

The Chamber Orchestra & the Conservatory—Together!

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson

- I. Nature, The Gentlest Mother
- II. There Came A Wind Like a Bugle
- III. The World Feels Dusty
- IV. Heart, We Will Forget Him!
- V. Dear March, Come In!
- VI. Sleep Is Supposed To Be
- VII. Going To Heaven
- VIII. The Chariot

Judeth Shay Burns, soprano

Music for Movies

- I. New England Countryside, from *The City*
- II. Barley Wagons, from *Of Mice and Men*
- III. Sunday Traffic, from *The City*
- IV. Grovers Corners, from *Our Town*
- V. Threshing Machines, from *Of Mice and Men*

INTERMISSION

Gian Carlo Menotti
(1911-2007)

The Boy Who Grew Too Fast

A Comic Opera in Two Parts

Miss Hope	Linda Weise
Poponel (big)	TBD
Mrs. Skosvodmonit	TBD
Dr. Shrinck	Mark Arnest
Mad Dog	Charles Schnetzer
Miss Proctor	Judeth Shay Burns
Poponel (little)	TBD
Lizzie Spender	TBD
Ricky	TBD
Policeman	TBD

Inspiration may be a form of super-consciousness, or perhaps of subconsciousness—I wouldn't know. But I am sure it is the antithesis of self-consciousness.—Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland was born on November 14, 1900 in New York City. His musical works ranged from ballet and orchestral music to choral music and movie scores. For the better part of four decades Aaron Copland was considered the premier American composer.

Copland learned to play piano from an older sister. By the time he was fifteen he had decided to become a composer. His first tentative steps included a correspondence course in writing harmony. In 1921 Copland traveled to Paris to attend the newly founded music school for Americans at Fontainebleau. He was the first American student of the brilliant teacher, Nadia Boulanger. After three years in Paris he returned to New York with his first major commission, writing an organ concerto for the American appearances of Madame Boulanger. His "Symphony for Organ and Orchestra" premiered in at Carnegie Hall in 1925.

Copland's growth as a composer mirrored important trends of his time. After his return from Paris he worked with jazz rhythms in his "Piano Concerto" (1926). His "Piano Variations" (1930) was strongly influenced by Igor Stravinsky's Neoclassicism.

In 1936 he changed his orientation toward a simpler style. He felt this made his music more meaningful to the large music-loving audience being created by radio and the movies. His most important works during this period were based on American folk lore including "Billy the Kid" (1938) and "Rodeo" (1942). Other works during this period were a series of movie scores including "Of Mice and Men" (1938) and "The Heiress" (1948).

In his later years Copland's work reflected the serial techniques of the so-called 12-tone school of Arnold Schoenberg. Notable among these was "Connotations" (1962) commissioned for the opening of Lincoln Center.

After 1970 Copland stopped composing, though he continued to lecture and conduct through the mid-1980s. He died on December 2, 1990 in Tarrytown, New York.

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson is Copland's longest and most significant work for voice and piano, even though he never intended to write such an extensive song cycle. Over a span of twelve years (1958-1970), Copland chose eight of his twelve Dickinson songs to arrange for voice and small orchestra. Copland was moved by Dickinson's reclusive life, leading him to warmer and more intimate orchestration techniques. The songs are somewhat unusual in style, with odd meters, wide intervals (which Copland loved), and unusual tonalities that make them difficult for any vocalist or ensemble.

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson

Nature, The Gentlest Mother

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,-
Her admonition wild

In the forest and the hill
By traveler is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,-
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infinite care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

There Came A Wind Like A Bugle

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors

As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed
On a strange mob of panting trees,

And fences fled away,

And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.

How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

The World Feels Dusty

The world feels dusty
When we stop to die;
We want the dew then,
Honors taste dry.

Flags vex a dying face,
But the least fan
Stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry
When they third comes,
Dews of thyself to fetch
And holy balms.

Heart, We Will Forget Him!

Heart, we will forget him!
You and I, to-night!
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging
I may remember him!

Dear March, Come In!

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat-
You must have walked-
How out of breath you are!

Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!

I got your letter, and the bird's;
The maples never knew
That you were coming, -I declare,
How red their faces grew!
But, March, forgive me-
And all those hills
You left for me to hue:
There was no purple suitable,
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? That April!
Lock the door!

I will not be pursued!
He stayed away a year, to call
When I am occupied.
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come,
And blame is just as dear as praise
And praise as mere as blame.

Sleep Is Supposed To Be

Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand!

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree,
The breaking of the day.

Morning has not occurred!
That shall aurora be
East of eternity;

One with the banner gay,
One in the red array,-
That is the break of day.

Going to Heaven!

Going to heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how,-
Indeed, I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to heaven!-
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?

If you should get there first,
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

Going to heaven!
I'm glad I don't believe it,
For it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!
I am glad they did believe it
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

The Chariot

Because I would not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children
played
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

In 1942, Copland assembled a suite of five movements from his first three film scores: *The City, Of Mice and Men* and *Our Town*. Copland felt that film music "makes sense only if it helps the film," and gave himself three conditions essential to that end: "The first is by intensifying the emotional impact of any given scene, the second by creating an illusion of continuity, and the third by providing a kind of neutral background. Music, an art that exists in time, can subtly hold disparate scenes together." **Music for Movies** was premiered on February 17, 1943 by the Saidenberg Little Symphony (New York) conducted by Michael Saidenberg.

Menotti represents something of a phenomenon in American music; before he was twenty-six he had completed, and seen produced, an opera ("Amelia Goes to the Ball") of such sparkling gaiety and charm that it disarmed all criticism.
—John Tasker Howard

Gian Carlo Menotti was born in Northern Italy in 1911 into a cultured family. He began to compose songs at the age of seven, and operas four years later. In 1923, he enrolled at the Milan Conservatory, but after his father's death his mother took him to the United States, to the Curtis

Institute of Music where he was to study with Rosario Scalero and find his lifelong friend, companion, and collaborator, Samuel Barber, who was also a Curtis student.

Celebrity arrived with Menotti's one-act opera buffa *Amelia goes to the Ball*. A CBS commission followed, then ballet, a piano concerto and international success with the operas *The Medium* and *The Telephone*. Two subsequent operas won Pulitzer prizes, and his children's opera for television *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951) has become an enduring classic.

The Boy Who Grew Too Fast is Menotti at his original best, far away from traditional operatic forms (overtures, arias, duets, and ballets) and telling a humorous tale with his trademark quirky characters and accessible dialogue. Even the recitatives become quasi-conversational, and songs are kept short to prevent any characters from dominating the flow. The first performance of *The Boy Who Grew Too Fast* was given on September 24, 1982, in Wilmington, Delaware.

Synopsis

On their first day back to school, the children sing a short hymn and are quickly introduced to their new classmate, Poponel, who is exceedingly tall for his age and draws much taunting and teasing. Miss Hope, the teacher, feels so sorry for Poponel that she suggests a visit to Dr. Shrinck, who is pulled away from the audience while enjoying a concert. Dr. Shrinck's reducing machine succeeds in bringing Popnel down to a normal size, but there is a condition: Poponel must conform with the other children in all ways. Should he fail, he will return to his overgrown state.

After Poponel returns to school, Mad Dog, a fugitive, comes busting into the classroom and threatens to take all the children prisoner. Miss Hope begs him to let the children go, but Mad Dog decides to keep one child, and Poponel volunteers. Poponel then slips away to the broom closet, and, since he hasn't conformed with the other children, he grows back to his normal size. He reenters, overpowers Mad Dog, and saves the day. Miss Hope sings the final moral of the opera:

Be glad of what you are,
Whether fat or thin,
Short or tall,
Black or white.
Be glad to be yourself;
Don't try to be another.
For what you are
Nobody else can be.