote. The first is that he had never properly learned and was unable to master the compositional craft required to write a convincing development section—thematic fragmentation and metamorphosis, polyphonic manipulation, modulation, and so forth. Second, Glinka is saying that he doesn't want to write a "Germanic-style" development of his themes, that doing so goes against his musical grain.

1. As we are well aware by now, sonata form lies at the heart of the 18th- and 19th-century symphony. And at the heart of sonata form is "the argument," that is, the development section, with its manipulation, fragmentation, and metamorphosis of previously stated materials.
2. By its nature, a development section represents a process of dissecting and reworking thematic material already presented whole in the exposition. It is a process that grew out of the Germanic predilection for analysis, introspection, argument, and investigation, a process that could not be further from the Russian psyche.
3. The point is that most 19th-century Russian symphonic music is "about" its thematic material, not "about" developing that thematic material.

D. Glinka died in February of 1857 and was all but canonized as the patron saint of Russian music. Among those who believed most fervently in Glinka's musical sainthood was a 20-year-old pianist and composer living in St. Petersburg named Mili Alekseyevich Balakirev (1837–1910).

1. Balakirev had even less musical training than his hero, but that didn't stop him from setting himself up in St. Petersburg as a music teacher and critic. Balakirev gathered around himself a group of young musicians who were to become known as the "Russian Five," the "Mighty Handful," or the "*Moguchay Kuchka*" (meaning, literally, "the mighty little heap").
2. This group of self-taught hobbyists included Cesar Antonovich Cui, an army engineer; Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, an army ensign and postal worker; Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a naval

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

officer; and Alexander Porfiryevich Borodin, a physician and a chemist.

3. With Balakirev at their head, "The Five" were unabashed Russian nationalists. Their "gods" were the Russian language, Russian folksong, the poet Pushkin, and of course, Mikhail Glinka. Self-taught and proud of it, they made a virtue of their technical ignorance and raised the flag of their dogmatic Russian nationalism (and anti-Germanism!) at every opportunity.

E. Balakirev wrote two symphonies that do not deserve even the slightest presence in the repertoire, but their influence was tremendous, and for that reason, they merit discussion and some listening. He began his First Symphony in 1864 and finally finished it 33 years later, in 1897. He began his Second Symphony in 1900 and finished it in 8 years. We turn to the First Symphony, by far the more influential of the two.

1. The first movement begins with a lengthy introduction that spells out the principal theme. We hear the theme as it appears following the introduction, about three minutes into the movement. (**Musical selection**: Balakirev, Symphony no. 1 in C Major, movement 1.)
2. We next listen to the second-movement scherzo. (**Musical selection**: Balakirev, Symphony no. 1 in C Major, movement 2.)
3. The slow third movement is a nocturne with the melodic flavor of a sophisticated folksong. (**Musical selection**: Balakirev, Symphony no. 1 in C Major, movement 3.)
4. The fourth movement is based on three Russian folksongs, heard almost one after the other. We hear the beginning of the movement, with the first of these three folksongs. (**Musical selection**: Balakirev, Symphony no. 1 in C Major, movement 4.)
5. So far, we have a monothematic first movement in which Balakirev abandons any pretense to sonata form, a movement characterized, instead, by thematic repetition, variation, and extension. The other three movements feature even less "development" than the first, consisting almost entirely of alternating folk and folk-like melodies.
6. This lack of sonata form, however, represents the nature of Balakirev's enduring influence. His message was: "Be yourself, be Russian, be proud, and celebrate Russian cultural values without fear."

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

II. Alexander Porfiryevich Borodin (1833–1887) was a big man and, by every account, a wonderful person. He returned to St. Petersburg from medical school in Germany and was immediately given a faculty position at the Academy of Medicine. He once said, "Science is my work and music is my fun."

A. In late 1862, immediately after Borodin had joined Balakirev's group, Balakirev decided that Borodin should compose a symphony. Given that Borodin knew nothing about large-scale composition or orchestration, Balakirev sent him home with scores of Beethoven's and Schumann's symphonies and told him to look them over and compose one of his own.

1. Incredibly, Borodin managed to turn out a symphony of sorts, a testament to the power of determination, talent, and Balakirev's measure-by-measure oversight.
2. Even with the example of his first, we would never anticipate that Borodin's Second Symphony would be a genuine masterwork, yet it had all hallmarks of such music: great breadth of conception, wonderful and memorable themes, a superb and advanced harmonic palette, and dramatic contrasts, all swept along with a palpably physical rhythmic power.

B. Borodin began his Second Symphony almost immediately after the premiere of the First, in 1869, and finished it 1876. Along with his opera, *Prince Igor*, it is one of Borodin's finest compositions. We hear the opening two minutes—what amounts to the exposition—of the brilliant fourth and final movement. (**Musical selection**: Borodin, Symphony no. 2 in B Minor, movement 4.)

C. Borodin began a Third Symphony but completed only the first two movements before he died of a heart attack on February 27, 1887, at the age of 53. In 1906, Sir Henry Hadow wrote of Borodin: "No [composer] has ever claimed immortality with so slender an offering."

1. This appraisal still stands. Borodin's best music, including his opera, *Prince Igor*; his orchestral tone poem, *In the Steppes of Central Asia*; his second string quartet; and his Second Symphony are a slender offering indeed, but they are superb works, and the Second Symphony deserves our attention.
2. The consensus today is that, excepting Mussorgsky, Borodin was the most gifted of The Five. He was also, in terms of his profession outside of music, the most successful of The Five, and his career as a doctor, chemist, and professor precluded him from creating the body of work that might have made him a mainstay of the repertoire.

III. Of all the members of The Five, only Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) managed to make a career as a composer. In doing so, he became one

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

of the most influential composers in the history of Russian music.

A. Rimsky-Korsakov came from a family of distinguished naval and military officers, and there was never any question that he would follow in their footsteps, despite his love for music.

B. Sometime in 1861, Rimsky-Korsakov, a 17-year-old cadet at the Naval Institute in St. Petersburg, decided to write a symphony.

1. Given that he knew next to nothing about music theory, he sought out Balakirev, who as we are now aware, hardly knew any more than Rimsky. It made no difference; Rimsky-Korsakov, enthralled to be in the company of a "known" composer, did what Balakirev told him to do, which was to continue working on the symphony during Rimsky's two-and-a-half year cruise on the clipper *Almaz*.
2. On his return to St. Petersburg, Rimsky-Korsakov became the fifth member of The Five. Under Balakirev's direction, he turned out a number of serviceable works, including his Second Symphony, subtitled "*Antar*," the symphonic poem *Sadko*, and the opera *The Maid of Pskov*. This output was pretty impressive for someone who knew nothing about the craft of musical composition, which became painfully clear when Rimsky-Korsakov was invited to join the faculty of the St. Petersburg Conservatory as a professor of practical composition and instrumentation.
3. Somehow, the new professor, studying day and night, managed to stay a week ahead of his students. Eventually, Rimsky learned his craft, and as if to prove to himself that he had mastered the art of counterpoint, he composed his third and final symphony, in which, according to the composer himself, "I tried to cram into it as much counterpoint as possible!"

C. Written in the unusual meter of 5/4 (an uneven, asymmetrical meter that is more characteristic of Eastern European music than Western), the second movement of the symphony bubbles over with energy and life. We listen to its opening two minutes. (**Musical selection**: Rimsky-Korsakov, Symphony no. 3 in C Major, op. 32, movement 2 [1873; revised 1886].)

D. Rimsky-Korsakov's appointment at the St. Petersburg Conservatory went a long way toward breaking up The Five. Modest Mussorgsky, in particular, was furious about it, believing that Rimsky-Korsakov had sold out to the German enemy to compose fugues and sonatas.

E. For both Rimsky-Korsakov and the history of music, however, his move to the Conservatory was about the best thing that could have happened.

1. By being forced to teach theory and orchestration, Rimsky-Korsakov finally learned the subjects himself.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

2. His position also allowed him to bridge the gap between the nationalist music and dogma of The Five and the traditional Western European musical establishment. He became an influential teacher, taking the nationalist message of The Five to the next generation of Russian composers, who were, unlike The Five, properly trained. Among Rimsky-Korsakov's students were: Igor Stravinsky, Sergei Prokofiev, and Alexander Glazunov, who himself became an important mentor of Dmitri Shostakovich.

IV. A prodigious talent, Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936) was often referred to as the "Mendelssohn of Russian music."

A. Glazunov completed his First Symphony when he was 16; his First String Quartet (of seven) was completed at age 17. In 1899, he was appointed professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and, in 1905, at the age of 40, was appointed director of the Conservatory, a post he held for 25 years.

B. Today, Glazunov is recognized as the composer who reconciled 19th-century Russian musical nationalism with the craft and developmental techniques of German compositional style.

C. As an example of Glazunov's symphonic style, we turn to his Symphony no. 5 in Bb Major, op. 55, of 1895. We hear the conclusion of its ringing, chirping, and altogether wonderful second-movement scherzo. (**Musical selection**: Alexander Glazunov, Symphony no. 5 in Bb Major, op. 55, movement 2.)

V. Of the many other composers of pre-Revolution Russian symphonies and post-Revolution Soviet symphonies, we have time for only the briefest mention.

A. Such composers as Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Reinhold Gliere, Sergei Lyapunov, Anton Arensky, Vasily Kalinnikov, Sergei Taneyev, and Alexander Scriabin all composed symphonies, none of which have entered into the international repertoire.

B. A more familiar name is Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) who, despite having written three symphonies, is justifiably much more famous as a composer of piano concerti.

C. Less well known but much more influential as a symphonist was Nikolai Myaskovsky, whose 27 symphonies, written between 1908 and 1950, spanned from the reign of Czar Nicholas II almost through to the end of Stalin's life.

D. We can continue to name other mid-20th–century Soviet composers of symphonies, from Maximilian Steinberg and Vladimir Shcherbachev to Dmitri Kabelevsky and Aram Khachaturian, but their symphonies have not entered the international repertoire. Two masters of the mid-20th–

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

century Soviet symphony eclipsed their contemporaries in much the same way that Haydn and Mozart eclipsed theirs in the late 18th century. We refer to Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich. Lecture Twenty-Four is devoted to Shostakovich and his Symphony no. 10, and here, we briefly highlight the work of Prokofiev.

VI. Not counting two student works, Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev (1891–1953) composed seven symphonies between 1917 and 1952. To this day, Prokofiev's most popular symphony is his First Symphony in D Major, op. 25, the so-called "Classical" Symphony.

A. At the time he composed it, in 1916–1917, Prokofiev was already known as a steel-fisted modernist and anti-Romantic, a "musical Cubist and Futurist"; thus, a Classically proportioned First Symphony was the last thing the musical community expected.

B. Prokofiev's First is a wonderful example of what would soon come to be called *Neo-Classicism*: the "New Classicism," in which Classical-era formal and melodic structures were layered like veneer over harmonic materials and orchestrational techniques that were otherwise very much of the 20th century. In the hands of a master like Prokofiev, the results can be delightful: wry, humorous, ironic, and engaging. As an example, we hear the exposition section that opens the first movement. (**Musical selection**: Prokofiev, Symphony no. 1 in C Major, op. 25, movement 1, exposition.)

C. Prokofiev was born in Ukraine and entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1904, at the age of 13. A brilliant pianist, he treated the piano like a percussion instrument, and he transferred his explosive, percussive vision of the piano to the orchestra, as well. When the Revolution came to Russia in 1917, the 26-year-old Prokofiev sailed for the United States by way of Japan.

D. Prokofiev left the United States in 1923 and moved to Paris, which remained his base of operations for 13 years. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Prokofiev was invited to concertize a number of times in the Soviet Union. The success of these tours convinced the naïve Prokofiev to return to Russia. In 1936, he renounced his "émigré" status, moved to Moscow, and became a Soviet citizen.

E. Prokofiev initially had success in the Soviet Union, but he was censured by the Soviet government in 1948 and died a frightened, broken man on March 5, 1953, about one hour before Joseph Stalin died.

F. We close with the opening of the second-movement scherzo of Prokofiev's Symphony no. 5, composed in 1944 and perhaps the most successful of all the pieces he wrote after his return to the Soviet Union. (**Musical selection**: Prokofiev, Symphony no. 5 in Bb Major, op. 100, movement 2.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

G. That bit of scherzo from the Fifth Symphony sounds like the "old" Prokofiev: the wry, idiosyncratic humorist, the composer he was before he returned to the Soviet Union and, for the sake of survival, wrote music that satisfied the Soviet state. We'll discuss this issue of music and "the state" at greater length when we return to the Soviet Union and Shostakovich's Symphony no. 10 in Lecture Twenty-Four.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Nineteen

Charles Ives

Scope: America did not develop a concert music infrastructure until the 19th century, or an indigenous concert music tradition until the early 20th century. With Charles Ives, America could finally claim a distinctly American composer, one who acknowledged and represented the diversity of the nation in his music. Ives freely used quotations from the popular music of his youth and technical experimentation to create a musical language all his own.

Outline

I. America did not develop an indigenous concert music tradition until the beginning of the 20th century.

A. There are any number of reasons for this, chief among them are economics and machismo. At the heart of the "American dream" is the concept of economic Darwinism, that is, survival of the economic fittest. In a freely competitive, merit-oriented marketplace, survival goes to those enterprises that can turn a profit and create something of value.

B. The arts exist uncomfortably in an environment where intrinsic value is measured in dollars and cents. Further, although a painting or a book can have intrinsic value, what "value" does a piece of concert music have? Concert music "exists" only in the air. What is the hard value of a symphony or string quartet? How do we measure its intrinsic worth?

C. In 18th- and 19th-century America, in a developing nation where success was measured by financial advancement and security, composers of concert music ranked exceedingly low on the social scale. In his book *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, H. Wiley Hitchcock notes that music was considered "the most intangible and 'useless' [of] the arts," and it was left as the province of women or "immigrant 'professors'" (45–46).

D. More than any other single group, it was the Germans who created what is now the American concert music infrastructure.

1. Massive crop failures in the 1840s, the failed revolutions of 1848, and the California gold rush of 1849 brought huge numbers of German-speaking immigrants to the United States in the mid-19th century. These immigrants brought with them their musical tastes and habits, and it was largely through their efforts and influence that German-style musical education institutions, concert halls, and performing organizations were born and funded.

2. Between 1860 and 1900, the American musical infrastructure virtually came into existence. Education institutions were founded, including the Peabody Conservatory in 1860 and the Institute of Musical Art (later renamed the Juilliard School) in 1904. Concert halls were built, including Carnegie Hall in 1891 and Boston's Symphony Hall in 1900. By the first decades of the 20th century, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic rivaled any orchestra in Europe.

3. The "American" musical infrastructure exhibited a built-in German bias from the beginning. For example, the first full professor of music at any American university was the American-born composer John Knowles Paine (1839–1906), who studied in Berlin before returning to teach at Harvard. Paine was a famous composer in his day and a highly influential teacher, whose music has a distinctly German sound. (**Musical selection**: Paine, Symphony no. 1 in C Minor, op. 23, movement 1, opening [1876].)

E. Building a musical infrastructure was only half the battle. If an "indigenous" concert music tradition was to evolve in the United States, American composers also had to develop an awareness that their music must celebrate the American experience and reflect the diversity of the nation. Today, we recognize that an American music is only "American," if, like American society itself, it somehow synthesizes diverse musical elements into a whole greater than its parts.

1. Jazz, for example, is a quintessentially "American" music: a synthesis of West African rhythmic constructs and microtonal scales with European instruments and harmonic practice.

2. In other words, if the soul of American society is its rich ethnic and racial diversity, then no one racial or ethnic tradition can, by itself, create a genuine American music. The first American-born composer of genius to intellectually and musically recognize this fact was a Connecticut Yankee, Charles Edward Ives.

II. Charles Ives (1874–1954) was born and raised in Danbury, Connecticut, where he lived the perfect New England childhood.

A. Aside from the New England environment of his youth, which he memorialized in his music, the great formative influence of Ives's life was his father, George Edward Ives, a Civil War veteran and a cornet player of some talent.

1. George Ives was Danbury's bandmaster and its music teacher. He conducted the local theater orchestras and was music director at the Methodist Church. He was also something of a rebel, being the only one of four siblings not to follow his father into a respectable job in business.

2. George's rebellious streak played itself out in his music and made a significant impression on his son Charlie. George was one of those individuals for whom the phrase "Yankee ingenuity" was coined; he was constantly building all sorts of musical inventions and creating musical exercises for his children.

3. George also imparted a traditional music curriculum to his children. According to one of Charles's biographers: "George Ives repudiated conformity, but he believed in discipline. [His] main departures from the academic standards were—one—that sound was a world of infinite possibilities to be explored and—two—that music was to be most valued when related to human events." (Gilbert Chase, *America's Music from the Pilgrim's to the Present*, 3rd ed., p. 430. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.)

B. Ives's own music is a unique synthesis of his classical training, his love for American music of every kind, the New England of his childhood, experimentation, and his abject belief that music was the common language that bound together all humanity in all places at all times.

C. Ives's attitudes toward music were formed early, and they were bound to cause problems when he came in contact with the German-educated pedants that dominated the American musical scene at the end of the 19th century. At Yale, Ives studied composition with Professor Horatio Parker, who had studied in Munich. Ives later said that Parker was "governed too much by the German rule" to allow Ives to try out any of his father's experimental ideas.

D. Ives also worked with Parker on a symphony as a sort of "undergraduate thesis," a work now known as his "First" Symphony. Later, Ives chose not to revise his First Symphony because during its original composition, Parker had forced him to make changes in it that he didn't want to make. In the end, he had a technically polished, perfectly "nice" symphony that he saw as a bundle of compromises, more Parker's than his own, a monument to the futility of trying to please anyone but himself.

III. Ives graduated from Yale in 1898; took a weekend job as church organist and choir director in Bloomfield, New Jersey; and went to work as a clerk in the actuarial department of the Mutual Life Insurance Company. He also composed in every spare minute he had; his Symphony no. 2, composed between 1900 and 1902, is a product of this period.

A. We turn to the recapitulation and coda of the fifth and final movement of Ives's Second, because the central issue surrounding the symphony is best demonstrated in its last minutes.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

1. That "issue" involves Ives's use of quotations, which are not momentary references to his musical heroes, but direct, often substantial quotations woven together to create a genuine American quilt. The musical references fly by, like momentary impressions seen from the window of a speeding train; together, they create an extraordinary sense of time and place.

2. We will hear the following: an energetic, almost Dvorak-like theme 1, followed by a bit of "Camptown Races" in the brass; a delicate version of theme 1 in the winds, followed by a Yankee drum-and-fife corps, with "Camptown Races" in the trombones, followed by a bit of "Turkey in the Straw"; a modulating bridge that uses material from themes 1 and 2, "Camptown Races," and other tunes, all of which coalesces into the patriotic march "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" in the brass; a buildup, a pause, a quiet transition in the strings…and then, theme 2.

3. Gentle and folk-like, theme 2 is punctuated by a brief bit of the song "Far, Far Away," heard in the oboe. Another bridge-like passage follows, combining almost everything we've heard so far; a snare drum then calls everyone to order; reveille is sounded in the trumpets, and a glorious, triumphant version of "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" blazes forth, followed by one last reveille call! (**Musical selection**: Ives, Symphony no. 2, movement 5, recapitulation and coda.)

4. Charles Ives developed a truly American artistic tenet based on pluralism, inclusivity, and the absolute necessity for diversity in an artist's outlook.

5. Ives's belief in the interrelation of all things was based on his Methodist spirituality and the New England Transcendental belief of the great uniting "over-soul" of the universe. For this reason, Ives freely juxtaposed different sorts of music as his imagination saw fit. The necessity of cultivating and celebrating musical diversity was seen by Ives as an essentially American principle.

B. The reason Ives was free to put his beliefs into his music and write what he wanted to write was that he made his living in the insurance business, not as a musician. Ives was a liberal idealist, and he viewed insurance as a great social equalizer that offered financial security for the "common person" decades before the creation of Social Security. Ives went on to make a fortune as a principal partner at Mutual Life.

C. He composed compulsively and continuously, but he refused to copyright his music, claiming that all music belonged to all people. He also refused to take royalties for his published works and donated the money to charity. He used his wealth to help other composers and musical enterprises; indeed, Ives's generosity kept many musicians and musical organizations in business through the Depression.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

D. Ives rarely sought out performances. As a result, his musical impact on his own generation of composers was almost nonexistent. It took decades for the world to discover Ives's music. His Second Symphony, for example, largely completed by 1902, when Ives was 28 years old, didn't receive its premiere until 1951, when he was 77 years old. Ives didn't attend the premiere but listened to it on the maid's radio in his kitchen when it was broadcast a few days later.

E. Ives's refusal to be a professional musician and his reserve about having his music performed may also reflect an attitude symptomatic of America at the time; that is, that "real men are not professional musicians." Ives could not bring himself to be "merely" a professional composer, answering only to his own imagination, his main purpose in life to wallow in artistic self-indulgence.

F. As was most of his generation, Ives was also virulently homophobic and terrified that his musical interests would be interpreted as a sign of effeminacy. Ives's cultivation of startling, often violent dissonance can be traced, partially, to his desire to shock the genteel and, in his mind, "effeminate" concert music community. We listen, once again, to the amazing conclusion of the Second Symphony. (**Musical selection**: Ives, Symphony no. 2, movement 5, conclusion.)

IV. Ives composed very little after the mid-1920s, when a series of heart attacks left him a coronary invalid. He lived until 1954, long enough to witness the belated success of his music.

A. Ives's third symphony was begun in 1902, first completed in 1904, and further revised in 1909. It received its premiere in 1946, 37 years later, under the baton of Lou Harrison in Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. The following year, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music.

B. The symphony, called by Ives *The Camp Meeting*, is a three-movement work based on the revival meetings he attended as a boy in the Connecticut countryside.

1. Each movement is an extended polyphonic fantasy based on the popular tunes and hymns he remembered from his youth. It is a gorgeous and, for Ives, a conservative work; one in which, true to form, the various quotations are subsumed into a deeply moving and lyric whole.

2. The power and purity of Ives's childhood memories—the New England summer, his father, and the communal religious ecstasy of the occasion—create a symphony that is profoundly spiritual.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

3. We hear the opening two and a half minutes of the first movement, subtitled "Old Folks Gatherin'," based largely on Lowell Mason's hymn "Azmon" and Charles Converse's hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." (**Musical selection**: Ives, Symphony no. 3, movement 1 opening.)

V. The "cumulative" buildup we heard in the first movement of the Third Symphony characterizes Ives's fourth and last symphony to an overwhelming degree, although the musical language of the Fourth is very different from that of the Third.

A. Ives began his Fourth Symphony in either 1909 or 1910 and finished it in 1916. It was first performed on April 26, 1965, at Carnegie Hall, by the American Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski conducting.

B. Ives's Fourth is his crowning symphonic achievement; in it, he uses every device in his incredible compositional bag of tricks, treating this Fourth Symphony as a sort of personal retrospective. We turn, in closing, to the fourth and final movement. Slow in tempo, grand and somber in mood, the fourth movement is based almost entirely on the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee."

C. The movement begins with a percussion *ostinato*, a repeated rhythmic pattern, that continues throughout at a tempo different from the rest of the orchestra. It represents "the constant," whatever we choose the constant to be. It is a constant against which the other musics are layered, musics that represent both the sacred and secular spirit that Ives perceived in humankind. (**Musical selection**: Ives, Symphony no. 4, movement 4, opening.)

D. Certainly, Ives was an astonishing innovator: His use of polytonality, polyrhythm, atonality, quotations, and musical collage, along with his assumption that any sound was potentially "musical" were all far ahead of his time. Indeed, Ives's innovations had to be reinvented by others in the 1950s and 1960s, when the larger musical community was prepared to deal with them. Ultimately, however, Ives's music is not about his technical innovations but, rather, his unique expressive voice and the power of that voice.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Twenty

Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber

Scope: The American concert music tradition began to emerge in the 1920s, and the American spirit of the time was captured in the work of Aaron Copland. Copland studied in France but returned to the United States with a spare and angular compositional style that was heavily influenced by jazz. Other American composers followed Copland, notably Samuel Barber, who is most well known for his *Adagio for Strings*. Barber wrote only two symphonies, but his work elevated the art form in America to a new level of beauty, design, and elegance.

Outline

I. An identifiably "American" concert music finally emerged in the 1920s, brought on by four changes in society.

- **A.** First, by the 1920s, the frontier expansion that had consumed so much of the creative energy of 19th-century America was complete. From coast to coast, particularly in the rapidly expanding urban centers, people could begin to focus on quality of life and quality of culture.
- **B.** Also by the 1920s, the music education institutions of the United States were turning out significant numbers of instrumentalists, singers, and composers who had been born in the United States and worked here.
- **C.** Third, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 resulted in a rejection of all things German and Austrian by both the American public and the professional music community. This rejection became almost universal when the United States entered the First World War against Germany and Austria in 1917.
- **D.** Finally, the emergence of American concert music was spurred by the isolationist attitude of the 1920s, during which time the American nation turned inward and began to shed its cultural inferiority complex. In the process, the public and professional musical community alike began to recognize and even embrace such quintessentially American musics as blues, ragtime, and jazz and the incredibly rich regional musical heritage of America, from folksong to Tex-Mex, from bluegrass to zydecko.
- **E.** No composer better epitomized the new "pan-American" musical spirit of the 1920s–1940s than Aaron Copland. For the American public and professional community alike, Copland remains the most representative "American" composer of the 20th century.

II. Aaron Copland (1900–1990) was in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Polish/Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. His father, Morris, was a successful

merchant, and Aaron, the pet of the family, grew up comfortably ensconced in the middle class.

- **A.** Charles Ives and Aaron Copland could not have come from more opposite backgrounds, yet they had much more in common than not. They both grew up in large, loving, and religious households. Both Ives and Copland had strong father figures, who believed in America and the value of hard work.
- **B.** Unlike Charles Ives, Aaron Copland was not a musical prodigy. He was a talented piano player whose love of music befuddled his family. What made Copland special was the initiative he took in his own music education. He found his own piano teachers, arranged for his own lessons, and took correspondence courses in harmony and theory; in early 1917, a few months after his 16th birthday, he began taking harmony, counterpoint, and composition lessons with Rubin Goldmark. Copland studied with Goldmark for four years and received a solid grounding in the basics of music composition and theory.
- **C.** In 1921, Copland left for Europe to study music, but instead of going to Vienna or Berlin or Hamburg, as had previous generations of aspiring American composers, he ended up in Fontainebleau, just outside of Paris, at the New School of Music for Americans, as a student of Nadia Boulanger.
  1. It was said that Nadia Boulanger taught music theory and composition to so many Americans that by the 1940s, every American town had two things: a five-and-ten-cent store and a former student of Nadia Boulanger.
  2. As an educator, Boulanger was just as familiar with the music of Mussorgsky and Stravinsky as she was that of the dead Germans, and she was fascinated by the experimental trends of the time.
  3. Through Boulanger, Copland got to meet the artistic movers and shakers of Paris, including Stravinsky, Ravel, Prokofiev, Francois Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Diaghilev, Picasso, Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce.
- **D.** Copland returned to the United States in 1924 with a compositional technique profoundly influenced by the Parisian scene, particularly Igor Stravinsky, and a burning desire to be "as recognizably American as Mussorgsky and Stravinsky were Russian."
- **E.** Aaron Copland wrote three symphonies. The first was composed immediately after he returned to the United States, at the request of Boulanger, who had been invited to appear as an organ soloist at the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Boulanger insisted that her star student, Copland, write a piece for her to perform with the orchestra; the result was Copland's First Symphony, the "Organ" Symphony.

F. Copland's compositional style was firmly in place by 1927 and is characterized by a spare, angular, open sound and a rhythmic impulse influenced equally by the asymmetrical rhythms of Igor Stravinsky and the explosive polyrhythms of jazz. The dual rhythmic influences of Stravinsky and jazz are joined wonderfully in Copland's Symphony no. 2, the so-called "Short Symphony," of 1933.

G. Most listeners are familiar with the "populist" Aaron Copland, who composed such works as *Appalachian Spring*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and the grandiose Third Symphony of 1946. The other Aaron Copland is uncompromising, abstract, and "modernist," the composer of the *Variations for Piano* in 1930; the *Fantasy for Piano* in 1957; the orchestral works *Connotations* and *Inscape* in 1962 and 1967, respectively; and the "Short Symphony" in 1933; among other works. Many believe that this Aaron Copland is a much more interesting and original composer than the populist one.

H. We take our cue for the first movement from Copland's own alternative title for the piece: *The Bounding Line*; it is a movement conceived as a single, leaping, uninterrupted melody line. As we listen, be aware of the following three points:

   1. For the most part, at any given moment, we will hear only one pitch at a time and almost never more than two at a time. This texture is spare, tidy, and "thrifty."

   2. Also note the explosive manner in which the notes are articulated and the unpredictable, "herky-jerky" rhythmic profile of these explosive articulations. This rhythmic asymmetry is a product of the combined influence of Stravinsky and jazz on Copland's compositional language.

   3. Finally, Copland makes no attempt to work within the confines of any existing form. This music develops as it goes, following its own interior logic. It is also music of tremendous charm, filled with life; music that is both playful and frantic; and music that is identifiably "American." (**Musical selection**: Copland, Symphony no. 2 [Short Symphony], movement 1, opening [1933].)

I. One reason this music is as supple and light as it is has to do with Copland's orchestration. The piece is scored for a full wind section, including a rarely heard bass oboe, an instrument called a *heckelphone*. The brass section consists of four horns and two trumpets only; there are no trombones or tubas to weigh the piece down. There is a full string section but, in lieu of any percussion, a piano.

J. The second movement is achingly beautiful and utterly original. We'll hear the first of the movement's three parts. (**Musical selection**: Copland, Symphony no. 2 [Short], movement 2, part 1.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

K. The third and final movement melds together the sprightly rhythmic profile of the first movement with the thematic material and denser harmonic structure of the second. It is an entirely thrilling movement, one that anticipates Copland's orchestral work *El Salon Mexico*, composed between 1933 and 1936. (**Musical selection**: Copland, Symphony no. 2 [Short Symphony], movement 3, opening.)

III. Fast on the heels of Aaron Copland, a bevy of American symphonists emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, composers whose music spanned a wide variety of styles and who were, in their own ways, each identifiably American.

A. For the remainder of this lecture and the entirety of the next, we will discuss three of these composers: Samuel Barber, Roy Harris, and William Schuman. Before we begin with Samuel Barber, however, the following is a short list of mid-century American symphonists and Dr. Greenberg's favorites among the symphonies of each of them.

B. Howard Hanson (1896–1981) was born in Wahoo, Nebraska, and was a genuine Romantic. He wrote seven symphonies between 1922 and 1977 and was the first president of the Eastman School of Music. Dr. Greenberg recommends his Second Symphony of 1930, subtitled "The Romantic," in particular the second movement, which John Williams adapted for his music for the bicycle chase scene in the movie *E.T.*

C. Walter Piston (1894–1976) was a professor of composition at Harvard, the author of textbooks on harmony and orchestration, and the composer of eight symphonies. His music combines great clarity and workmanship with a marvelous melodic sensibility, a genuinely American rhythmic energy, and an utter lack of pretension. Dr. Greenberg recommends Piston's Sixth Symphony of 1955.

D. Roger Sessions (1896–1985) was a professor of music composition at Princeton University and the University of California at Berkeley and a legend as both a teacher and a composer. He wrote nine symphonies, complex works of extraordinary craft and expressive power. For those prepared to do battle with a great but challenging piece of music, Dr. Greenberg recommends Sessions's Fourth of 1958.

E. Henry Cowell (1897–1965) composed 21 symphonies. He was an experimenter and teacher; as a music publisher and conductor, he was a great friend to other composers and the man responsible for bringing the music of Charles Ives to the attention of the world. His Symphony no. 11 of 1954, entitled *The Seven Rituals of Music*, is a compendium of the musical styles and techniques he spent a lifetime developing.

F. Peter Mennin (1923–1983) was the composer of nine symphonies and president of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and of the Juilliard School from 1962 until his death in 1983. His music is filled with

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

energy and edge, very "New York" in its power and intensity. His Seventh Symphony of 1963 is one of Dr. Greenberg's favorites.

G. David Diamond (b. 1915) has composed 11 symphonies that are marked by extraordinary refinement, craftsmanship, and expressive power. Dr. Greenberg suggests Diamond's Fourth Symphony of 1945 as a starting place.

H. Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987) composed nine symphonies; Dr. Greenberg recommends his Symphony no. 5 (*Symphony for Strings*) of 1954.

I. Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000) composed 67 numbered symphonies, many of them colored by his Armenian heritage and his fascination with Eastern mysticism. The piece that put him on the symphonic map is his Symphony no. 2, subtitled "Mysterious Mountain."

IV. Samuel Osborne Barber (1910–1981) was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the son of a well-known doctor and a mother with a passionate interest in music.

A. Barber wrote his first piece at age 7 and tried writing his first opera at 10. When he was 14, he was among the first students to enter the new Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied voice, piano, composition, and conducting with the great Fritz Reiner.

B. Barber composed only two symphonies, the first while he was in residence at the American Academy in Rome. Barber was 26 years old when it was premiered in Rome in May of 1936. The piece was awarded a Pulitzer Traveling Scholarship in 1936; because Barber had also won the Pulitzer Scholarship in 1935, he became the first composer to win the award in back-to-back years.

C. Barber's Second Symphony was composed in 1944 when he was a corporal in the Army Air Force; it was commissioned by and dedicated to the U.S. Army Air Force. Barber was never satisfied with it. In 1964, he extracted a single movement from the symphony and entitled it "Night Flight." Four years later, in 1968, 24 years after its composition, he withdrew the entire symphony and destroyed his manuscript score. Nevertheless, recordings are available.

D. We return to Barber's Symphony no. 1, op. 9, of 1936, revised in 1943. Although the four sections of the symphony are played without a break, they trace the familiar pattern of the traditional symphonic template: a first-movement allegro in sonata form, a second-movement scherzo, a third-movement andante, and a somewhat faster and dramatic fourth movement that sums up and extends what has gone before it.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

1. The four continuous sections of Barber's First are unified by a single thematic idea, a *motto* theme, that's heard at the very beginning of the first movement. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, motto theme, opening.)
2. As the development section approaches its climax, this motto theme is heard three times in the brass. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, motto theme, development.)

E. As the development section comes to its shattering, drum-dominated climax, instead of the expected return to the motto theme at the beginning of what we expect will be the recapitulation, we hear, instead, the motto theme in an entirely different guise, as the opening of the scherzo. Thus, the run-on sections here are actually bridged over; the motto theme acts both as a recapitulatory statement of the sonata form and an opening thematic statement of the scherzo.

1. First, we hear the motto theme as it initiates the scherzo, quick, chipper, and full of repeated notes. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, scherzo, opening.)
2. Next, we hear the connection between the truncated sonata form and the scherzo. We listen from the statement of the motto theme in the development section of sonata form through the first third or so of the scherzo. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, motto theme, development through scherzo opening.)

F. The andante is Barber at his lyric best: music of great beauty and expressive power. The music begins quietly, with an aria-like theme played by a solo oboe accompanied by muted strings, building to an amazing climax. We will listen to the entire andante so that we might hear it as a single magnificent melodic line powered, ultimately, by a single huge crescendo. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, andante.)

G. The fourth and final section is a *passacaglia*, meaning that the theme heard at the very beginning in the 'cellos and basses is repeated over and over, while the music heard above that theme is ever changing. The passacaglia theme—the opening melody heard in the 'cellos and basses on which the entire movement is based—is another version of the motto theme heard at the beginning of the symphony.

1. By way of review, we listen to the motto theme as it first appeared at the beginning of the symphony, followed immediately by the passacaglia theme at the beginning of the fourth section. (**Musical selections**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, section 1, motto theme, and section 4, passacaglia theme.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

2. This passacaglia—and the symphony—concludes with blaring brass reiterating the motto theme, followed by a forceful ending. (**Musical selection**: Barber, Symphony no. 1, movement 4, conclusion.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Twenty-One

Roy Harris and William Schuman

Scope: During the heyday of the American symphony, the 1930s–1950s, Roy Harris and William Schuman were considered the preeminent symphonic composers of their time, and they remain among the most important symphonists of the 20th century. Harris wrote 15 symphonies, and his work, like that of Ives, makes use of distinctly American sounds, including folksongs and hymns, combined with a rustic musical voice. Schuman composed 10 symphonies; we will examine his Third, which embodies the optimistic and aggressive spirit of America during this period.

Outline

I. The life of Roy Harris (1898–1979) reads almost like a storybook.

   A. "Leroy" Harris was born in a log cabin on Abraham Lincoln's birthday in Lincoln County, Oklahoma. He grew up on a hardscrabble farm, the child of genuine pioneers.

      1. In 1904, when Harris was 6 years old, the family moved to California, where Harris's father, Elmer, bought a small piece of grazing pasture just east of Pasadena and started a farm.
      2. The country changed dramatically over the next few years, as the orange groves and ranch lands of Los Angeles County were swallowed up by growth and development, but the simple pioneer environment in which Harris came of age was the foundation of his artistic makeup.
      3. Like Charles Ives, Roy Harris was profoundly influenced by the folksongs and patriotic anthems he heard and sang while he was growing up, and like Ives, Harris associated that music with the physical environment of his childhood, in his case, the open spaces of the American West.

   B. Harris's musical education was nothing out of the ordinary. He took piano lessons as a child and played clarinet in the Covina Public High School band. Because his interest in music was considered effeminate by his peers, he tried out for football. While playing, he broke his nose and arm and injured one of his fingers, thus ending his chances of becoming a pianist.

   C. During the First World War, Harris served in the heavy artillery. After being discharged, he spent a year bumming around the country. He returned to southern California and got a job driving a truck for a local dairy.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

1. Harris also began attending concerts of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; because he couldn't afford to buy tickets, he got in as an usher. His interest in music rekindled, Harris took some private lessons, then applied and was accepted at the University of California at Berkeley, where in his mid-20s, he finally began his formal training in music.
2. He stayed at Berkeley for two years, then returned to Los Angeles for private study with Arthur Farwell, a local composer, and his career began to take shape.
3. Harris composed a piece for orchestra entitled *Andante*. The piece fell into the hands of Howard Hanson, who agreed to perform it in Rochester, New York, where he conducted the orchestra and directed the Eastman School of Music. Hanson invited Harris to come out for the performance, and Harris scraped together the train fare for what was supposed to be a two-week trip. He didn't return to California for five years.

D. While in New York, Harris was offered a residency at the Macdowell artists' colony. There, he met Aaron Copland, recently returned from France and already a rising star, who told Harris that he should study with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau.

1. Almost immediately, Harris managed to secure the first of two Guggenheim grants that made it possible for him to travel to Paris to study with Boulanger.
2. At first, Harris engaged in a kind of independent study with Boulanger, exploring Beethoven's string quartets on his own. They were the revelation that changed his artistic life.
3. Ultimately, Harris stayed in France for four years and was exposed to the culture there. Boulanger understood that it was best to stay out of Harris's way, to remain in the background, from where she directed his education without stifling his enthusiasm or personal initiative. Harris—gregarious, enthusiastic, and filled with energy—was one of those people who had to learn things on his own, through a process of self-discovery and trial and error.

E. The music Harris wrote while in Paris betrayed a certain rusticity that never entirely left his musical voice. As Harris learned how to compose, he cultivated this rusticity as an essential element of his compositional style.

1. Compositionally, Harris was what we might call a highly sophisticated primitive. He was a composer who always sought the "broad stroke," the most direct expressive path, and the most brilliant coloration he could create.
2. His "primitivism," based on American folksong, fiddling, and Protestant hymns, honed and polished in Fontainebleau and Paris,

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

made his music quintessentially American for a generation in search of an American "sound."

3. As we listen to Harris's Symphony no. 3, his greatest and most famous symphony, we will define and describe just those elements of Harris's style that make his music seem so American.

F. Having returned to the United States from France and with his music in increasing demand, Harris's success was just around the corner. His First Symphony, composed in 1933, was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Harris's Second Symphony, of 1935, was also commissioned and premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as was the Third Symphony of 1937, which received its premiere on February 24, 1939.

II. Harris's Symphony no. 3 is a one-movement work consisting of five continuous parts that outline a history of music, from its Gregorian chant–like opening through its tragic, Romantic conclusion.

A. Part 1 opens with a long, unaccompanied melody, reminiscent of a plain chant, in the 'cellos, that evokes the wide open spaces of the American countryside. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 1, opening.)

B. The violas now join the 'cellos in playing the "chant" tune in parallel fourths and fifths, evoking the music—called *parallel organum*—of the 9th and 10th centuries C.E. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 1, continued.)

C. More instruments now join in, thickening and intensifying the purposely "primitive" counterpoint until, with the entry of the French horns, the richly lyric part 2 begins. Here, the harmonic and melodic language has "progressed" to include major and minor elements, and this section is filled with "major-then-minor" harmonic shifts that are an essential part of Harris's mature compositional language. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 2, opening.)

D. Part 3 exhibits another step forward in the "musical evolution" that marks the symphony. About one-third of the way through, the music coalesces into a strikingly beautiful passage, as shimmering, muted string arpeggios outline shifting harmonies, while solo wind instruments float above, playing varied fragments of the opening "chant" melody. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 3.)

E. This section builds in intensity and reaches its climax with the beginning of part 4, entitled "Fugue." It's a rather unconventional and very much American fugue; its theme has the short melodic phrases and foot-stomping rhythmic power of a barn dance! (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 4 [Fugue], opening.)

F. The fugue builds to a brilliant climax, which leads directly into part 5. Part 5 begins as a dialogue among blaring brass, explosive timpani, and

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

sustained strings. We listen from the last moments of the fugue, which are scored for brass, winds, and timpani only. Part 5 "officially" begins with the entrance of the strings. It is a terrific passage, which eventually gives way to a bold but tragic march, initiated by the timpani. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 4, conclusion and part 5, opening.)

G. The symphony concludes about two minutes later, monumentally, magnificently, and tragically, recalling the opening chant theme in the brass. (**Musical selection**: Harris, Symphony no. 3, part 5, conclusion.)

H. This music is powerful but also concise; like the quintessential American hero—the "strong, silent type"—this is bold, stark, frankly masculine music that says what it needs to say with a minimum of fuss. Harris's penchant for simple melodic and harmonic intervals—fourths and fifths—imbues his music with both an open sound and a certain "primitive simplicity," but underlying this simplicity is great emotional depth and expressive sophistication.

I. Serge Koussevitzky's believed that Harris's Third represented a level of symphonic accomplishment that was new to the American scene, and this belief was shared by many of his contemporaries. During the 1941–1942 concert season alone, Harris's Third was performed by 33 orchestras in just the United States, a record for a contemporary work that stands to this day.

III. William Howard Schuman (1910–1992) was born in New York City, on the upper West Side, and grew up happily in a middle-class household.

A. When he was 12 years old, he learned to play the violin, mostly by ear, in order to play in the school band. Through his teens, his interest was in popular music; he organized his high school's dance band and wrote melodies for more than 200 songs, but he was, for all intents and purposes, a musical illiterate.

B. After high school graduation, Schuman enrolled at the School of Commerce at New York University, which he attended for two years. Pestered by his mother, he allowed himself to be dragged to Carnegie Hall, where he heard Arturo Toscanini conduct the New York Philharmonic in a program of music by Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, and Zoltan Kodaly. Bill Schuman was enthralled and, within days, had taken up the study of harmony to become a composer.

C. According to Schuman, for the next five years he "ate, slept, and lived" at Carnegie Hall and Town Hall, typically attending both matinee and evening concerts on the same day. In 1933, Schuman enrolled at Teachers College at Columbia University, where he received his B.S. in 1935 and M.A. in 1937. In 1936, while Schuman was attending Columbia, he heard a performance of Roy Harris's Symphony no. 1 and was stunned.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

D. To his huge surprise and delight, Schuman discovered that Harris was teaching at the Juilliard School, which was, at the time, just across the street from Columbia University. Schuman wasted no time in seeking Harris out, and for the next two years, from 1936–1938, he studied privately with Harris. Harris's direct, extroverted, muscular style of composition found an eager disciple in Schuman.

IV. For all of his fine music, the core of Schuman's output is his orchestral music, of which his 10 symphonies hold pride of place.

A. With Harris's guidance, Schuman wrote his Second Symphony in 1937, which then came to the attention of Aaron Copland. In an article in the influential journal *Modern Music*, Copland called Schuman "the musical discovery of the year." Copland also contacted his friend Serge Koussevitzky about Schuman. The result was a series of performances and commissions from Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, capped by the commission and premiere of Schuman's Symphony no. 3 of 1941, dedicated to Serge Koussevitzky.

B. Schuman's Third Symphony is cast in two movements, each of which is divided into two parts. The titles of the two movements indicate that, structurally, Schuman's Third pays homage to the Baroque era: Movement one is entitled "Passacaglia and Fugue," and movement two is entitled "Chorale and Toccata."

1. A *passacaglia* is a Baroque variations procedure in which a bass line is presented and repeated, as the material above that bass line changes constantly. The first iteration of the bass line—the passacaglia theme—is referred to as the *theme*, and each reiteration, with the changing materials above, is called a *variation*.
2. Schuman's passacaglia is usual in two ways. First, the theme is initially presented not by the basses and 'cellos but by the violas, which makes it sound like a genuine "tune," not just a bass line. As we listen to it, be aware of Schuman's typical melodic style, in which the passacaglia theme, though pensive and lyric, is filled with leaps and wide-open melodic spaces. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 1, passacaglia theme.)
3. The second reason that Schuman's passacaglia is unusual is that each successive entry of the theme is stated a half-step higher than the last, imbuing the music with a sense of rising tension that is "sensed" if not consciously "heard." We listen from the beginning to the theme and the first five variations. Note how the texture thickens as each variation adds a new melodic line. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 1, passacaglia theme and first five variations.)
4. This is powerful and expansive music. About halfway through the passacaglia, we hear a variation for brass alone. The block-like brass writing here is typical of the mature Schuman. (**Musical**

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

selection: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 1, passacaglia, brass variation.)

C. The fugue almost spills out of the conclusion of the passacaglia. The fugue subject—initially played by four horns and pizzicato violas and 'cellos—is terse and spiky and offers a perfect contrast to the broad passacaglia theme that went before it. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 1, fugue subject.)

D. Like the passacaglia, the fugue builds in intensity, as more and more instrumental lines are layered, one atop the other. The conclusion of the fugue—and of this huge first movement—is fabulous: raucous, brilliant, blaring, and energized. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 1, fugue conclusion.)

E. The second-movement "chorale" opens with a gentle, undulating prelude scored for violas and 'cellos. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 2, opening.)

F. About a minute later, a solo trumpet, then a solo flute, enter; each sings a typically Schuman melody of extraordinary beauty and breadth. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 2, chorale, trumpet entry.)

G. The chorale eventually gives way to a very low Bb, played by the bassoon and a contrabassoon, which indicates that the final section—the toccata—has begun. A snare drum taps out the rhythm of the toccata's main theme, which is then played by a solo bass-clarinet. The theme is an incredibly virtuosic tour-de-force for the bass clarinet. (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 2, toccata, opening.)

H. As we would expect, the symphony ends with a bang! (**Musical selection**: Schuman, Symphony no. 3, movement 2, conclusion.)

I. Schuman was not just a great composer, but a great educator and arts administrator, as well.

1. He virtually created the music program at Sarah Lawrence College, where he taught from 1935–1945. He was president of the Juilliard School from 1945–1962, then became the first president of Lincoln Center, from 1962–1969. He formed the Juilliard String Quartet, which became the model for quartets-in-residence throughout the world. He founded the Lincoln Center Student Program, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, and many other performance programs.

2. Somehow, he also found time to compose. His Third Symphony received the first New York Critics' Circle Award, in 1941, and he was awarded the first Pulitzer Prize given in musical composition, in 1943. Schuman was awarded a second Pulitzer in 1985 for his lifetime achievements in composition, teaching, and administration.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Twenty-Two

The 20th-Century British Symphony

Scope: Even more than America, Britain was dominated by German musical influences, producing not a single major compositional figure of its own between 1700 and 1850. That situation changed with Edward Elgar, whose work mirrored the Victorian elegance, Edwardian propriety and nobility, and an exuberance that mirrored the British Empire itself at its peak. Following Elgar, Ralph Vaughn Williams wrote symphonies that offer a different picture of Britain, one that makes substantial use of native British folk influences. In doing so, Vaughan Williams almost single-handedly re-established an English vernacular and, along with Elgar, established a genuinely English symphonic tradition.

Outline

I. With some exceptions, England produced few major compositional figures until the birth of Edward William Elgar.

A. The late 1500s and early 1600s saw a brilliant group of composers working in London, including William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Morley, John Dowland, John Wilbye, and Thomas Weelkes. The English Baroque reached its zenith with the music of Henry Purcell, whose opera, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689) is still considered one of the great masterworks of the 17th century. From that point until the birth of Elgar in 1857, however, England's musical output was unremarkable.

B. This is not to say that England didn't have an appetite for new music, but that appetite was fed, for the most part, by German composers.

1. The English appetite for German music began with the arrival of the Saxon-born, Italian-trained George Frederick Handel in London in 1711. Handel lived and composed in England until his death in 1759, and his music was revered to the extent that native English music ceased to be cultivated.

2. A hundred years later, at a time when English literature was flourishing, the German-born Felix Mendelssohn became the musical hero to another generation of English audiences.

3. England became known in Germany as "*Das Land ohne Musik*," "the country without music," although what the Germans meant was that England was "the country without composers." Nineteenth-century England did indeed produce some native-born composers, such as William Bennett, Charles Hubert Parry, Alexander Mackenzie, Charles Stanford, and Arthur Sullivan, but there were no major compositional figures in England until the appearance of Elgar.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

II. Edward William Elgar (1857–1934) was born in Broadheath, in the southwest of Manchester, the fourth of seven children of Anne Greening and William Henry Elgar.

A. Elgar's father was a competent organist and violinist who made his living as a piano tuner. Despite the musical environment in which he grew up, Elgar was almost entirely self-taught as a musician, having had only a few lessons on the violin and virtually no training as a composer. Nevertheless, he began writing music at around the age of 10, and after working briefly in a lawyer's office, he decided at the age of 16 to make a career in music.

B. At first, he was just another provincial hack, fiddling away in theaters and taverns and writing forgettable salon compositions for the amusement of "the ladies." His working life, however, became his classroom. He held down a number of jobs, including organist at St. George's Church in Worcester, director of the Worcester Instrumental Society, and conductor of the Worcester Philharmonic. He also played bassoon in a wind quintet, established a studio as a violin teacher, and from 1879–1884, conducted the staff orchestra at the county lunatic asylum at Powick. All the while, Elgar composed music of every sort.

C. In 1890, recently married and burning with ambition, the 32-year-old Elgar and his bride moved to London. Without realizing it, Elgar had everything going against him. He was a self-taught provincial trying to make a career in what was, at the time, the most cosmopolitan city in the world. He had no academic degrees, and he arrived without recommendations or connections. Almost predictably, Elgar failed miserably; he felt himself degraded and returned to the English Midlands, depressed and humiliated.

D. Back in Worcestershire, embittered by his experience in London, Elgar continued to compose and conduct, and slowly his reputation grew. In 1899, at the age of 42, he completed the orchestral work that would make him famous: the *Variations on an Original Theme*, op. 36, a piece of music known today as the *Enigma Variations*.

E. Elgar's Symphony no. 1 in Ab Major was completed in 1908, and his Symphony no. 2 in Eb Major, completed in 1911, was premiered in London that same year. The following year, Elgar and his wife moved back to London, arriving, this time, in triumph. Elgar was made Master of the King's Music; he was knighted and made First Baronet of Broadheath; he was commissioned to write the coronation music for King Edward VII; he was awarded no less than 10 honorary degrees by universities; and among his many awards, he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1925.

III. Elgar's Second Symphony, based on materials sketched as early as 1903–1904, was begun in 1909 and completed on February 28, 1911. Elgar

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

dedicated the symphony to the memory of King Edward VII, who had died on May 6, 1910, during its composition.

A. The first of its four movements opens with a grand and spacious theme that is typical of Elgar's mature music: He wrote in a big way; his phrases are long; he called for a gigantic orchestra and filled his scores with a tremendous amount of orchestrational detail. (**Musical selection**: Elgar, Symphony no. 2 in Eb Major, op. 63, movement 1, opening, theme 1.)

B. In his second movement, Elgar pays tribute to Beethoven's own Eb symphony, the *Eroica*. Like Beethoven's Third, Elgar's Second features a second-movement dirge, one associated by the public with the death of the king. (**Musical selection**: Elgar, Symphony no. 2 in Eb Major, op. 63, movement 2, opening.)

C. The third-movement scherzo is a brilliant tour-de-force of rhythmic energy and orchestration. We will listen to the very beginning and the very end of this movement. (**Musical selection**: Elgar, Symphony no. 2 in Eb Major, op. 63, movement 3, opening and conclusion.)

D. Like the first movement, the fourth movement opens with a long and spacious theme, played by the brass. (**Musical selection**: Elgar, Symphony no. 2 in Eb Major, op. 63, movement 4, opening.)

E. While Elgar's First Symphony of 1908 was a triumph, his Second was not. It was a bit too long and complicated for listeners at first, but ultimately, the English music-loving public embraced Elgar's Second.

F. Elgar's reputation changed dramatically between the time he completed his Second Symphony in 1911 and his death 23 years later, in 1934.

1. Incredibly popular at the time he composed his Second Symphony, he watched in horror as he became a musical dinosaur in his own lifetime. During the period of modernism, he was viewed as a throwback to the Edwardian era.
2. Elgar's music has, rightfully, come a long way back since the mid-20th century. It is not explicitly "nationalistic" music, although it is implicitly of its time and place. It displays a Victorian elegance, an Edwardian propriety and nobility, and a broadness and exuberance of conception that mirrors the British Empire itself at the time of its greatest breadth.

IV. Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872–1958) was an English composer of symphonies who looked to the folk heritage of England for musical inspiration.

A. Vaughn Williams had all the musical and educational opportunities that Edward Elgar did not. He came from a well-to-do family, and as a child, he studied the violin, piano, and organ. In 1890, he embarked on an 11-year stint in academia, studying at the Royal College of Music, Trinity College at Cambridge, and in Berlin.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

B. Academically, Vaughn Williams was as pedigreed as they come, but the turning point of his life didn't occur until after he got his doctorate, when he joined the English Folk Music Society. Along with his good friend, the composer Gustav Holst, Vaughn Williams traveled the English countryside, collecting native folk music in as pure a state as it could be found.

C. Vaughn Williams immersed himself in the folk music he collected; its spirit entered his heart and mind and became the essential substance of his musical language. Ultimately, Vaughn Williams became a rabid musical nationalist, and he rejected the German musical influence that had been so pervasive in English music since at least the time of Handel, 200 years earlier.

V. Altogether, Ralph Vaughn Williams wrote nine symphonies, although he didn't begin numbering them until the Fourth. Many of Vaughn Williams's symphonies bear programmatic titles, and two of them, the First and the Seventh, are scored for vocal soloists and chorus and could just as easily be called *oratorios* as symphonies.

A. The following is a chronological list of Vaughn Williams's symphonies:

Symphony no. 1 (1909) is known as *A Sea Symphony*.
Symphony no. 2 (1913) is known as *A London Symphony*.
Symphony no. 3 (1921) is known as the *Pastoral Symphony*.
Symphonies nos. 4, 5, and 6 (1934, 1943, and 1947, respectively) have no programmatic titles and were, thus, numbered.
Symphony no. 7 (1952) is known as *Sinfonia Antarctica*.
Symphonies nos. 8 and 9 (1955 and 1957, respectively) also have no programmatic titles.

B. We turn to Vaughn Williams's Symphony no. 6 in E Minor. The symphony was begun in 1944, completed in 1947, and premiered in 1948 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

1. The dates of this symphony are significant. Vaughn Williams began the symphony in 1944, during the second-to-last year of the Second World War, and completed it three years later, in 1947, at a time when a Third World War appeared increasingly likely.
2. I've chosen this symphony because it is the first work we have encountered in this course that reflects the experience of World War II, the birth of the atomic age, and the terrible fears that another war, one between the Communist East and the Democratic West, was inevitable.

C. Vaughn Williams's Sixth is a compelling, powerful, often anguished work, and it was perceived as being all the more so by audiences who were accustomed to his generally more cheerful expressive palette. The first movement begins explosively; it is not difficult to hear the massed

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

brass and the explosive attacks and rolls in the bass drum as a reference to war. (**Musical selection**: Vaughn Williams, Symphony no. 6 in E Minor, movement 1, opening.)

D. Vaughn Williams introduces a pastoral episode in D major, influenced by English folksong, during the development section and recapitulates this pastoral music near the close of the movement. These two episodes are as close to "the old, familiar" Vaughn Williams as we will hear in the Sixth Symphony. We hear the closing version of this pastoral music, followed by one last iteration of the dramatic and explosive opening theme. (**Musical selection**: Vaughn Williams, Symphony no. 6 in E Minor, movement 1, conclusion.)

E. We should not expect any slow, lyric relief in the second movement. Labeled "*moderato*," it is as dark and funereal in tone as anything Vaughn Williams ever wrote. The movement is in three parts; we listen to the beginning of the third part, where an obsessive, nagging rhythm, reminiscent of a funeral march and consisting of three notes—short–short–long—works the orchestra into a state of rage and despair. (**Musical selection**: Vaughn Williams, Symphony no. 6 in E Minor, movement 2, part 3, opening.)

F. A bitter, ironic, Shostakovich-like third-movement scherzo follows. (**Musical selection**: Vaughn Williams, Symphony no. 6 in E Minor, movement 3, opening.)

G. The music of the fourth movement, entitled simply "Epilogue," is so unexpected that it takes the listener's breath away. During its almost 10-minute length, the movement never rises above a *pianissimo*. In 1948, at the time of the symphony's premiere, the quiet desolation of this final movement was interpreted by many as being a depiction of a world laid to waste by nuclear war. (**Musical selection**: Vaughn Williams, Symphony no. 6 in E Minor, movement 4, opening.)

H. Vaughn Williams's Sixth Symphony is, in many ways, atypical of his overall output. Its four-movement design is more Classical than much of his mature music, and the relatively few episodes of folk-like material, in favor of the relatively modern, post-Romantic idiom that characterizes the piece, are also unusual in his mature music. If anything, the Sixth shows that Vaughn Williams could quite comfortably go beyond his Tudor England–inspired musical language and write a first-class postwar symphony.

I. Through the strength of his example, Vaughn Williams almost single-handedly reestablished an English musical vernacular. Along with Edward Elgar, he also established, almost from scratch, a genuine English symphonic tradition.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Twenty-Three

Olivier Messiaen and *Turangalila*!

Scope: Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony* is a magnificent achievement; it is among the first masterworks of the postwar era and among the first of Messiaen's storied career. The *Turangalila Symphony* is completely different from any other piece of music by any other composer. Like his Gallic predecessors, Hector Berlioz and Claude Debussy, Messiaen was a true original, whose music and teaching continue to exert an incredible degree of influence. In this lecture, we take an in-depth look at the *Turangalila Symphony*, which is meant to encompass the movement and rhythm of the universe and finds joy in the cycle of life and death.

Outline

I. Olivier Messiaen, born on December 10, 1908, was 36 years old when the war in Europe ended in May of 1945. As they had been for so many of his fellow French citizens, the previous five years had been difficult and extremely dangerous for Messiaen.

A. Messiaen joined the French army when war broke out in 1939 and was taken prisoner in 1940. He spent the next two years in Stalag VIII in Gorlitz, in Silesia. Messiaen was freed and repatriated in 1942. He returned to Paris, where he was appointed professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatory.

B. On top of his duties at the Conservatory, Messiaen began teaching private composition classes in 1943 at the home of a friend. Among the students who attended these private classes was the pianist Yvonne Loriod, who would eventually become Messiaen's wife and play a pivotal role in the creation of the *Turangalila Symphony*, and a young Pierre Boulez, who is one of the most important musicians of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

C. On April 1, 1945, about eight months after the liberation of Paris and a month before the end of the war in Europe, Messiaen, still working in relative obscurity, premiered a work for orchestra and chorus entitled *Three Small Liturgies of the Divine Presence*. The piece unleashed a storm of controversy and attention.

D. A short time after the premiere of *Three Small Liturgies of the Divine Presence*, Serge Koussevitzky contacted Messiaen and commissioned him to write a symphony of any length, using any instrumentation he pleased, to be delivered whenever he finished it.

E. Messiaen dedicated more than two years of his life to writing this symphony. It was a summation of virtually everything he loved and believed in at that time: Eastern religions and a personal, pantheistic spirituality; Gregorian chant; birdsong; ancient Greek scales; and ancient Hindu rhythmic constructs. The result was a 10-movement symphony, running 1 hour and 15 minutes, for orchestra, piano, and an early electronic keyboard instrument called an *ondes martenot*.

F. Messiaen called his sprawling, unique work the *Turangalila Symphony*. The title is derived from two Sanskrit words: *turanga* and *lila*. *Turanga* means "time" and, by extension, "movement" and "rhythm," activities marked by physical movement that take place in time. *Lila* means, literally, "play," "sport," or "amusement" in terms of divine activity in the cosmos, such as the act of creation. It can also mean transcendent "love" and "joy."

G. That dazzling and abandoned joy is perfectly expressed in the fifth of the symphony's 10 movements. The fifth movement, a scherzo, is entitled "Joy of the Blood of the Stars," and it brings the first half of the symphony to its close. It is a brilliant, visceral, and perfect representation of what Messiaen means by the word-construction *Turangalila*. We listen to the first two minutes of this movement. Messiaen creates here an overpowering sense of euphoric, energized abandon. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 5 ["Joy of the Blood of the Stars"], opening.)

H. The *Turangalila Symphony* was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra on December 2, 1949, under the baton of Serge Koussevitzky's 31-year-old protégé, Leonard Bernstein. In the program note he prepared for the premiere, Messiaen wrote that the symphony embodies love such as "is symbolized by Tristan and Isolde."

1. The *Turangalila Symphony* was the second of three works by Messiaen inspired by the legend of Tristan and Isolde. The first is a song-cycle entitled *Harawi*, for soprano and piano, composed in 1945, and the third is a work entitled *Cinq rechants* ("*Five Songs Sung Again*"), for small chorus, composed in 1950.
2. Unlike its companions, the *Turangalila Symphony* is an entirely instrumental piece; its only "words" are the descriptive titles of each of the 10 movements, which suggest how the movements may be related to the legend of Tristan and Isolde.
3. Soon after his symphony's incredibly successful premiere, Messiaen began to regret his program note, the titles he had given to each movement, and even the title he had given to the entire work. His regrets were the result of the endless questions and "interpretations" of what the symphony was "really" about. Messiaen later claimed that he had chosen the title for the symphony merely because he liked the sound of the word.

II. *Turangalila* remains Messiaen's only symphony, and it is a work that capped his early compositional efforts.

   A. Messiaen was born in Avignon, France, on December 10, 1908. His mother, Cecile Sauvage, was a well-respected poet, and his father, Pierre Messiaen, taught English. Among Pierre Messiaen's accomplishments was having translated the complete works of Shakespeare into French.

   B. In such a highly cultured household, Olivier's musical precocity was recognized early and carefully cultivated. He began composing at the age of 7. When he was 10, his harmony teacher gave Olivier a score of Claude Debussy's only opera, *Pelleas and Melisande*, which was, for Messiaen, a revelation. Debussy's extraordinary and original treatment of harmony, tonality, and rhythm inspired Messiaen to even greater tonal and rhythmic freedom in his own works. If any single composer can be said to be the successor of Debussy in terms of both musical syntax and sheer originality, it would have to be Messiaen.

   C. The year after he received the score of *Pelleas and Melisande*, the 11-year-old Messiaen entered the Paris Conservatory. His tenure there was marked by one amazing success after another. In 1926, at the age of 18, he won first prize in harmony, counterpoint, and fugue. In 1928, he won first prize in piano accompaniment. In 1929, he won first prize in music history. And in 1930, the year he graduated, he won the prize he most coveted, first prize in composition.

   D. Immediately after graduating, Messiaen was appointed organist at La Trinité in Paris, a post he held for 40 years. In 1936, at the age of 28, he joined the faculty of the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, and in 1939, he joined the French army after Germany invaded Poland and France subsequently declared war on Germany.

III. Messiaen organized the 10 movements of the *Turangalila Symphony* around a number of "cyclic" themes, that is, themes that cycle back from movement to movement.

   A. The two most important of these cyclic themes are polar opposites. The first, what we will call the *earth theme*, is heavy, monumental, and craggy in character. This earth theme represents the corporeal, that which is real and solid, permanent and unchanging. When we first hear this theme, about 30 seconds into the first movement, it is played by trombones and tuba. We listen to the first two iterations of this earth theme. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 1 [Introduction], earth theme.)

   B. We now listen from the beginning of the first movement, which Messiaen calls simply "Introduction." The movement begins dramatically and with a sense of great anticipation, anticipation that is well satisfied by the appearance of the earth theme about 30 seconds in. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 1 [Introduction], opening.)

   C. The second of the cyclic themes presented in the first movement could not be more different from the first. In his program note, Messiaen refers to this theme as the "flower" theme, because of its gentle, supple, curving contour. We hear this second theme, which makes its first appearance about two and a half minutes into the first movement. (**Musical section**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 1 [Introduction], spirit theme.)

   D. As the flowers evoked by Messiaen's program note grow from the earth, so this second theme grows out of the earth theme. We will refer to this second theme as the *spirit theme*, because for Messiaen, it represents the ineffable, the beautiful, that which changes and metamorphoses, the life cycle of death and rebirth. We listen to it again. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 1 [Introduction], spirit theme.)

   E. What we have called the earth theme has also been referred to in the literature as the *masculine* or *phallic theme*, and what we are calling the spirit theme has also been referred to as the *feminine* or *blossom theme*. Whatever we choose to call them, these two themes represent the complementary opposites of the universe.

   F. The meeting of these two themes occurs at the beginning of the second half of the symphony—during the beginning of the sixth movement—when the harmonic elements of the earth theme are mated and merged with the melodic element of the spirit theme.

      1. The offspring of the two is a long, slow melody that represents idealized love, a theme that will be heard cyclically during the second half of the symphony.

      2. We listen to this idealized love theme as it appears at the beginning of the sixth movement, which is entitled "Garden of Love's Sleep." The theme, shimmering and otherworldly, is played by an electronic keyboard instrument called an *ondes martenot*, accompanied by strings and decorated by the piano and percussion instruments. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 6 [Garden of Love's Sleep].)

   G. The *ondes martenot* was invented by a Parisian pianist and composer named Maurice Martenot and was first heard publicly in 1928.

      1. It resembles a small electric organ with a big speaker attached to it, and the keyboard is played using the right hand, while the left hand controls the various dials and slides that modify its tone color and volume.

      2. During the late 1920s and 1930s, the *ondes martenot* was perceived by many as "an instrument of the future," and many of France's leading composers wrote music for it.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

3. Along with the *theremin*, the *ondes martenot* was the most popular electronic instrument developed before the synthesizer, and Messiaen uses it with superb effect in the *Turangalila Symphony*.

IV. We return to the first movement of the *Turangalila Symphony*, entitled "Introduction."

A. The first half of this first movement is "about" the introduction of the earth and spirit themes. After a brief piano cadenza, the second half of the movement is given over to an amazing passage in which four different rhythmic patters are superimposed one atop the other. Using Hindu rhythmic patterns called *tala*, Messiaen creates an incredibly energized passage characterized by constantly shifting rhythmic relationships, as different rhythmic patterns go in and out of phase with each other. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 1 [Introduction].)

B. During the course of the second movement, entitled "Love Song I," explosive passages of music characterized by superimposed rhythmic patterns alternate with calm, static, and extremely lyric passages. Like Hector Berlioz in the first movement of the *Symphonie fantastique*, Messiaen is depicting the emotional extremes of love: intense pleasure and intense pain, clarity and disorientation. We hear the opening of the movement. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 2 [Love Song I].)

C. The third movement is entitled "Turangalila I." It opens with a ghostly solo for clarinet, accompanied by the *ondes martenot*. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 3 [Turangalila I].)

D. Messiaen entitled the fourth movement "Love Song II." It is, like so much of the symphony, a tour-de-force of layering and superimposition.

1. The movement begins, simply enough, as a duet between a piccolo and a bassoon, accompanied by a ringing *ondes martenot*. Soon enough, a woodblock enters, followed by low pizzicato strings and a rustling piano, with each new part characterized by its own melodic material and its own rhythmic profile.
2. By the time the opening section of the movement comes to its conclusion, the texture consists of five distinctly different, yet amazingly unified parts. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 4 [Love Song II].)

E. The fifth movement, entitled "Joy of the Blood of the Stars," brings the first half of the symphony to its conclusion. Movement six, "Garden of Love's Sleep," begins with the gorgeous and dreamlike idealized love theme that is itself a product of the "mating" of the earth theme and the spirit theme. This sixth movement is the symphony's adagio. It is a magical movement, with its lush harmonies and birdsongs heard in the

piano based on the actual songs of the nightingale, blackbird, and garden warbler.

F. The seventh movement, entitled "Turangalila II," is the shortest of the symphony. It features a bristling, birdsong-dominated piano part; it's as if the quiet and relaxed nightingale, blackbird, and garden warbler of the previous movement have all been transformed into much more animated creatures. We hear the piano solo that initiates this seventh movement. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 7, opening [Turangalila II].)

G. The eighth movement is the longest of the symphony. Entitled "Development of Love," this movement is exactly what it says it is—a huge development section, during which all of the major themes heard thus far in the symphony appear.

1. The ongoing developmental process that occurs during this eighth movement is interrupted three times by increasingly longer and more ecstatic versions of the idealized love theme.
2. Messiaen refers to these moments as the "explosions" of the love theme, and their appearance marks the climax of the symphony. We listen to the third and last of these "explosions" and the gradual subsidence that follows. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 8, [Development of Love].)

H. The ninth movement, entitled "Turangalila III," is a brief series of variations on the earth theme. The tenth movement, entitled simply "Finale," is the only one of the movements written in sonata form.

1. The spirit of this final movement is joyful and dancing, a return to the frenetic mood of the fifth movement. Messiaen indicates that this finale should be performed "very fast, and with great joy."
2. We listen to the recapitulation and conclusion of the movement and the symphony. Please note, about 1 minute and 22 seconds into the excerpt, we will hear the idealized love theme, which has, in this movement, been used as theme 2 of the sonata form. (**Musical selection**: Messiaen, *Turangalila Symphony*, movement 10 [Finale].)

Lecture Twenty-Four

Dmitri Shostakovich and His Tenth Symphony

Scope: It is entirely appropriate that we conclude this survey with Dmitri Shostakovich. What Haydn was for the 18th century, what Beethoven was for the 19th century, so Shostakovich was for the 20th—the preeminent composer of symphonies in his century. Like Haydn and Beethoven before him, Shostakovich wrote symphonies throughout his compositional career and wrote a large enough number of symphonies to constitute a major body of work. Like Haydn and Beethoven, Shostakovich's symphonies constitute a virtual diary of his life and evolving compositional style. And like Haydn and Beethoven, Shostakovich's symphonies are a true and unapologetic mirror of his times and his environment. We can only wonder which composers history will choose as representative of our time, but we can be sure that the symphonic genre will play a major role in helping to make that determination.

Outline

I. To understand the life and music of Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975), we must take a clear, honest, and unemotional view of the events that shaped him.

   A. Shostakovich was the greatest composer produced by the Soviet Union. Propaganda of the time tells us that he was a model for the superior Soviet way of life and a hero of the Soviet Union. In reality, Shostakovich was abused, deceived, manipulated, and frightened by his government to a degree that threatened his sanity. That Shostakovich survived without being imprisoned or "liquidated" is a miracle. He survived because he was considered by the authorities to be a *yurodivy*, a "village idiot" or "holy fool"; by Russian tradition, one of the chosen few allowed to speak out.

   B. After Shostakovich's death in August of 1975 and his subsequent "posthumous rehabilitation," the Soviet authorities declared him to be "Soviet Russia's most loyal musical son." Again, in reality, the "public" Shostakovich said and did what he was told. He joined the Communist party when Khrushchev told him to do so in 1960, at the age of 54; he sat on official state committees and attended their meetings religiously; and he allowed his name to be signed to anti-Western rants and editorials.

   C. Very few people outside the Soviet Union were clever enough to see the truth about Shostakovich. One of those people was the composer Nicholas Nabokov, an émigré to the United States and a cousin of the writer Vladimir Nabokov, who met Shostakovich in New York in 1949 and made some extraordinary observations at the time.

      1. In 1948, Shostakovich was officially censured and nearly purged by the Soviet authorities, despite the fact that just seven years before, he had been proclaimed "a hero of the Soviet people" for having stayed in Leningrad during the siege and composed his Symphony no. 7, the so-called "Leningrad" Symphony.

      2. At the time, Stalin had decided to bring to heel those members of the military and government, as well as artists and intellectuals, who had become emboldened by contact with the West during the war and by the Soviet victory over the Nazis. Thus, Shostakovich was fired from his teaching jobs at the Moscow and Leningrad Conservatories and his music was banned. He waited at night, awake and terrified, to be arrested. This "threat of arrest" had happened once before to Shostakovich, in 1936–1937, and he knew the taste of fear. As he had in 1936–1937, Shostakovich also considered suicide in 1948.

      3. Then, in late February 1949, Stalin called Shostakovich and "asked" him to travel to the United States as a member of the Soviet delegation to the Congress of Peace and Culture. Shostakovich replied that the trip might seem odd, given that his works were freely played in America but had been forbidden in the Soviet Union. Stalin ordered that the ban on Shostakovich's music be lifted, and in March of 1949, the composer left for the United States during the iciest days of the Cold War.

      4. During the trip, hostile, strident, anti-Western, anti-American speeches were read—in English, by interpreters—while Shostakovich looked on in misery; gullible Westerners believed that these speeches were written by Shostakovich himself.

      5. Nicholas Nabokov, however, knew that the remarks attributed to Shostakovich had been written in the standard style of Soviet propaganda, and he saw clearly that Shostakovich was being punished—he was publicly humiliated by having to express his gratitude to the Communist Party for helping him recognize flaws in his work!

II. We take a brief detour from this period in Shostakovich's life—the years 1948–1953, which saw the gestation and composition of the Tenth Symphony—to discuss the book that exposed the truth behind the carefully crafted, Soviet version of "Shostakovich" and ignited a debate about the composer and his music that goes on to this day.

   A. The book, entitled *Testimony*: *The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, consists of a series of interviews that Shostakovich gave near the end of his life. Sick and embittered, he poured out his heart and soul, his

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

hostility and hatred toward the Soviet regime, and discussed the true meaning of his music.

1. The interviews—conducted at Shostakovich's flat by a young Soviet musicologist named Solomon Volkov—were transcribed; Shostakovich signed the transcripts; and they were smuggled out of the Soviet Union with the promise that they would not be published until after the composer's death.
2. Shostakovich died in 1975; when the Soviet government learned of the existence of the interviews, it did everything possible to prevent publication, but the memoirs were published by Harper and Row, in New York in 1979.
3. The Soviet government decried the book as another example of the West defaming a Soviet hero. The last thing the Soviets wanted in 1979 was to have Shostakovich—so recently rehabilitated—reconstrued as a closet dissident.
4. In the United States, Volkov was vilified and accused of having fabricated portions of the memoir; of using Shostakovich's words to push his own personal agenda; and of trying to make money off the memory of a revered composer. The debate between "pro-*Testimony*" and "con-*Testimony*" writers and academics raged on.

B. In 1991 came the fall of the Soviet Union and, with it, the truth. We learned that what actually went on in the Soviet Union was much worse than what we in the West had thought possible.

C. Should we now believe *Testimony*? The answer is yes. Shostakovich's friends and associates—speaking freely in interviews since 1991 or speaking from the grave in newly discovered and translated material—tell us repeatedly that the words and stories in *Testimony* are Shostakovich's own. In the post-Soviet world, as the truth comes out, the dark tales contained in *Testimony* are now being corroborated. Finally, the Shostakovich we meet in *Testimony*—furious, embittered, humorous, and blackly ironic—is seen as a man who squares with his music.

III. Shostakovich, unlike many of his contemporaries, neither wept nor celebrated when he heard about Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, but he did arrange for the release and premiere of the many masterworks he had composed and hidden since 1948.

A. A veritable flood of "new" Shostakovich works was heard in the months after Stalin's death, including the Fourth String Quartet, the Fifth String Quartet, the Violin Concerto No. 1, and the song cycle *From Jewish Poetry*. The big premiere of this post-Stalin period, however, was that of the Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, composed during the summer after Stalin's death.

B. Shostakovich's Tenth immediately became the most talked-about and influential piece of music in the Eastern Block. In those heady days after the death of Stalin, a period known as the "Thaw," Shostakovich's Tenth became a model for what the "new," post-Stalin Soviet music might aspire to be: a more personally expressive, less explicitly programmatic work, one that both engaged and challenged its listeners.

C. Structurally, Shostakovich was very much a Classicist: We will observe in his music the now quite familiar Classical-era formal structures of sonata form, scherzo, and rondo. Harmonically, Shostakovich never abandoned traditional tonality, and his melodic language grows directly out of 19th-century Russian nationalism. If all of this would seem to indicate that Shostakovich was a musical conservative, we must remember that he had to walk a fine line between the doctrine of Soviet Socialist Musical Realism, that is, to compose music accessible to the Soviet masses, and his own compositional muse.

IV. The first of the four movements of Shostakovich's Tenth is epic in terms of both expressive content and length, running around 25 minutes in performance. Structurally, it is a gigantic sonata form with three distinct themes.

A. The movement opens with a familiar "Russian" device: massed low strings, the deep, masculine, "Russian" voice of the bass singer. Familiar as this device may be, it is nowhere used to better effect than here, imbuing this opening with tremendous gravity and a hint of the tragic. (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 1, opening, theme 1.)

B. This magnificent and contemplative music now gives way to an exquisitely melancholy theme initially played by a clarinet. This constitutes the second of the three thematic elements that make up the exposition. (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 1, theme 2.)

C. This "second theme" music builds to a huge climax, which is then followed by a reprise of the clarinet theme. Finally, six minutes into the movement, the third and final thematic element is heard: a slightly nervous, slightly dancing theme initially heard in a solo flute accompanied by pizzicato strings. (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 1, theme 3.)

D. Not one of this movement's three principal themes is magnificent, heroic, or otherwise dramatic when it makes its first appearance. In fact, the impression we get during this first movement has been described as "the quality of absence—of emptiness." Yes, the thematic ideas develop, but in their primal state, they are all quiet, melancholy, restrained; the anticipated "bombast" of a typical symphonic first movement is replaced with introspection and uneasy quiet, a perfect

metaphor for the mood in the Soviet Union after the death of the "leader and teacher."

V. The second movement cannot be said to have a mood of introspection or uneasy quiet. It is a raw, brutal, and vicious piece of music—Shostakovich's famous musical portrait of Stalin. It starts fortissimo and, from there, features 50 crescendos and only 2 decrescendos! (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 2, entirety.)

VI. Throughout both the third and fourth movements, Shostakovich repeatedly uses a particular melodic idea consisting of four pitches.

A. These pitches, D–Eb–C–B, are quite significant, in that they constitute Shostakovich's musical signature: D–S–C–H. In German, the pitch names are D–S(Eb)–C–H(B)—D S C H, as in D. Shostakovich.

B. This musical signature is first heard about 1 minute and 10 seconds into the third movement. When it first appears, it is rather shrilly played by winds and accompanied by a triangle. This is cartoon-like music, a herky-jerky puppet's dance, and it is a clear statement on Shostakovich's part. He often said that "we are all marionettes." That he would portray himself—with his own musical signature—in the guise of a puppet is typical of his cynical, ironic sense of humor. (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 3, D–S–C–H appearance.)

VII. The fourth movement begins with a slow introduction that itself begins with a pensive melody for 'cellos and double basses, a clear reference to the beginning of the first movement of the symphony. (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 4, introduction, opening.)

A. When this long and bleak introduction finally ends, the fast, chipper and upbeat music that follows it seems ridiculously incongruous, as if Shostakovich is saying, "Smile! Smile! We're supposed to be happy! The leader and teacher says so! Smile!" (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 4, introduction, opening.)

B. Given the spirit of the first three movements of this symphony, the mock gaiety of this movement becomes more and more forced, until the music metamorphoses into something very dark; the "smile" disappears, and the frenzied viciousness of the second movement returns, followed by a huge and howling appearance of the D–S–C–H motive. It is as if Shostakovich is saying to us, "I have danced the dance and smiled the smile, and now Stalin is dead and I will do it no longer!" (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 4.)

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

C. The final minutes of the symphony are deeply moving. The "smile" is gone; the music becomes lyric and introspective, punctuated throughout by the D–S–C–H motive. Finally, the fast, upbeat music returns, but it seems less incongruous, as if perhaps, now, there is a genuine reason to smile. Certainly, the celebratory conclusion of the movement would seem to reinforce that interpretation; the reiterated D–S–C–H motive heard among blaring brass is a clear and personal statement: "I am here; I am alive; and I can still write!" (**Musical selection**: Shostakovich, Symphony no. 10 in E Minor, op. 93, movement 4, conclusion.)

D. It was just this sort of movement that confused Western commentators for years. Thanks to *Testimony* and the work of such scholars as David Fanning, we now understand that irony is the key to understanding Shostakovich's music.

E. A few months after the premiere of the Tenth, Shostakovich wrote a truly absurd apology for the symphony that helped him "play it safe" with the authorities. He gave the official critics the negative comments they required and, at the same time, distracted them from thinking too deeply about the "true" meaning of the symphony. Nonetheless, Shostakovich's Tenth became an instant classic, and the composer emerged from his censure with his reputation enhanced. The sheer quality of his Tenth Symphony was a testament to Shostakovich's incredible artistic integrity and imagination.

©2004 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership