

Music in the United States



Better late than never...

19th Century America

- ❖ No American composers to speak of
- ❖ Music (arts in general) not a prestige path
- ❖ Viewed as belonging more in the home

Thought Experiment

- ❖ Imagine Beethoven born in Philadelphia, 1830
- ❖ Would he have been a composer?
- ❖ Unlikely: more likely would have gone into railroads, banking, steel, shipping, etc...

Charles Ives

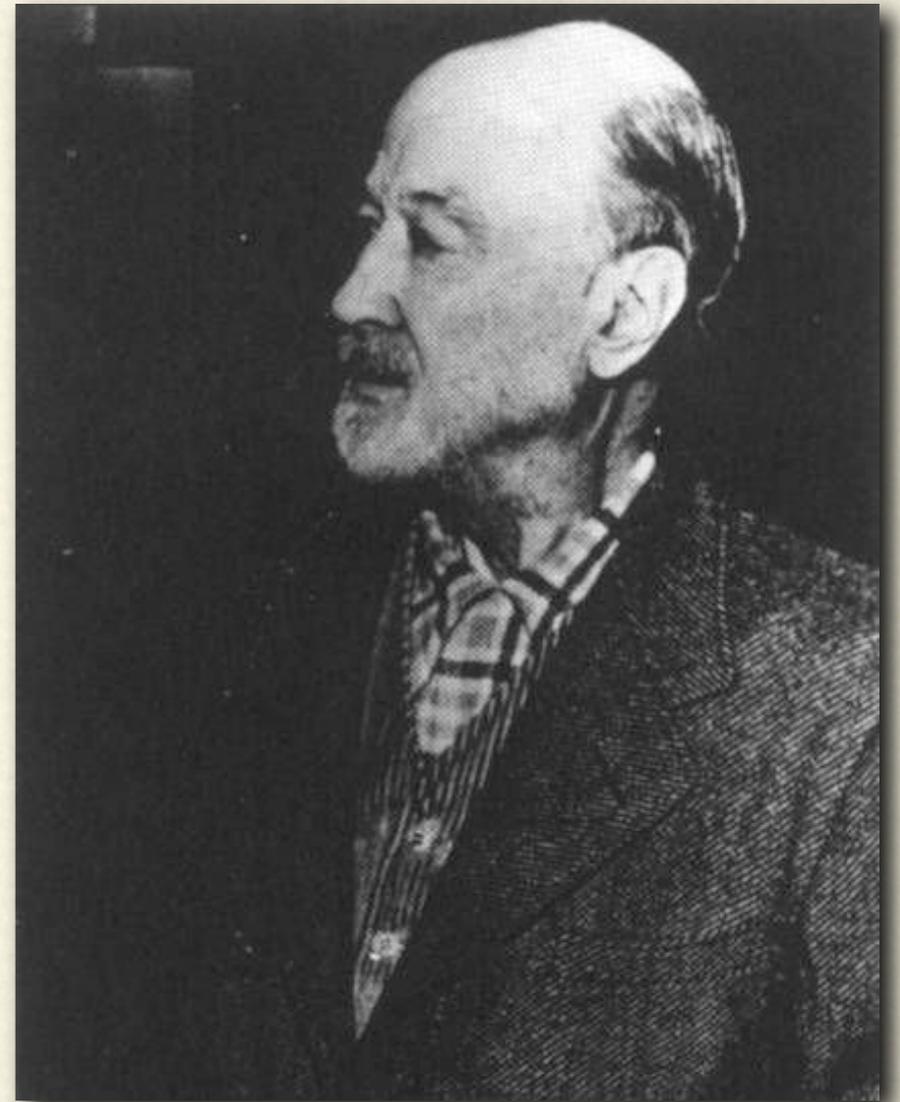
- ❖ Über-dilettante
- ❖ Non-professional composer
- ❖ Insurance executive
- ❖ Composed on the weekends
- ❖ Total original
 - ❖ Left no disciples or followers
 - ❖ Has never been copied or emulated

Charles Ives

- ❖ Stream-of-consciousness style
- ❖ Often influenced by everyday sounds
 - ❖ Country fairs or civic celebrations
 - ❖ Multiple bands playing
- ❖ Combination of musical styles
 - ❖ Hymns
 - ❖ Ragtime
 - ❖ Band music
 - ❖ Atonal modernism

Charles Ives

- ❖ Strange blend of populism and elitism
- ❖ Never easy; always challenging
- ❖ Stopped composing in mid-life
 - ❖ Discouragement
 - ❖ Bad health



Second Orchestral Set

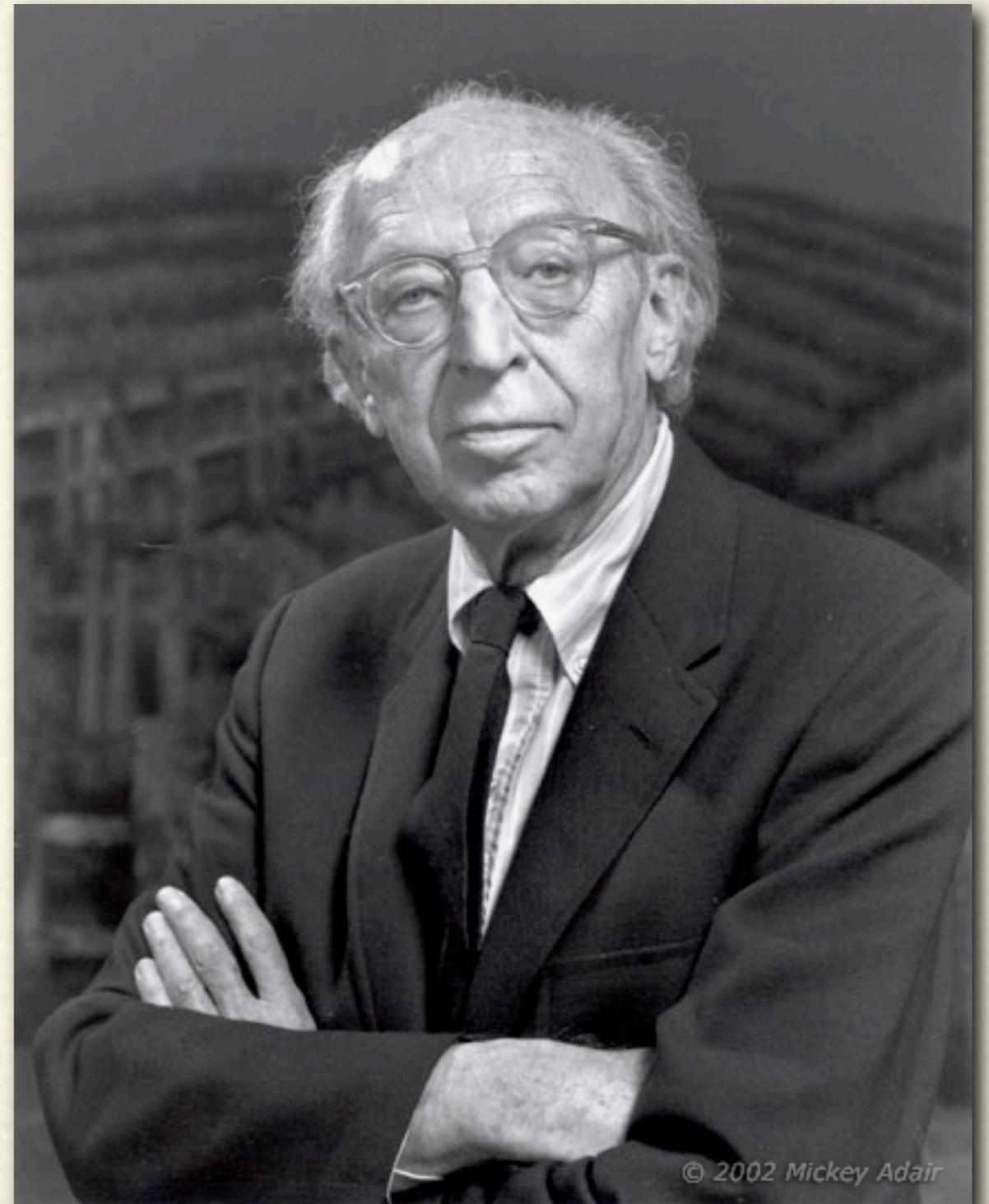
- ❖ “The Rockstrewn Hills Join in the People’s Outdoor Meeting” (1909)
 - ❖ Written *before* “The Rite of Spring”
 - ❖ Kaleidoscope of almost-random sounds
 - ❖ Dances
 - ❖ Marches
 - ❖ Hymns

“The Rockstrewn Hills”

- ❖ **Introductory**
- ❖ Dance fragment; strings; interrupted
- ❖ Dance fragment; woodwinds; interrupted
- ❖ Ragtime fragment, piano

Aaron Copland

- ❖ 1900 - 1990
- ❖ Trained in France
- ❖ Highly educated, sophisticated composer
- ❖ Tireless promoter and supporter of American music



Aaron Copland

- ❖ Two kinds of compositions
 - ❖ “Modernist” compositions designed for a more professional audience
 - ❖ “Populist” compositions designed for the wider public

Copland: Major Works

❖ **Ballets**

- ❖ Appalachian Spring
- ❖ Rodeo
- ❖ Billy the Kid

❖ **Orchestral**

- ❖ Third Symphony
- ❖ Lincoln Portrait

❖ **Piano**

- ❖ Piano Variations
- ❖ Piano Fantasy
- ❖ Sonata

Appalachian Spring

- ❖ Written in 1945
- ❖ Choreographed by Martha Graham
- ❖ Part of the post-war interest in Americana.
- ❖ The ballet itself has faded, but the musical score continues as standard repertory for most orchestras worldwide.

Aaron Copland



Appalachian Spring (1945)

Sections 1, 2, 5, and 6

Aaron Copland conducting the New York Philharmonic

Section 1

- ❖ Very still, static passage
- ❖ Seems to capture landscape at dawn

Early Jazz

- ❖ The 12-bar Blues
 - ❖ a a' b
 - ❖ As many stanzas as you want
 - ❖ Improvised sections, sometimes sung

Early Jazz

- ❖ Sippie Wallace: “If You Ever Been Down” Blues
- ❖ Louis Armstrong on trumpet



Swing

- ❖ Big-band compositions
- ❖ Partly notated, partly improvised
- ❖ Typically full-band sections were alternated with individual instrumental improvisations

Duke Ellington



Conga Brava (1940)



a	Trombone
a	
b	Brass and alto sax
a	Sax
a	
b	Muted brass
a	Reed choir (with trumpet)
b'	Brass choir
a	Trombone

George Gershwin

- ❖ Primarily a songwriter and Broadway composer
- ❖ Also wrote some memorable movie scores
- ❖ Never a highly trained composer, more an instinctive composer with one of the great lyrical talents of all time.

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Rhapsody in Blue (1923)

- ❖ Big concert hit
- ❖ A bit from the 1923 recording

Prelude No. 1 (1926)

- ❖ First of a set of three
- ❖ George himself playing it

Gershwin in Hollywood

- ❖ 1936 - 1937
- ❖ Planned as a short trip to write a musical for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers
- ❖ One of his very best scores “Shall We Dance”, although it received only a lukewarm reception at the time

Gershwin in Hollywood

- ❖ Hated Hollywood
- ❖ Dated some starlets, including Paulette Goddard (who eventually married Charlie Chaplin)
- ❖ Began complaining of headaches
 - ❖ His overall mood had been low already
 - ❖ People tended to dismiss it
 - ❖ But it was a brain tumor
 - ❖ He collapsed and died in 1937, at the age of 38



George Gershwin



“They Can't Take That Away from Me”

from

“Shall We Dance” (RKO, 1937)

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers

FERRY
TO
MANHATTAN



John Cage

- ❖ Experimental ideas in music
- ❖ The music itself hasn't survived to speak of
- ❖ Some of the questions were worth asking, however

John Cage



4'33''



Minimalism

- ❖ Reaction against:
 - ❖ 1) the forbidding cerebralism of serial and other forms of avant-garde music
 - ❖ 2) John Cage and his followers

Minimalism

- ❖ Composers had grown up with sound recording and the techniques of the recording studio
- ❖ Minimalism drew a significant amount of inspiration from popular music, especially rock recordings from the 1960s such as The Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*

Minimalism

- ❖ Terry Riley
- ❖ Phillip Glass
- ❖ Steve Reich
- ❖ John Adams

Steve Reich

Music for 18 Musicians (1974–76)



The 21st Century

- ❖ Minimalism ended
- ❖ A “neo-Romantic” movement arose in the 1990s
- ❖ Slowly but surely, a new language is arising, one that is a synthesis of the many different idioms and styles that characterize today’s world

John Adams



El Niño

2000

El Niño

- ❖ An oratorio on the same subject as Handel's *Messiah*
- ❖ Contains arias, recitatives, choruses—but was also planned as multimedia, and is multitextual as well
- ❖ The selections are the first three numbers from the second half
 - ❖ A lullaby to the infant child (in Spanish)
 - ❖ Herod's meeting with the three wise men (from Matthew)
 - ❖ Isaiah's warnings on those who do evil

El Niño

- ❖ Due to the fluidity of the musical settings, the animated charts cannot follow all parts of the selections precisely

Pues mi Dios ha nacido a penar,
déjenle velar.

Pues está desvelado por mi,
déjenle dormir.

Déjenle velar,
que no hay pena, en quin ama
como no penar.

Déjenle dormir,
quen quien duerme, en el sueño
se ensaya a morir.

Silencio, que duerme.

Cuidado, que vela.

¡No le despierten, no!

¡Si le despierten, si!

¡Déjenle velar!

¡Déjenle dormir!

Because my Lord was born to suffer,
let him stay awake.

Because he stays awake for me,
let him sleep.

Let him stay awake,
for there is no suffering for him who loves,
as if there were no pain ever.

Let him sleep,
for one who sleeps, in his dreaming
rehearses his own death.

Silence, let him sleep!

Take care, let him stay awake!

Don't wake him, no!

Yes, wake him, yes!

Let him stay awake!

Let him sleep!