

November 12, 2022

7:30 pm

“Made in America”

American Armed Forces Salute

Arr. Bob Lowden (1920 - 1998)

Made in America

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor

Edward MacDowell (1860 - 1908)

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto in moto perpetuo

Drew Petersen, piano

INTERMISSION

Preamble to a Solemn Occasion (1949)

Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

Letter from Home (1944)

Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

Suite from *The Tender Land* (1954)

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Armed Forces Salute

Arr. Bob Lowden (b. Camden, New Jersey, July 23, 1920; d. Medford, New Jersey, October 30, 1998)

To honor our veterans of the armed forces for Veterans Day, we feature a piece that’s a favorite: *Armed Forces Salute*, arranged by Bob Lowden. This is a wonderful medley of service songs including *The Caisson Song* (Army), *Semper Paratus* (Coast Guard), *The Marines’ Hymn*, *The Air Force Song*, and *Anchors Aweigh* (Navy).

While there are many pieces similar to tonight’s work, this one is often felt to be the best as the selections flow organically into one another. In fact, authors write about the work saying Lowden spreads the melody around among instrumental sections throughout with major melodies and countermelodies. The short melodic tunes are easy to spot at the beginning, including phrases from *Columbia-the Gem of the Ocean* and *America the Beautiful*. We also hear *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*.

Robert William “Bob” Lowden, an internationally known arranger and composer, was one of the best-known modern-day arrangers for orchestra, bands, and jazz bands. His works encompass professional orchestras, film, and recordings, and he was a major contributor of musical arrangements for American’s college and high school performers. He was also in demand as a clinician and adjudicator of instrumental festivals. Appropriately, during World War II, he served as a trombonist in the Military Music Chapel of the 322th United States Army in Fort Dix.



Robert “Bob” Lowden

Made in America

Joan Tower (born September 6, 1938)

The work is scored for two flutes (doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion, and strings. The duration is 13 minutes.

Joan Tower, an American composer, wrote *Made in America*. It is an orchestral composition for a joint commission by the League of American Orchestras and Meet the Composer. The work was first performed in Glens Falls, New York, by the Glens Falls Symphony Orchestra in October 2005. The work was then premiered in each of the remaining 49 states over the next two years, ending in Alaska with the Juneau Symphony in June of 2007.

Tower's early music reflects the influence of her mentors at Columbia University. During a career spanning more than sixty years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Her works have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; soloists Alisa Weilerstein (cello), Carol Wincenc (flute), David Shifrin (clarinet), Paul Neubauer (viola), and John Browning (piano); and the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Nashville, Albany NY, and Washington DC.

The main theme of the work is based on the song "America the Beautiful." Tower described the inspiration for the piece in the score program notes, writing:

"I crossed a big bridge at the age of nine when my family moved to South America (La Paz, Bolivia), where we stayed for nine years. I had to learn a new language, a new culture, and how to live at 13,000 feet! It was a lively culture with many saints' days celebrated through music and dance, but the large Inca population in Bolivia was generally poor and there was little chance of moving up in class or work position.

"When I returned to the United States, I was proud to have free choices, upward mobility, and the chance to try to become who I wanted to be. I also enjoyed the basic luxuries of an American citizen that we so often take for granted, for example: hot running water, blankets for the cold winters, floors that are not made of dirt, and easy modes of transportation.

"Therefore, when I started composing this piece, the song "America the Beautiful" kept coming into my consciousness and eventually became the main theme for the work. The beauty of the song is undeniable, and I loved working with it as a musical idea. One can never take for granted, however, the strength of a musical idea — as Beethoven (one of my strongest influences) knew so well.

"This theme is challenged by other more aggressive and dissonant ideas that keep interrupting, unsettling it, but 'America the Beautiful' keeps resurfacing in different guises (some small and tender, others big and magnanimous), as if to say, 'I'm still here, ever changing, but holding my own.' A musical struggle is heard throughout the work. Perhaps it was my unconscious reacting to the challenge of how we keep America beautiful."

A recording of the piece, performed by Leonard Slatkin and the Nashville Symphony, won the 2008 Grammy Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition, in addition to the Grammy Awards for Best Classical Album and Best Orchestral Performance.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Op. 23

Edward MacDowell (b. New York City, New York, December 18, 1860; d. New York City, New York, January 23, 1908)

- I. **Allegro**
- II. **Andante**
- III. **Presto in moto perpetuo**

Drew Petersen, piano

The work is scored for piano solo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings. Approximate performance time is 26 minutes.

This *D minor Piano Concerto* was written in 1884 to 1885 and premiered in New York City when Theodore Thomas conducted the first performance on March 5, 1889.

MacDowell was a musically talented child. “He was given piano lessons while growing up in New York City, but before long his parents felt it was necessary for him to have a European education,” writes Jonathan D. Kramer in his book *Listen to the Music*. At age 16, MacDowell set off for Paris, accompanied by his mother. “After two years at the Paris Conservatory, MacDowell moved to Germany for further study,” continues Kramer.

MacDowell was 19 when he met Franz Liszt. Studying first at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, he then moved on to become a piano instructor at the Darmstadt Conservatory. Kramer adds, “He continued composing and dedicated his *First Piano Concerto* to Franz Liszt, who helped him secure European performances and publication of his works.”

Moving to Wiesbaden, he composed this *Second Piano Concerto* – which we will hear tonight – a big, romantic work in the tradition of the Liszt piano concertos. Living in Europe for twelve years, he composed a great deal of music – including songs, choruses, symphonic poems, orchestral suites, many piano pieces and studies, and four piano sonatas, in addition to his two piano concertos – which displays the influence of German composers such as Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, and his composition teacher, Joseph Joachim Raff. Raff was a German-Swiss composer, pedagogue and pianist, who also served as Liszt’s assistant in Weimar. Besides being MacDowell’s composition teacher, he served as the highly esteemed director of the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt.

Because of the support of Liszt, MacDowell was able to return to America as a celebrity. “Yet, he will be best remembered by the small piano pieces that gave a romantic picture of old American scenes,” state Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson in their book *Music in History: The Evolution of an Art*.

In fact, MacDowell is “considered by many to be America’s first truly professional composer and was at his best composing piano miniatures,” reports Maurice Hinson in *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*. “He left us 160 romantic character-pieces that show a poetic mastery.” Among them are *Ten Woodland Sketches, Op. 51* (1896) in which ‘To a Wild Rose’ can be found.

MacDowell performed his *Second Piano Concerto* in both New York City and Boston to enthusiastic praise. “His reputation grew rapidly, and before long he was the most famous composer in the United States,” writes Kramer. “He was living in Boston, where he had a number of private students, concertized frequently, and composed intensely.”

The *Second Piano Concerto* is still performed throughout the country and has been for many years by serious artists. Van Cliburn, for instance, and other noted pianists played it regularly.

At age 35, MacDowell was invited to start a music department at Columbia University in New York City. Leaving Columbia after eight years, he remained in New York City and helped found the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He also transformed his summer home in Peterborough, New Hampshire, into an artists’ colony which still flourishes today. He died three years later, at the age of 47.

MacDowell’s impact on American music – more through his founding of the American Academy and the MacDowell Colony than through his compositions – remains strong.

INTERMISSION

Aaron Copland **By William Schuman**

The music of Aaron Copland is recognized as part of our American heritage. That special Copland sound has enriched us all. It is a sound that was not in music before, and so personal an expression that not one of his many imitators has been able to make it convincingly his own.

Yet, Aaron Copland has so long been a familiar figure in our national musical life that he and his work are too easily taken for granted. What makes Copland so special? Copland has created a body of works that speaks to his countrymen in identifiable terms – and this identification is national commonality.

Foremost, for me, is my firm conviction that he represents the ideal for artists functioning in a democratic society. Copland’s roles are many and varied – citizen, composer, performer, teacher, lecturer, committee member, spokesperson, and, lest we forget one of his favorites, conductor. Copland is the quintessential artist in a democratic society.

William Schuman (Composer and President of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts) – Introduction to “What to Listen for in Music” by Aaron Copland.

Preamble to a Solemn Occasion (1949)

Aaron Copland (b. Brooklyn, New York, November 14, 1900; d. Sleepy Hollow, New York, December 2, 1990)

This work calls for three flutes (with piccolo), three oboes (with English horn), three clarinets (with bass clarinet), three bassoons (with contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings. The duration of the work is six minutes.

This work received its world premiere in New York City on December 10, 1949. Laurence Olivier was the narrator, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

“The text for this work is the ‘Preamble to the United Nations Charter’,” reads *Orchestral Music – A Handbook*, Third Edition, by David Daniels.

Originally conceived as a hymn, this slow and stately piece was written to mark the first anniversary of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" by the United Nations. As Copland said, "It was not difficult to compose, for the words, which were drawn directly from the United Nations Charter, were in themselves inspiring." Copland revised the accompaniment so that *Preamble* can be played by orchestra without narrator as well. It is particularly appropriate for performances at special occasions.

Copland went to France to attend music classes taught by Nadia Boulanger. Her other American students were Copland, Virgil Thomson, Melville Smith, Roy Harris, Walter Piston, and Elliott Carter. According to a biography of Ms. Boulanger – *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music* – written by Léonie Rosenstiel, “Brooklyn-born Aaron Copland was the first to enroll in her classes at the French music school for Americans in the summer of 1921. Boulanger transformed the usually dry subject of harmony into an exciting experience for her pupils because she passionately cared about every note and sought the reasons why the composers placed it where it was.”

Copland was immensely talented and received recommendations from Boulanger. In fact, immediately upon returning to the US after studying with Boulanger in France, Serge Koussevitzky, Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned Copland to write a work for organ and orchestra.

Letter from Home (1944)

Aaron Copland (b. Brooklyn, New York, November 14, 1900; d. Sleepy Hollow, New York, December 2, 1990)

This 1964 orchestral version is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets (with bass clarinet), two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings. The piece lasts seven minutes.

Letter from Home (1944), was written two years after Copland’s *Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*. It received its world premiere in New York City on October 17, 1944, with Paul Whiteman and his orchestra and the American Broadcasting Company.

During WWII, Copland could feel that he was doing his part for the war effort by composing patriotic music that would be meaningful to the general public. He accepted a commission from Whiteman, who was requesting pieces from famous composers to be played by his orchestra on the *Philco Radio Hour* of the American Broadcasting System. This touching *Letter from Home* has been described as Copland's "most sentimental." Following the radio premiere, Copland shortened the piece slightly and expanded the orchestration so that it could be performed in the concert hall.

Suite from *The Tender Land* (1954)

Aaron Copland (b. Brooklyn, New York, November 14, 1900; d. Sleepy Hollow, New York, December 2, 1990)

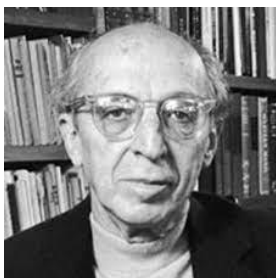
- I. Introduction and love music
- II. Party scene
- III. Finale: The promise of living

The Suite calls for three flutes (with piccolo), two oboes (with English horn), two clarinets (with bass clarinet), two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celeste, and strings. The duration of the work is 19 minutes.

Copland arranged this orchestral suite from the score of his only full-length opera, *The Tender Land*. The work we will hear tonight, *The Suite from The Tender Land*, received its world premiere in Chicago on April 10, 1958, with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Fritz Reiner. This suite that Copland extracted from *The Tender Land* is in three movements, with the second and third linked without pause.

The opera tells of a farm family in the Midwest. The setting is the 1930s, at the time of the spring harvest and, also, of high school graduation. Copland was inspired to write this opera after viewing the Depression-era photographs of Walker Evans and reading James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. He wrote the work between 1952 and 1954, for the *NBC Television Opera Workshop*, with the intention of its being presented on television. However, the television producers rejected the opera.

Eventually, the work had its premiere on April 1, 1954, at the New York City Opera, with Thomas Schippers as the conductor, Jerome Robbins as the director. Copland revised the opera, expanding Act 2 for performances at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in August 1954, and making further adjustments for performances at Oberlin College in 1955.



Aaron Copland