

“Aaron Copland”

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Aaron Copland, American Composer

(Adapted from VOA-Special English: <http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/Aaron-Copland-1900-1990-He-Taught-Americans-About-Themselves-Through-His-Music-127652173.html>)

Today we tell about Aaron Copland, one of America's best modern music composers.

Aaron Copland was born in nineteen hundred in Brooklyn, New York. He was the youngest of five children. His parents had come to the United States from eastern Europe. They owned a store in Brooklyn. Aaron began playing the piano when he was a young child. He wrote his first song for his mother when he was eight years old. His dreams of becoming a composer began when he was young.

When he was in his early twenties, Copland went to Paris where he studied music with Nadia Boulanger. She was one of the most important music teachers of the time. He returned to New York in nineteen twenty-four.

Aaron Copland wrote many kinds of music. He wrote music for the orchestra, piano, and voice. He wrote music for plays, movies and dance. Copland also was a conductor, pianist, speaker, teacher and author.

Music critics say Copland taught Americans about themselves through his music. He used parts of many old traditional American folk songs in his work. He was influenced to do this after studying music in France. He said that composers there had a very French way of writing music. He said Americans had nothing like that in this country. So he decided to compose music that was truly American.

In nineteen forty-two, Copland wrote "Lincoln Portrait" to honor America's sixteenth president. Copland's music included parts of American folk songs and songs popular during the American Civil War. He added words from President Lincoln's speeches and letters.

Lincoln was a quiet man. Abe Lincoln was a quiet and a melancholy man. But when he spoke of democracy, this is what he said.

He said: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy."

Also in nineteen forty-two, Copland composed "Fanfare for the Common Man." This music is played in America during many national events.

In nineteen sixty-four, President Lyndon Johnson presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Aaron Copland died in nineteen ninety at the age of ninety. But his music lives on.



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When he was in his _____ twenties, Copland went to Paris where he _____ music with Nadia Boulanger. She was one of the most important music _____ of the time. He returned to New York in nineteen twenty-four.

Aaron Copland _____ many _____ of music. He wrote music for the orchestra, piano, and voice. He wrote music for plays, movies and _____. Copland also _____ a conductor, pianist, speaker, teacher and author.

Music critics say Copland _____ Americans about themselves through his music. He _____ parts of many old traditional American folk _____ in his work. He was influenced to do this _____ studying _____ in France. He _____ that composers there had a _____ French way of writing music. He said Americans had _____ like that in this country. So he decided to compose _____ that was truly American.

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Test your comprehension!

True or False:

1. Aaron Copland was born in Paris. T F
2. He was the youngest of five children. T F
3. Aaron Copland was a carpenter. T F
4. He wrote music about George Bush. T F
5. "Fanfare for the Common Man" was written by Aaron Copland. T F
6. He wrote music in a French way. T F
7. He began playing the piano when he was young. T F
8. Aaron Copland is one of Europe's best composers of the 1500's. T F
9. He wrote music that was truly American. T F
10. Aaron Copland gave President Johnson a "Medal of Honor". T F

