

THE DESERT SYMPHONY AMERICAN MUSIC - WHAT MAKES IT SO?

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 25 2018
10 AM & 11:30 AM



2018 > 2019
FIELD TRIP SERIES

BROADEN THE HORIZONS
OF YOUR CLASSROOM.
EXPERIENCE THE VIBRANT
WORLD OF THE ARTS
AT THE McCALLUM!



LEARNING LINKS

McCALLUM THEATRE EDUCATION
PRESENTS

THE DESERT SYMPHONY AMERICAN MUSIC - WHAT MAKES IT SO?

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*"American Music —
What Makes it So? [looks at]
how American music differentiated
itself from its European origins to
become an entity of its own."*

> GARY BERKSON,
MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Connecting to Curriculum and Students' Lives!

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY > U.S. History from latter part of the 1800s into the 1900s

ARTS > Music, symphonic instruments

EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

What is a "text"? We invite you to consider the performances on McCallum's Field Trip Series as non-print texts available for study and investigation by your students. Anyone who has shown a filmed version of a play in their classroom, used a website as companion to a textbook, or asked students to do online research already knows that "texts" don't begin and end with textbooks, novels, and reading packets. They extend to videos, websites, games, plays, concerts, dances, radio programs, and a number of other non-print texts that students and teachers engage with on a regular basis.

We know that when we expand our definition of texts to the variety of media that we use in our everyday lives, we broaden the materials and concepts we have at our disposal in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enrich learning experiences.

Please consider how utilizing your McCallum performance as a text might align to standards established for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language.

How do we help students to use these texts as a way of shaping ideas and understanding the world?

Please use this material to help you on this journey.

NON-PRINT TEXT > any medium/text that creates meaning through sound or images or both, such as symbols, words, songs, speeches, pictures, and illustrations not in traditional print form including those seen on computers, films, and in the environment.

THE WORK OF ART

A NON-PRINT TEXT FOR STUDY

WHAT'S IT MADE OF? HOW CAN THIS WORK SERVE AS A COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS-MANDATED "TEXT" FOR STUDENT STUDY IN THE CLASSROOM?



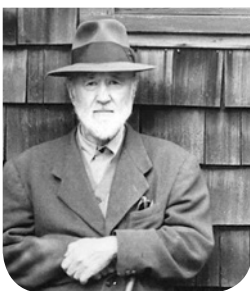
DUDLEY BUCK

One of the desert's premiere symphony orchestras, under the baton of Maestro Gary Berkson, sets out to discover what it means when we speak of American classical music. First up is a rarity by a composer who was very famous in the Victorian Era but largely forgotten today – Dudley Buck. In 1879 he composed *Festival Overture on America's National Air* to celebrate Independence Day. Seven minutes long, the piece makes lively use of the melody of "The Star-Spangled Banner." This was at a time when there was no radio, no recordings, and only one of today's U.S. professional orchestras existed – the New York Philharmonic.



JOHN PHILLIPS SOUSA

Composer John Philip Sousa has fared better. His name today is almost synonymous with marches, and his music is played all over the country. However, his other compositions – the orchestral music suite *Dwellers in the Western World* for example – are more rarely performed. *Dwellers...* is divided into three movements: "The Red Man," "The White Man," and "The Black Man." Sousa layered in musical elements he associated with the musical styles of Native Americans, Caucasians like himself and African-Americans.



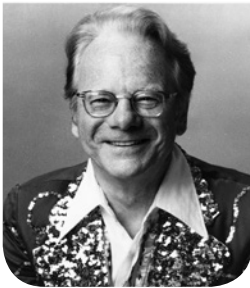
CHARLES IVES

Composer Charles Ives is revered today, but during his lifetime his music was a sideline to his main work – the insurance business. As a teenager, in 1891, he put together a playful set of organ variations on the patriotic anthem "America." Many years later, the composer William Schuman heard the piece at an organ recital in 1962. "By the time the piece was over," said Schuman, "I knew that I simply had to transcribe it." So he did, and the New York Philharmonic premiered Schuman's orchestral version, titled *Variations on "America,"* in 1964. A master at scoring, Schuman brought in an extra bit of humor. Listen for that.



AARON COPELAND

That most American of classical composers, Aaron Copland, wrote the music for a ballet with a very American theme: *Rodeo*. Premiered in 1942, it featured choreography by Agnes de Mille. Its subtitle is *The Courting at Burnt Ranch*, and there are five sections: "Buckaroo Holiday," "Corral Nocturne," "Ranch House Party," "Saturday Night Waltz," and "Hoe-Down." Earlier, Copland had written a first ballet on a Western theme, *Billy the Kid*, and he wasn't keen on writing "another cowboy ballet." But De Mille was persuasive, and the work premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1942, receiving 22 curtain calls. The cast, made up of dancers from around the world, was well-schooled in the mannerisms of American cowboys and the nascent Broadway team of Rodgers and Hammerstein, attending a performance, snatched de Mille up at once to choreograph their upcoming production of *Oklahoma!*



RICHARD HAYMAN

Richard Hayman, who joined that big band in the sky a mere four years ago, was an American conductor as well as an arranger for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios during its heyday. He did arrangements for classic Judy Garland musicals like *Girl Crazy* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Hayman's biggest claim to fame, though, was as the principal arranger for the Boston Pops Orchestra. For over 30 years, he churned out award-winning arrangements which are still in use today. *Pops Hoe-Down* is six and one-half minutes of toe-tapping pleasure, weaving together melodies such as "Chicken Reel," "Paddy Whack," "Pop! Goes the Weasel," "Turkey in the Straw," and "Lamplighter's Hornpipe."





THE ARTISTS

WHO HAS *PRODUCED* THIS TEXT FOR STUDY?

A native of Michigan, Edwin Benachowski won many awards for his clarinet playing. He also performed under the baton of noted conductor Percy Grainger. He was a bandmaster during WWII, touring the Midwest with singing cowboy Gene Autry and the South Pacific with Danny Kaye. He studied at the Juilliard School of Music, and in 1989 he founded The Desert Symphony with his wife Marilyn. When he passed away, the current Music Director, Gary Berkson, took over the reins. Previously, Maestro Berkson was the Resident Conductor of the Royal Swedish Ballet and Royal Swedish Opera. A Juilliard graduate, he is best known for his work as a conductor in the theater, appearing with companies such as the Dutch National Ballet, the Nederlands Dans Theater, Hamburg Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Greater Miami Opera, and Chattanooga Opera. He has conducted for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip of Great Britain, King Carl XVI Gustav and Queen Silvia of Sweden, and Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

THE ORCHESTRA OFFERS THE FOLLOWING MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a professional orchestra committed to enhancing and enriching the cultural life of the people in the Desert Cities. We offer a series of concerts, recitals and special events with programs of musical, artistic excellence that entertain, educate and engage the audience. We are also dedicated to providing free concerts to schoolchildren where they can experience a live symphony orchestra.



GARY BERKSON

Made up of approximately 65 musicians, ranging in age from 30 to 80-something, and hailing from all over Southern California; the actual number playing in a given concert varies according to the orchestration needs of the particular program. On the educational front, The Desert Symphony recently began a project in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley. Orchestra musicians go into classrooms during after-school hours to perform and talk with the students about music in general and classical music in particular.

When asked what musical genres the orchestra focuses on, Maestro Berkson offered the following, “Mostly classical music when it began. About 10 years ago, when it moved into the McCallum Theatre and needed to find a broader audience, the shift was made toward popular music – from jazz to big band to country-western to Broadway. That seems to be the niche that the audience wants, and of course the orchestra is there ... for the audience.”

When questioned about his own musical upbringing, he shared, “I never saw myself as a musician. My goal was to become a theoretical mathematician. But then when I was at university – this was a couple of years after we landed on the moon and there was a lot of talk about dismantling the space program – I figured, I really can’t stand on a street corner with a slide rule doing calculations for a quarter ... but ... at least I can play [music]!”

CONTEXTS

WHAT INFORMATION SURROUNDS
THIS TEXT FOR STUDY & COULD HELP
MAKE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT
WITH IT MORE POWERFUL?

"Having lived outside of the United States for thirty years, I always felt it important to maintain my American identity," says Gary Berkson. "Many composers, starting in the mid-nineteenth century, felt a similar urge, as much music up to that time was indistinguishable with regard to the country of the composer. The field trip program *American Music – What Makes It So?* takes up this question by looking at the various aspects of how American music, during the latter part of the 1800s and well into the 1900s, differentiated itself from its European origins to become an entity of its own."

When we say American classical music we mean music written in the United States in the European classical music tradition and dating from the 1800s forward. This is music that borrows heavily from American folk music. And throughout the 20th century, composers produced many examples influenced not only by folk, but also by jazz, blues, Native American and pop styles!

American classical music developed with special vitality in New England in the late 1800s. Characteristics arose that distinguished it from its European counterparts. This was achieved first and foremost through the liberal borrowing from American indigenous musical elements. Some of the composers who did this were Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell and Horatio Parker, who incidentally, would go on to be the teacher of Charles Ives. Together with three others, these were known as the Boston Six. These composers went to Europe to study, and on returning to America created works that combined the sophistication of Old World technique with New World thematic material.

George Gershwin, with the dawn of the Jazz Age, drew heavily on African American music, producing a synthesis of styles. Mid-century titan Leonard Bernstein continued this same *modus operandi*, introducing jazz and even atonalism into his classical compositions. Later composers in a similar vein include Leroy Anderson, Ferde Grofé and Morton Gould.

Many American classical composers borrowed from folk traditions. Charles Ives and Aaron Copland loom large in this context. And of course, the 20th Century saw immigrants like Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg enlarge the parameters of music made on these shores.

One of the strains most prevalent in today's American classical field is that of Minimalism, a musical movement begun in the 60s in New York City. Philip Glass and John Adams are pioneers on this most recent musical frontier.

"Having lived
outside of the United States
for thirty years, I always felt
it important to maintain
my American identity."

> GARY BERKSON,
MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

TO GET READY FOR THE PERFORMANCE, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

> AMERICAN MUSIC GENRES

HERE'S A 60-MINUTE LESSON IN COLLABORATION & PROBLEM-SOLVING YOU COULD TEACH TO HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THIS WORK:

LINE OF INQUIRY – LOI is an essential question that generates a lesson:

How does The Desert Symphony explore what it means to be American in the framework of classical orchestra music?

ASK STUDENTS

What does it mean to be American? What kinds of music are distinctly American? (Be prepared to suggest jazz, Ragtime, blues in addition to Hip-hop and pop.) What are some American patriotic songs? What do you think American classical music would be like?

Offer some context utilizing the CONTEXTS section on the previous page, adapted to fit your students' level.

SHARE WITH STUDENTS

In Charles Ives' composition *Variations on "America"* he uses the basic tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" to create lots of very creative variations. What's a variation? (In music, it often means that the melody gets changed up in various ways, sometimes very recognizable and other times not so much.)

Play this straightforward orchestral version of the song - without words -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4h2PngP-8E>

Next, play - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs0VjhNWqn8>, which is Charles Ives' composition in which he creates variations on that tune. Listen closely and see if you can recognize the tune – and perhaps even notice the different ways he does the tune.

ASK STUDENTS

Mr. Ives isn't around for us to ask him, but what ideas do you think he was working with in making this version of the familiar tune? What could he be telling us about what it is to be an American?

SHARE WITH STUDENTS

Not every piece in the concert will offer variations of a familiar tune. Some feature tunes we don't recognize, and the orchestra instruments play in a way that seems to give the piece a special kind of flavoring. Listen to a bit of "Saturday Night Waltz" from *Rodeo* by Aaron Copland - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu_Q9ijKx8c

ASK STUDENTS

What do you notice? What instruments do you hear? What kinds of feelings does the music suggest? What pictures come to mind as you listen? What part of the American experience could this be painting for us through music? If time permits, have students listen a second time – and this time draw (sketch) on paper what they "hear" in the music. Students can then share their drawings with the whole class, and you can help enrich their noticing by asking questions about the drawings that direct student attention back to the piece of music.

AFTER COMING TO THE THEATER, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > AMERICAN CLASSICAL MUSIC
- > IMAGES AND SYMBOLS THAT WE ASSOCIATE WITH AMERICA
AND BEING AMERICAN

HERE'S A 45/60-MINUTE LESSON YOU COULD TEACH AFTER STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE WORK:

DISCUSSION

Have students take a look back at the performance. What stood out, and why? Describe the numbers. How were they sequenced? What special skills on the part of the instrumentalists were in evidence? What about the conductor? What were the different groupings for the different numbers? How did the instrumentalists and conductor appear to communicate with each other? What evidence was there of collaboration? What emotions were conveyed – and how? How was humor used? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about?

ASK STUDENTS

What are some images & symbols we associate with America & being American? (bald eagle, flag, the White House, etc.)

PROJECT IDEA

Have students fold a large piece of paper in four, and then open it back up, revealing four quadrants. In the first square have students sketch one of these images, for example the eagle. (It may be useful to have gathered selected images beforehand for this project.) Then, in the 2nd square have students reproduce the same image but vary it in some way. The eagle might change its facial expression, for example, or face in a different direction, or gain some kind of ornamentation, or be simplified into just a few bold strokes of the crayon. Students then introduce some further variation into the image in square three, and another variation in square four.

DISPLAY DRAWINGS

Setting them out in gallery-style so that all students can have a look at how fellow students have worked with the idea of variation. You may wish, via questioning, to guide their noticing around one particular example as a way of enriching the observation through group analysis.

ASK STUDENTS

How does this experience in producing variations relate to the work of art?



WHAT'S YOUR READ OF THIS NON-PRINT TEXT?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS - AND HOW COULD THEY BE ADAPTED AS GUIDING QUESTIONS TO SPARK STUDENT DISCUSSION?

- > About how many members did the orchestra have?
- > How were the different instruments arranged – in the space and in relationship to each other? To the conductor?
- > How did the instrumentalists collaborate?
- > What did the conductor do to help bring that about?
- > What else did you sense the conductor contributing to the performance?
- > How did the instrumental sounds interact with the acoustics of the room?
- > What did you observe about the soloist instrumentalists?
- > What kinds of “stories” did these pieces tell – and how?
- > What about mood? Sense of location? Events depicted?
- > What did you notice about pacing?
- > Which moments were climactic – and what made them so?
- > How was the idea of contrast employed in this performance?
- > How did the music make you respond? What contributed to that, do you think?
- > What did you observe about the structure of the concert?
What about the sequence of pieces?



"When I hear a new piece of music that I do not understand I am intrigued - I want to make contact with it again at the first opportunity."

> AARON COPLAND
AMERICAN COMPOSER

INTERNET

THE DESERT SYMPHONY'S WEBSITE
www.desertsymphony.org

SFS KIDS: FUN & GAMES WITH MUSIC
www.sfskids.org

AMERICAN CLASSICAL MUSIC
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_classical_music

BOOKS

STORY OF THE ORCHESTRA: LISTEN WHILE YOU LEARN ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS, THE MUSIC AND THE COMPOSERS WHO WROTE THE MUSIC!

By: Robert Levine

Reading level: Ages 9 and up

Publisher: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2000

ISBN-10: 1579121489

Orchestra Bob guides readers through a delightful musical journey. The book is divided into two major parts: composers from Vivaldi to Bernstein and their associated musical periods, and the instruments of the orchestra. There are interesting and sometimes humorous bits of information about the composers, their music, and corresponding historical events. The last two pages introduce the conductor.

AMERICA MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE: AN AMERICAN SONG ABOUT FREEDOM (PATRIOTIC SONGS)

By: Todd Ouren

Reading Level: Ages 4 – 9

Publisher: Picture Window Books, 2003

ISBN-10: 140480174X

Discusses the history of the song "America", and includes the song lyrics plus an activity to do at home.

BOOKS

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER (READING RAINBOW BOOKS)

By: Peter Spier

Reading Level: Ages 4 – 7

Publisher: Dragonfly Books, 1992

ISBN-10: 0440406978

Due to careful research, Spier's artwork depicts "the dawn's early light" and "the rocket's red glare" with remarkable authenticity and detail in this celebratory book. Among the highlights: a brief history of the anthem, a reproduction of Francis Scott Key's original manuscript, music for guitar and piano chords and many photographs.

AARON COPLAND (GETTING TO KNOW THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMPOSERS)

By: Mike Venezia

Reading Level: Ages 7 – 10

Publisher: Childrens Pr, 2018

ISBN-10: 0531233707

THE EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC OF MR. IVES: THE TRUE STORY OF A FAMOUS AMERICAN COMPOSER

By: Joanne Stanbridge

Reading Level: Ages 4 – 8

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers, 2012

ISBN-10: 0547238665

This book focuses on a particular moment in Ives' life, when he was moved to create music after learning about the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915.

"A work of art
does not answer
questions,
it provokes them."

> LEONARD BERNSTEIN
AMERICAN COMPOSER

LEARNING LINKS HAVE BEEN
CREATED BY:

MARK ALMY
RESEARCH AND TEXT UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED

MARK DUEBNER DESIGN
DESIGN

MICHAEL FLANNIGAN
FIELD TRIP SERIES COORDINATOR

KAJSA THURESSON-FRARY
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION