

Cameron Baird: Bringing Paul Hindemith and Aaron Copland to Buffalo



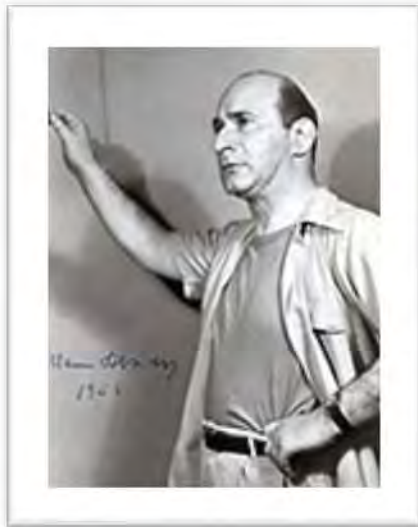
Cameron Baird (1905-1960)

University at Buffalo Music Library Exhibit

Curated and written by John Bewley

May 2014 – October 2014

Cameron Baird was committed to building an exceptional musical culture in the city of Buffalo. He founded the **Buffalo Oratorio Chorus** in 1930, conducted the **Buffalo Schola Cantorum** for ten years beginning in 1945, worked with Frederick Slee, Samuel Capen, and others to establish the **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** in 1934 (with the first concert season being 1935-36), continued working with the Philharmonic with input and influence on matters including hiring musical directors **Lajos Shuk, Franco Autori, William Steinberg, and Josef Krips**, founded the music department at the University of Buffalo in 1952 and served as its first chair until his death in 1960, and likely influenced his friend Frederick Slee as he shaped the bequests to the University that funded the position of **Slee Lecturer in Music** and the annual **Slee Beethoven Quartet Cycle** concert series.



William Steinberg
Unidentified photographer
Perry Collection C15_023



Josef Krips
Unidentified photographer
Perry Collection C08_032

This exhibit is about Cameron Baird's efforts to bring two of the world's most notable composers to the University of Buffalo, **Paul Hindemith** and **Aaron Copland**. The stories demonstrate the range of Baird's reach

in the musical world at the time and provide a measure of his humanitarianism and courage in the face of political factors beyond the world of music.

During the early 1930s Cameron Baird took breaks from his position in the administration of the **Buffalo Pipe and Foundry Company** to travel to Europe to study music. He studied conducting with **Bruno Walter** and **Felix Weingarten** in Salzburg, Austria and applied to study composition with Paul Hindemith at the **Berlin Hochschule für Musik**. The contacts he made with musicians during these trips would prove highly valuable to him back in Buffalo.



Bruno Walter

*Photograph by Susan Hoeller
Perry Collection C18_038*

It was quite likely Baird's contact with Hindemith in Berlin that laid the groundwork for Hindemith to appear with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra during his first visit to the United States. Hindemith conducted his ***Symphony 'Mathis der Maler'*** and performed as viola

soloist in his *Der Schwanendreher* with the Orchestra on its April 23 1937 program.



Paul Hindemith

*Photograph by Rudolf Hindemith
Perry Collection C07_021*

While in Buffalo for the 1937 performance with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Hindemith expressed his feelings about Cameron Baird in a letter to his wife **Gertrud** April 22 1937:

[...] Heart and soul of musical affairs is the young vice-director of an iron pipe foundry, Cameron Baird. My musical grandchild, for during the time when business was bad in America he travelled to Berlin to study music; he came to me and I directed him to [Harald] Genzmer, who gave him lessons and later passed him on to [Bernhard] Heiden – to the latter's good fortune, for the kindhearted Baird was a great help to the Heidens when they moved to America. Today, too, he got them to come up from Detroit and stay with him.

About the orchestra, Hindemith had less kind words:

...The Orchestra is as stupid as a crowd of puppies, the people forget from one minute to the next and cannot concentrate. The strings, up to the solo violist, are without exception bad, the brass is good.

Cameron Baird's vision for the musical culture of Buffalo included the creation of a strong school of music. In an attempt to fulfill that goal Baird invited **Paul Hindemith** to come to Buffalo in **1940** to teach music classes at the University of Buffalo. He also hoped to entice Hindemith to stay in Buffalo to create a school of music at the University. But that was only a small part of the story.

By 1940 Paul Hindemith was basically an exile from Germany living in Switzerland. Nazi bans on performances of his music and his employment as a performer or teacher seriously limited his income. Although Hindemith did not seem terribly concerned about his plight, his friends in the United States and elsewhere were worried enough to make their own plans to help him escape Europe. These people included **Cameron Baird**, composer **Nicolas Nabokov**, and Hindemith's manager in America, **Ernst R. Voigt**, who was president of Associated Music Publishers (representatives for Hindemith's publisher, Schott Music) in New York.

It appears that **Ernst Voigt** served as ringmaster for the efforts to secure enough engagements in the United States to convince Hindemith it was worth his time and effort to leave Europe. More daunting was the need to provide documentation to United States immigration officials that substantiated Hindemith's application for a visa. They needed to document his qualifications as a professor of music, justify the need for his services, and prove that he had commitments from employers to provide an income sufficient to support him while in the country. Voigt collaborated with Nabokov at

Wells College, Baird at the **University of Buffalo**, and Paul J. Weaver at **Cornell University** to insure that Hindemith's appointments, combined with his teaching position at **Tanglewood** (Koussevitsky had invited him to teach composition at the inaugural summer 1940 session of the Berkshire Music Center), would fulfill the requirements of the immigration officials.

Announcement of Hindemith's appointment to teach at the University of Buffalo in the University's Alumni Publication February 1 1940.

Two Europeans Arrive

Two Europeans fresh from the war zone will spend the next few months on the university campus. One is Paul Hindemith, eminent German composer, who comes as visiting lecturer in music. An exponent of atonal music, Mr. Hindemith was at first on good terms with the Nazi government. Later Propaganda Minister Goebbels denounced his music as Bolshevistic and it was banned. Hindemith has spent most of the time since in Turkey, England and Switzerland.

The other visitor is Maurice Le Breton, visiting professor of French on the Mrs. Joseph T. Jones foundation. He comes from the University of Lille. M. Breton was originally scheduled to be at the university last semester, but when World War II broke out he was called to the front.

The following timeline presents some of the major events that created a perilous situation for Hindemith in Europe.

1933 April

The National Socialist Party banned performances of much of Hindemith's music because it manifested "cultural Bolshevism".

1936 October

The Nazis extended the ban to all of Hindemith's music.

1937 March

Hindemith resigned his position at the Berlin Hochschule.

Hindemith made his first visit to the United States, including a concert in Buffalo, New York.

1938 February to April

Hindemith made his second visit to the United States.

1938 May

Hindemith was included among the "degenerate" composers listed in the *Entartete Musik* exhibition in Düsseldorf.

1938 September

Hindemith left Germany to live in Switzerland.

1939

Hindemith made a third visit to the United States, including time spent at Wells College in Aurora, NY where composer Nicolas Nabokov was chair of the music department.

1939 September 1

Germany invaded Poland.

1939

Serge Koussevitsky, conductor of the Boston Symphony, invited Hindemith to join Aaron Copland as the first composition teachers for the new Berkshire Music Center (now the Tanglewood Music Center).

1939 November

Ernst R. Voigt wrote to Hindemith about a teaching job at a university (UB) to precede the position at Tanglewood in the summer of 1940.

1940 February

Hindemith arrived in Buffalo.

1946 January

Hindemith became an American citizen.

Ernst Voigt wrote to Nabokov about Hindemith's appointment at the University of Buffalo:

The professorship offered him at the university is in the nature of pretense ... as Mr. Baird is subscribing the amount of his salary. He will only be asked to give two lessons or lectures a week, the rest of the time to be his own, the principal purpose being to discuss and to set under way the plans for the founding of the new conservatory in the fall ... It would of course be a wonderful opportunity for Hindemith, as he would be sole director, untrammelled by traditions and policies he might have to contend with were he to take over the directorship of an old school.

University at Buffalo records (the minutes of the Committee on General Administration) corroborate Voigt's statement. Baird paid Hindemith's salary of **\$1500** from his own pocket. Hindemith was never on the University's payroll and it does not appear that he taught any of his classes on campus facilities. He was to spend about 14 hours a week teaching two courses in Buffalo each Wednesday, including a "general" course for non-musicians that he stated had an enrollment of 40-50 people. He also held other classes for professional musicians and teachers in the Buffalo area. Organists **Robert Noehren** and **Herbert Fromm** were among the professional musicians who attended classes.

Hindemith also traveled to **Aurora, New York** to teach one day a week, providing six lectures on Tuesday evenings, March 19-April 30 at the **Wells College for Women**. His trips to Aurora were combined with trips to Cornell University in **Ithaca, New York** to lecture on Tuesday afternoons at 4 p.m.

In the midst of this schedule **Yale University** hired Hindemith to give lectures and master classes on three consecutive Saturdays and Mondays between March 30 and April 15 1940. Hindemith was invited

to join the faculty at Yale beginning in 1941. He taught at Yale until his retirement in 1953.

After only a couple of weeks in Buffalo, Paul Hindemith wrote to his wife on **March 7 1940** that it seemed unlikely he would stay in Buffalo to assist Cameron Baird with the creation of a music department at the University. Whether this plan was completely a pretense for Hindemith to come to Buffalo or if Baird abandoned the idea after seeing Hindemith's response to Buffalo is unclear. It would be another dozen years before a music department was established at the University of Buffalo.

...Nothing has been said about school plans, and I don't think anything will come of it. I'm glad of that, for, were I forced to become director of this school, I can already visualize the classroom in which, after a few years of working here, I should hang myself.

Dr. Max Landsberger was one of the musical amateurs who enrolled in Hindemith's classes. In 1966 Dr. Landsberger wrote a recollection of the experience. It includes a transcription of a fugue subject (see page 3) Hindemith wrote on the board during a classroom session. Dr. Landsberger's recollection was published in the *Buffalo News* April 6 1980.

Both of the Landsberger documents were provided courtesy of the University Archives at the University at Buffalo.

Re: Hindemith
in Buffalo

Mass Landberger M.D.
Reminiscence On Paul Hindemith

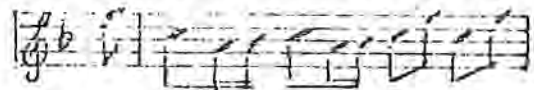
1.

Is it possible to contribute anything of general interest to the memory of Paul Hindemith for someone who had only brief contacts with him during his stay at Buffalo in the early part of 1940? Searching through memory and notes, however, there may be a few points which go a little beyond what is known about him and may, in a small way, help to illuminate the picture of a great contemporary.

Hindemith had been invited by the University of Buffalo to give a series of lectures with the faint hope to keep him here and possibly build a music school around him. The idea was supported mainly by the late Cameron Baird, leading musical personality at that time, and Mrs. Lydia Hoffman-Behrendt, later of Norwich, Vt., concert pianist and teacher who had played an active part in promoting contemporary music and had performed several of Hindemith's works. The University announced his courses for different grades of ability and knowledge. Three prominent local organists were the selected participants in the most advanced group. The writer of this reminiscence joined the lowest class of about twenty as probably the only non-professional musician, but as a great admirer of Hindemith the composer, especially after having studied and played his flute sonata (1940) and of Hindemith the performer on the viola d'amore and the viola.

The ideas of the composer on the elements of music are well known and documented in his writings. But the great scholar also

had an astounding ability to guide even listeners with rather scanty backgrounds through the vast and difficult area of music, beginning with the history of the tone systems and modes through the development of the 40 or 50 chords used in the past into the thousands applied to modern harmony. Analyzing the physics of tones, overtones and intervals led to the mechanics of obsolete as well as modern instruments. It was apparent that, as was his reputation, Hindemith had more than a basic technical knowledge of every instrument of all times and could actually play many of them. One of the interesting problems he touched was the "Bach trumpet" which had been a matter of controversy for some time. (I was reminded of experiments with one of the modern construction which had been demonstrated at a Bach festival of the German Bach Society in the early 1930's). As an impressive example, new to this class, but perhaps not to music scholars, namely that the Bach-trumpet undoubtedly was larger than the present-day instruments in higher keys, - in spite of the high range often required - Hindemith quoted the beginning of the second Brandenburg Concerto where all the parts play unisono:

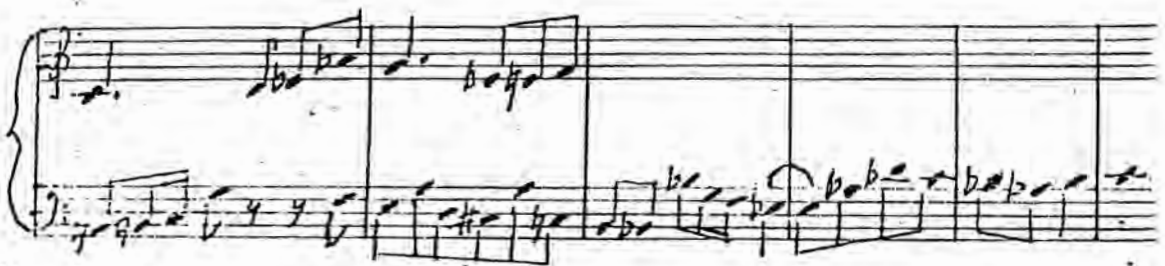


except the trumpet assigned to:



This-valveless-trumpet, therefore, must have been unable to produce B-flat, even as a harmonic overtone, but reached F probably as a natural tone. The art of playing these instruments has been lost. In the last of his lectures Hindemith discussed fugues and demonstrated on the blackboard how to "reconstruct" one, which he

did faster than it could be copied by the listeners. For historical reasons it may be of interest to present at least the first few bars, as much as the notebook could take:



These weekly evening sessions took place at a private home. The small audience was sitting in a semi-circle around the piano, frequently used for ad hoc demonstrations, the blackboard, on which musical symbols and figures appeared with incredible speed, and the lecturer himself who, hardly handicapped by an occasional lack of English expressions, fascinated everybody by his lively and assured, but unpretentious, way of bringing down his points. It was obvious that none of the audience left this course without being impressed for life by a great personality and composer. The evening ended routinely with a light refreshment for the speaker including a glass of beer, his favorite drink, and driving him to his hotel.

Several times two of us, the organist and composer Herbert Fromm, now in Boston, Mass., one of his most advanced pupils, and myself had a chance to spend one or two hours in quiet restaurants where he was sure that no "entertaining" music would disturb us. On these occasions we came as close, as one could have hoped for, to the man Hindemith who with all his complexity displayed the basic simplicity and clarity reflected in his music. He enjoyed talking about some remote and little frequented valleys in Switzerland, humorous happenings of the day or of the past, even telling jokes, mostly concerning music or musicians. He did not hesitate to minimize some of his own, mostly earlier, works, but also called others, such as the flute sonata, still ^{being} among his favorites. These days, he told us, he was fascinated by the personality of Galileo (or was it Kepler?) on whom he was doing some research with the idea of using this material for a new opera. Hindemith's attitude toward romantic music was never clearly revealed in these conversations, although a slight hesitancy at times could be detected when composers of that period were mentioned. Some light, perhaps, was shed later, after he had returned to Switzerland, when a renowned conductor asked him whether he would accept the solo part in Berlioz "Harold in Italy" to which he replied that he could not arrange it, adding, reportedly, "-----, and Harold in Italy! Ha, ha!". Hindemith was deeply impressed by some American institutions, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and critical of others, for instance

putting too much emphasis on credits in music education which may distract students from achieving maximal results. Asked once whether he would consider staying in the U.S.A. after the war, he expressed his doubts because of his feeling too solidly rooted in the German speaking parts of Central Europe.

While Hindemith seemed to avoid being socially overexposed, he showed enough personal interest to accompany us to a stage rehearsal before a recital in which we were to perform works by J.S. Bach and Herbert Fromm for flute and piano and to offer valuable comments. Hindemith also came regularly to the established biweekly meetings of a small chamber orchestra group, consisting of leading professional instrumentalists of the community and a few amateurs, under the leadership of Cameron Baird who had been so influential in bringing him to Buffalo. Here the originator of "Gebrauchsmusik" proved that he meant what he preached as he joined the group with great enthusiasm, playing various instruments down to the double-bass, or conducting the unrehearsed readings of works from Bach to Hindemith. The playing of the B-minor suite by Bach under his baton left an unforgettable impression on the amateur flutist. Several times, between larger instrumentations, a string quartet or quintet with Hindemith on the viola was improvised which he enjoyed as much as the other members. Near the end of the memorable times of his stay in Buffalo a farewell party was given for him where various members

of the group and guests performed works only by the guest of honor. The flute was represented in "Ein Jaeger aus Kurpfalz" a quintet for wind instruments and - played by a guest - the sonata (1936).

Hindemith never returned to Buffalo where, unfortunately, only too few people had realized at that time what Hindemith meant to the world.

Max Landsberger, 1966.

Footnote to Buffalo Musical Life Involves Composer Hindemith

Leaving Nazi-dominated Germany in 1938, Dr. Max Landsberger came to Buffalo and opened private practice after a one-year association with Children's Hospital. He was appointed a part-time faculty member of the University of Buffalo Medical School, and in 1964 retired as Clinical Associate Professor. A lifelong devotee of music and an amateur performer, he treasures his unusual Buffalo experience, four decades ago, with composer Paul Hindemith.

By MAX LANDSBERGER

German composer Paul Hindemith, who died at 68 in 1963, is one of the truly significant music figures of the 20th Century, and one of the least-known facts about his career involves Buffalo.

Hindemith's opera "Mathis der Mahler" was banned before performance in Berlin in 1934. The work took pot shots at bureaucrats and tyranny, and the Nazis forbade its production.

It received its first performance in Zurich in 1938, and then Hindemith could not go home again. He visited Germany after World War II and the rout of the Nazis, but only as a guest conductor and lecturer. He made his home in America, several years at Yale University, and then in Zurich.

Historical accounts either slight or ignore the Buffalo interlude, which this writer was privileged to share with the composer.

This was in 1940, two years after I had managed to leave Nazi-tyrannized Germany myself, and had come to Buffalo to practice medicine, including an association with the University of Buffalo Medical School.

Buffalo industrialist and philanthropist Cameron Baird was an excellent musician with a broad vision. He was interested in the UB Music Department (he became department chairman years afterward) and it was his ambition to bring a great music figure to the scene here, to inspire and attract both faculty members and students.

Cameron Baird invited Hindemith, and to the joy of a rather small coterie of Buffalo-based teachers, players and educated amateurs who knew something about the composer, Hindemith accepted.



Buffalo was a city of estimable musical resources in 1940. It was the inaugural year of Kleinhans Music Hall, considered a model of architectural and acoustical excellence by international experts.

The Chamber Music Society had been flourishing since 1924. The Buffalo Philharmonic was in its early years, under Franco Autori.

The Cameron Baird home was a gathering place for informal music making by a group of amateurs and professionals, often including visitors such as the superb Budapest Quartet.

This was the setting Paul Hindemith found on arriving in Buffalo. I was particularly excited, since I had been aware of the composer in Germany. And now in Buffalo, I had been studying the Hindemith Flute Sonata 1936, for performance in a lecture series by Lydia Hoffman-Behrendt.

Hindemith lived in the Lenox Hotel on North Street, even then a favorite hostelry for visiting artists and theatrical figures, as it is today.

The composer gave classes in the university, in private-home settings and in nearby First Presbyterian Church, across from the music hall. Choirmaster Squire Haskin was a student, also Temple Beth Zion organist Herbert Fromm and — in a lower class — myself, a zealous amateur.

Hindemith enjoyed himself greatly — playing any of several instruments in various ensembles at the Baird home sessions, teaching his students, even having beer and conversation in quiet midtown restaurants.

He would write musical illustrations on the blackboard swiftly, and for his final class he composed a blackboard fugue with incredible speed. I was able to copy only a small portion in my notebook before he erased it to make room for more notes. I usually escorted him home.

He was a brilliant man of great vitality and breadth, an inspiration to those around him, but we could not keep him. The larger and more compelling resources of Yale University soon claimed him, and he spent many years in New Haven, on into the 1950s, after which he returned to Switzerland.

The importance of the Hindemith visit was not widely appreciated then, and a new generation in Buffalo is scarcely aware of it. But for a few of us who shared his presence and felt his genius, it was a rare and unforgettable experience.



Aaron Copland

Photograph by Carl Van Vechten

Yvar Mikhashoff Collection YM01-03

Cameron Baird stated that it took three months of negotiation and cajoling to convince **Aaron Copland** to accept the offer to become the first composer appointed **Slee Lecturer in Music** beginning in 1957. The appointment was announced in the *Buffalo News* on January 23 1957. The announcement was met with protests from some local citizens who denounced Copland's appointment based on assertions that he had been associated with numerous Communist organizations.

Copland's political thinking and sentiments have been the subject of research in the years since this event took place. While it has never been determined that Copland was a member of the **Communist Party**, there is documentation that demonstrates Copland's sympathies for liberal programs and actions that were held in common with items on the Communist agenda. These were enough to draw the attention of the media and authorities in a time of near hysteria about Communist infiltration and influence in the United States.

Here is a timeline of some of the background for the accusations about Aaron Copland's involvement with Communism.

1949 March 25-27

Copland acted as a sponsor for and attended the *Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace* at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Unbeknownst to many of the participants, the event was arranged by the Communist Party of the United States.

1949 April 4

Life magazine (v. 26, n. 14: p. 39-43) ran an article, "Red visitors cause rumpus", that denounced the Conference and included a list of its sponsors under the heading "Dupes and fellow travelers dress up Communist fronts". Although *Life* was careful to state that many of the people listed might have been innocent of any association with communism it still provided their names and photos, including Leonard Bernstein, Marc Blitzstein, Aaron Copland, Olin Downes, Morton Gould, Alan Lomax, Wallingford Riegger, Paul Robeson, and Artur Schnabel.

RED VISITORS CAUSE RUMPUS

In New York City last weekend a strange furor surrounded the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Inside was gathered an oddly assorted group of thinkers from all over the world. Outside milled a loud and angry group of pickets, proclaiming that the proceedings were strictly pro-Communist propaganda. Between the picketing and the chance to see some real live visitors from behind the Iron Curtain, things were really in an uproar.

The meeting was called the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, and it was an outgrowth of the cultural conference of 1948 in Wroclaw, Poland—at which the U.S. writer and artist were described as producing "disgusting filth" marred by the dollar sign. Its host was the U.S.'s own National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions, dominated by intellectuals who fellow-travel the Communist line. The foreign guests were mostly from Russian-dominated countries where intellectuals can travel in only one direction. Russia sent seven delegates, headed by Novelist A. A. Fadeev and Composer Dmitri Shostakovich. Poland sent three, Czechoslovakia four, Yugoslavia five. Some 20 other would-be delegates were forced to stay home by the U.S. State Department, which refused them visas. In this connection the State Department was torn between two motives. It hesitated to extend more privileges to Communists than Russia would give the U.S. Yet it wanted to show that free speech is still granted in America—even to the severest critics.



PICKET'S SIGN refers to Mrs. Oksana Kasenkina, who leaped from Russian consulate to escape in 1948.



A PRAYER FOR CZECHS is offered at the Waldorf-Astoria by women dressed in the national costumes of

their immigrant forebears. Many of the pickets were of families from countries now behind the Iron Curtain.



PRESS CONFERENCE launches meeting. Delegates sit in Waldorf suite. Left to right they are I. D. Ruzhansky (Russia), William Olaf Stapledon (England), Dmitri

Shostakovich (Russia), Alexander Fadeev (head of Russian delegation), Dr. R. E. C. Armattoe (Ireland), Alexander Oparin (Russia) and Mikhail Chiaureli (Russia).

THE RUSSIANS GET A BIG HAND FROM U.S. FRIENDS

In many respects the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace was a comic opera—even though it had its tragic implications. There was no doubt that it had been engineered by Americans who knew exactly what they were doing—*i.e.*, providing a sounding board for Communist propaganda. Every time the Russian delegation stood up it got a tremendous ovation. But among the speakers were many gentle souls, a little bewildered by the world outside their laboratories or textbooks, who were sincerely looking for world peace and who embarrassed the fellow travelers mightily by putting at least half the blame for the cold war on the Russians—which was the last sort of heresy the fellow travelers wanted to hear.

Also among the speakers was one absolute ringer,

Editor Norman Cousins of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, who got up at the main banquet in the Waldorf's plush Grand Ballroom (*right*) and made a ringingly pro-American speech (which brought some hisses). There was one hilarious incident when Dr. Sidney Hook of New York University, leader of the anti-Communist intellectuals, burst into the hotel room of Dr. Harlow Shapley of Harvard, the chairman of the conference, to protest being frozen off the list of speakers. Dr. Shapley cleverly maneuvered Dr. Hook into the hallway, then quickly retreated back to his room, locking the door and refusing to come out again. All told the pro-Communist propaganda fell a little flat, as far as the vast majority of Americans was concerned, and the meeting seemed to wind up in a victory for free speech.



GRAND BALLROOM AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA WAS



STAR OF SHOW was Dmitri Shostakovich, composer and deputy to the Supreme Soviet.



INTERESTED AMERICANS are millionaire blues singer Libby Holman (*center*), Columnist Jennings Perry (*right*). Holman and Perry were sponsors.



OFFICIAL HOST Harvard's Harlow Shapley gets a laugh from Playwright Lillian Hellman.

Red Rumpus CONTINUED

DUPES AND FELLOW TRAVELERS DRESS UP COMMUNIST FRONTS

Offhand it might seem that a propaganda meeting like the one in New York last week would have been regarded by almost all Americans with scorn. But the Communists prepare carefully for such eventualities. Their weapons are the fellow traveler and the so-called "innocent dupe." These are the prominent people who, wittingly or not, associate themselves with a Communist-front organization and thereby lend it glamor, prestige or the respectability of American liberalism. Fifty of these people are shown on these pages. They are not the most notorious 50 but a representative selection ranging from hard-working fellow travelers to soft-headed do-gooders who have persistently lent their names



JO DAVIDSON
Sculptor



DOROTHY PARKER
Writer



GUY EMERY SHIPLER
Editor of "The Churchman"



VITO MARCANTONIO
U.S. congressman



ARTHUR MILLER
Playwright



RUSSELL NIXON
Labor lobbyist



HENRY W. L. DANA
Writer



ADAM CLAYTON POWELL JR.
U.S. congressman



KIRTLEY F. MATHER
Geologist



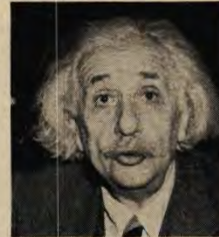
C. B. BALDWIN
Wallace party secretary



LANGSTON HUGHES
Poet



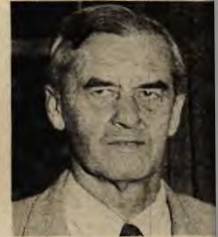
PAUL L. ROSS
Lawyer



ALBERT EINSTEIN
Physicist



ALBERT J. FITZGERALD
Labor union president



HENRY P. FAIRCHILD
Sociology professor emeritus



STEPHEN H. FRITCHMAN
Unitarian clergyman



RALPH BARTON PERRY
Philosophy professor



J. RAYMOND WALSH
Radio commentator



WILLIAM B. SPOFFORD
Episcopal clergyman



MARK VAN DOREN
Poet



MAUD SLYE
Pathologist



CLIFFORD ODETS
Playwright



AARON COPELAND
Composer



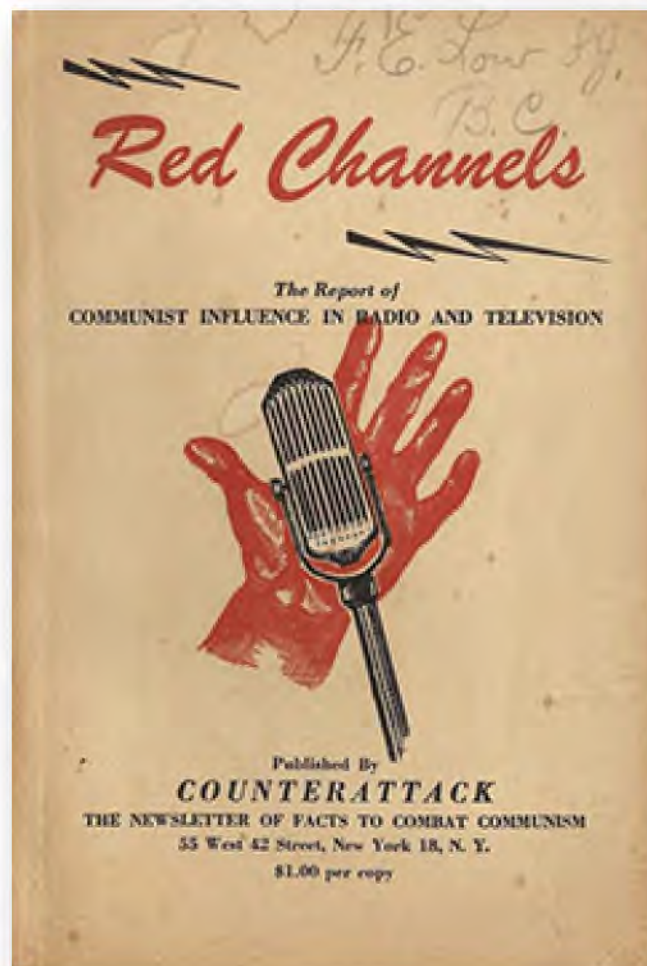
LEONARD BERNSTEIN
Composer and conductor



EDWARD L. PARSONS
Episcopal bishop

1950 June 22

The journal *Counterattack* issued a supplement titled *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television*. It named 151 people working in the entertainment fields who allegedly had ties to communist organizations or causes. Copland was named (p. 39-41) with a list of 21 instances of affiliations.



1953 January 3

Representative Fred E. Busbey of Illinois spoke on the floor of the United States Congress to protest the scheduling of a performance of Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait* at the January 18th National

Symphony concert preceding the presidential inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower on January 20th. The work was withdrawn from the program.

1953 April

Senator Joseph McCarthy convinced the State Department to ban the distribution of recordings of music by composers who had been subjected to any sort of derogatory allegations, substantiated or not. The recordings were normally distributed to 196 official American libraries around the world. The ban included music by George Gershwin, Roger Sessions, Randall Thompson, Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, Leonard Bernstein, and Aaron Copland.



Leonard Bernstein
Perry Collection C53_003
Unidentified photographer



Virgil Thomson
Perry Collection C17_014
Unidentified photographer

1953 May 26

Copland testified before Senators Joseph McCarthy, Karl Mundt, and John McClellan of the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. One of McCarthy's concerns at the time was with Americans who had been selected to serve as government-sponsored lecturers abroad. Copland went to Latin America in 1941 and 1947, and

to Italy in 1951 as a lecturer on music under the auspices of the State Department.

Excerpts from the Testimony of Aaron Copland before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, May 26 1953. The entire testimony is available online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-107SPRT83870/pdf/CPRT-107SPRT83870.pdf>

The Chairman. Now, Mr. Copland, have you ever been a Communist?

Mr. Copland. No, I have not been a Communist in the past and I am not now a Communist.

The Chairman. Have you ever been a Communist sympathizer?

Mr. Copland. I am not sure that I would be able to say what you mean by the word "sympathizer." From my impression of it I have never thought of myself as a Communist sympathizer.

The Chairman. You did not.

Mr. Copland. I did not.

The Chairman. Did you ever attend any Communist meetings?

Mr. Copland. I never attended any specific Communist party function of any kind.

The Chairman. Did you ever attend a Communist meeting?

Mr. Copland. I am afraid I don't know how you define a Communist meeting.

The Chairman. A meeting you knew then or now had been called by the Communist party and sponsored by the Communist party.

Mr. Copland. Not that I would know of. No.

The Chairman. I know that every man has a different type of memory, so we can't ask you to evaluate your memory. Would it seem logical that were you asked to join the Communist party, you would remember?

Mr. Copland. If I had been asked to? Not unless it had some significance in my mind.

The Chairman. So your answer at this time is that you can't say definitely whether you have been asked to join the Communist party or not?

Mr. Copland. No.

The Chairman. Are any of your close friends Communists?

Mr. Copland. Not to my knowledge.

The Chairman. Do you know any members of the Communist party who are Communists?

Mr. Copland. I don't know any member of the Communist party, as far as I know.

The Chairman. I may say one of the reasons you are here today is because of the part you played in the exchange program lecturing, etc., and you have a public record of association with organizations officially listed by the attorney general. As the Communist party record is extremely long, I think counsel will want to ask you some questions on that. May I give you some advice? You have a lawyer here. There are witnesses who come before this committee and often indulge in the assumption that they can avoid giving us the facts. Those who underestimate the work the staff has done in the past end up occasionally before a grand jury for perjury, so I suggest when counsel questions you about these matters that you tell the truth or take advantage of the Fifth Amendment.

Mr. Copland. Senator McCarthy, I would like to say now, I received a telegram to be here Friday. The telegram gave me no hint as to why I was coming. If I am to be questioned on affiliations over a period of many years it is practically impossible without some kind of preparation to be able to answer definitely one way or another when I was and what I was connected with. This comes as a complete surprise.

The Chairman. May I rephrase that, Roy. Did you feel at that time we should declare war on Finland?

Mr. Copland. Senator McCarthy, I am in no position--I spend my days writing symphonies, concertos, ballads, and I am not a political thinker. My relation has been extremely tangent.

The Chairman. We want to know whether you signed this letter to the president urging that we declare war on Finland--whether you are a musician or not. We now find that you are lecturing with the stamp of approval of the United States government and we would like to check on these things. This is one small item. There is a long record of apparent Communist activities. Now you say you don't remember signing the letter. Just to refresh your memory, may I ask, did you feel at the time the letter was signed by you that we should declare war on Finland?

Mr. Copland. I would say the thought would be extremely uncharacteristic of me. I have never thought that the declaration of war would solve, in my opinion, serious problems. I would say I was a man of hope for a peaceful solution.

The Chairman. Did you sign a petition to the attorney general in behalf of Hanns Eisler?

Mr. Copland. I may have.

The Chairman. Do you recall whether you did or not?

Mr. Copland. Not positively, no.

The Chairman. Did you know Hanns Eisler had been named as a Communist agent at that time?

Mr. Copland. No, I didn't.

The Chairman. When did you first learn that Hanns Eisler had been named as a Communist agent?

Mr. Copland. I never heard that he had been named as a Communist agent. I never heard that he had been named. I knew that he had a reputation in Germany in the twenties of having been a Communist, but I understood that was in the past and since his arrival in America and the Rockefeller grant of \$20,000, it was my impression that the Communist element in him was in the past.

The Chairman. Did you feel that you knew enough about the Hanns Eisler case to petition the attorney general in his behalf?

Mr. Copland. I would have to study what the petition was and think about the problem.

The Chairman. Were you well-acquainted with Hanns Eisler?

Mr. Copland. No.

The Chairman. Do you feel now that your name was misused by various organizations or do you want further time to check into it?

Mr. Copland. I would like further time to check into it. It is also well known that if they got your name in connection with one thing, they didn't hesitate to use it in connection with another. I would also like to say that my connection, insofar as it would show, was the direct

outcome of the feelings of a musician. I was not moved by the Communist element, whatever it may have been. I was moved by specific causes to which I lent my name. Musicians make music out of feelings aroused out of public events.

Senator Mundt. I can't follow this line of argument. I don't see how that line of reasoning makes sense with a hatchet man like Bridges.

Mr. Copland. A musician, when he writes his notes he makes his music out of emotions and you can't make your music unless you are moved by events. If I sponsored a committee in relation to Bridges, I may have been misled, not through Communist leanings. If I had them, there was something about his situation that moved me.

Senator Mundt. That would be true of anybody--any human beings, I think, not only musicians. Emotions are part of everyone's personality. That certainly stretches a point. We are all governed by the same rules of caution. When you get to Browder and Bridges, I think musicians have to go by the same code as governs other citizens.

Mr. Copland. We are assuming--I would like to see what it was I was supposed to have signed. I would have to know the circumstances to make any kind of sensible case.

The Chairman. Do you say now that your activities as a musician had to do with your connection with Bridges and Browder?

Mr. Copland. I would say that anything I signed was because of the human cause behind it that interested me—

The Chairman. Were you a good friend of Hanns Eisler?

Mr. Copland. No, I knew him slightly. I was not a good friend of his.

The Chairman. Did you meet him socially?

Mr. Copland. Yes.

The Chairman. Roughly, how many times?

Mr. Copland. Roughly, this is a guess, two or three times.

The Chairman. When did you last see him?

Mr. Copland. My impression is I last saw him in California.

The Chairman. Did you agree with the statement by Eisler that "Revolutionary music is now more powerful than ever. Its political and artistic importance is growing daily."

Mr. Copland. That is a vague statement. I don't know what he means by "revolutionary music."

The Chairman. Do you agree with him that there is a political importance in music?

Mr. Copland. I certainly would not. What the Soviet government has been trying to do in forcing their composers to write along lines favorable to themselves is absolutely wrong. It is one of the basic reasons why I could have no sympathy with such an attitude.

The Chairman. Would you say a good musician who is a Communist could be important in influencing people in favor of the Communist cause?

Mr. Copland. Perhaps in some indirect way.

The Chairman. One final question. Quoting Hanns Eisler, is this a correct description of you by Eisler:

I am extremely pleased to report a considerable shift to the left among the American artistic intelligentsia. I don't think it would be an exaggeration to state that the best people in the musical world of America (with very few exceptions) share at present extremely progressive ideas. Their names? They are Aaron Copland.

Would you say that is a correct description of you?

Mr. Copland. No, I would not. I would say he is using knowledge of my liberal feelings in the arts and in general to typify me as a help to his own cause.

Aaron Copland issued the following press release after the hearing:

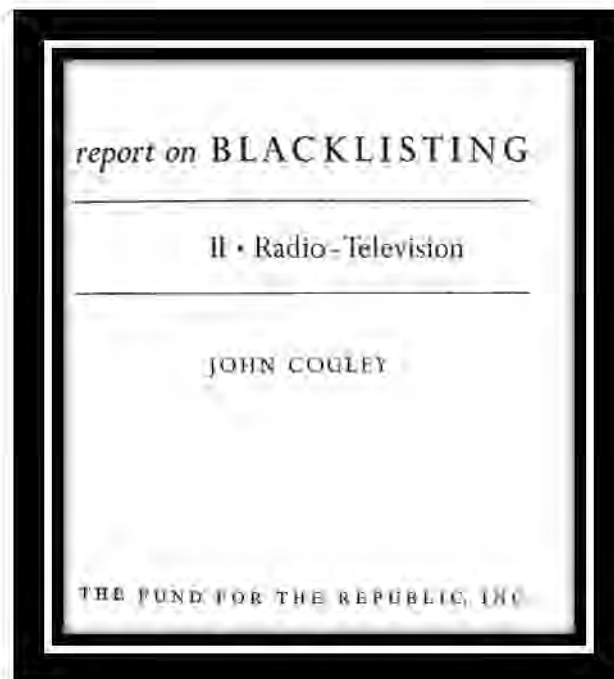
On late Friday afternoon, I received a telegram from the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to appear as a witness. I did. I answered to the best of my ability all of the questions which were asked me. I testified under oath that I have never supported, and am now opposed to, the limitations put on freedom by the Soviet Union. . . . My relationships with the United States Government were originally with the Music Advisory Committee to the Coordinator of Inter American Affairs and later as a lecturer in music in South America and as a Fulbright Professor. In these capacities my work was limited to the technical aspects of music."

Later in 1953

Copland's scheduled appearances at the University of Alabama and the University of Colorado were canceled. The Los Angeles Chamber Symphony revoked an agreement for Copland to appear with them as conductor. Copland continued to be investigated by the FBI, especially after an unnamed informant claimed Copland was a member of the Communist Party. This claim was dismissed by the government November 30 1955.

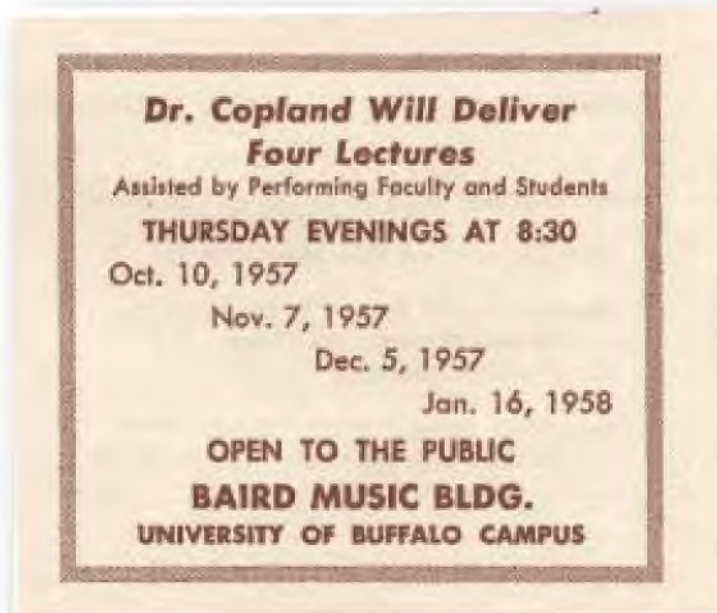
1954 September

A study about the blacklisting that was occurring in the entertainment industries was initiated by The Fund for the Republic as an examination of the effects of the publication of *Red Channels*. The *Report on Blacklisting* was written by John Cogley and published in 1956.



1957 October 10

Copland presented the first of his four lecture-recitals at the University of Buffalo.



Aaron Copland

*Unidentified photographer, distributed by Boosey & Hawkes
Music Department Collection MD02_011*

Announcement of Copland's appointment in
February 1 1957 University of Buffalo
Alumni Publication

Copland, Noted as Composer, is Named Professor of Music

Aaron Copland, famous American composer and lecturer, has been appointed visiting Slocum professor of music at The University of Buffalo. The appointment will be effective for one semester beginning in September.

Mr. Copland was awarded the 1945 Pulitzer Prize and the New York Music Critics' Award for the ballet score of "Appalachian Spring," and in 1950 he received the Motion Picture Academy Award for the best dramatic film score, "The Heiress."

Cameron Baird, head of the University of Buffalo Department of Music, said: "I consider Aaron Copland the outstanding American composer and certainly the leading composer of American folk idiom."

Mr. Copland has composed numerous symphonies and chamber music selections for piano, violin and clarinet, as well as authoring two books, "What to Listen for in Music" and "Our New Music."

A lecturer for more than ten years at the New School for Social Research, Mr. Copland also served as guest lecturer at Harvard University. Last year he was awarded the degree of doctor of music from Princeton University and recently received the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, which is given only once every five years.

Reached at his home in Ossining, N. Y., Mr. Copland said: "I take pleasure and pride in my coming association with the Music Department of the University of Buffalo. I take the invitation to the campus of a practicing composer such as myself to be a sign of the increasingly important role our schools are willing to play in the development of the arts of America. I shall do all I can to advance the cause of music during my stay in Buffalo."

The documents on the following pages show a sequence of documents that were written as a result of Aaron Copland's appointment as Slee Lecturer of Music at the University of Buffalo (as it was called prior to becoming University **at** Buffalo when it joined the State University of New York system). It includes two letters by Cameron Baird standing firm in the face of the protests and a letter by Aaron Copland to Cameron Baird in which he offers a brief history of the issues.

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 1957

BUFFALO EVENING NEWS

Composer Copland Appointed to UB as Visiting Professor

Aaron Copland, famous American composer and lecturer, has been appointed visiting Slee professor of music at the University of Buffalo, Dr. G. Lester Anderson, vice chancellor for educational affairs, said today. The appointment will be effective for one semester beginning in September.

Mr. Copland was awarded the 1945 Pulitzer Prize and the New York Music Critics' Award for the ballet score of "Appalachian Spring," and in 1950 received the Motion Picture Academy Award for the best dramatic film score, "The Heiress."

Cameron Baird, head of the University of Buffalo Department of Music, said: "I consider Aaron Copland the outstanding American composer and certainly the leading composer of American folk idiom."

Hopes to Offer Scholarships

"It is a tremendous thing for the university to have a man of such stature on its faculty and I am sure all of our young composers in the Western New York community and those from as far away as Toronto, Rochester and Erie regions will want to take advantage of the opportunity to study with Mr. Copland."

Mr. Baird indicated that the university hopes to offer a number of scholarships for this study.

He also said that "we are eternally grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Slee who, through their generous bequest, have made possible the engagement of Mr. Copland."

Mr. Copland has composed numerous symphonies and chamber music selections for piano, violin and clarinet, as well as authoring two books, "What to Listen for in Music" and "Our New Music."

Honored by Princeton

A lecturer for more than ten years at the New School for Social Research, Mr. Copland also served as guest lecturer at Harvard University. Last year he was awarded the degree of doctor of music from Princeton University and recently received the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts & Letters, which is given only once every five years.

Reached at his home in Ossining, Mr. Copland said: "I take pleasure and pride in my coming association with the Music Department of the University of Buffalo."

"I take the invitation to the campus of a practicing composer such as myself to be a sign of the increasingly important role our schools are willing to play in the development of the arts of America. I shall do all I can to advance the cause of music during



AARON COPLAND
Named to Slee Professorship

Announcement of Copland's appointment as
Slee Lecturer in Music.

Courtesy of University at Buffalo
University Archives

Response to announcement
of Copland's appointment,
Buffalo News

Courtesy of University at
Buffalo University Archives

New UB Professor Accused Of Radical Associations

Regarding the glowing announcement in *The News* of the appointment of Mr. Aaron Copland as Snee professor of music at the University of Buffalo, something very interesting was omitted from the account of Mr. Copland's background.

According to an official investigation by a congressional committee, Mr. Copland is on record as having been affiliated with from 21 to 30 Communist-front organizations. Mr. Copland was a sponsor of the notorious Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace held in New York City in March 1949. This was thoroughly exposed as a phony peace movement set up by the Reds.

One would have to be quite naive to believe a man could join 21 to 30 organizations without knowing their purpose. Perhaps one, two or three, but not 21 to 30. Could you join the American Legion, the Chamber of Commerce, the Knights of Columbus, the Masons, the Rotary Club or the Lions, or any number of

other associations, without knowing their purpose? Could you actually be a sponsor for a conference or a meeting without knowing the purpose of the conference?

There are some educators—I believe they call themselves "educationists"—whose only measure of a teacher's fitness is his special knowledge in one particular and sometimes narrow field of knowledge. His weakness for organizations which are part of the Communist conspiracy to overthrow your Government, his lack of common sense—none of these things matter to the "educationists." Carried to its ridiculous end, this silly doctrine would welcome the gangster Frank Costello to UB if he had managed to establish himself as a philosopher of life between his deviations.

We think the University of Buffalo owes an explanation to the people of Buffalo who, after all, are the ones who support the institution. Brilliance alone is not enough in a teacher. His influence can and does extend beyond the subject he is teaching.

G. A. R. and C.

Cameron Baird's response to letter from Joseph P. McNamara protesting the appointment of Aaron Copland as Slee Lecturer of Music.

Courtesy of the University at Buffalo University Archives

February 5, 1957

Mr. Joseph P. McNamara
63 Hedley Place
Buffalo, New York

Dear Mr. McNamara:

In the absence of Dr. Puffer, who is out of the Country for several weeks, I have been asked to reply to your letter of February 1, since as head of the Music Department, I engaged Dr. Aaron Copland. I negotiated with him nearly three months before he finally agreed to come to the University of Buffalo, because he insisted that he was so far behind in his commissions for various compositions. He finally felt, however, that a new Music Department could be a challenge to him to promote the cause of American music. The reason that I particularly wanted Dr. Copland was that he is the outstanding American-born composer today and is internationally known, not only for his typical American compositions, such as Billy the Kid, A Lincoln Portrait, Appalachian Spring, and his opera, "The Tender Land," but also for his dogged promotion of other American composers.

It was with great surprise, therefore, that I should find his Americanism questioned. He has told me that he had never been a member of the Communist party, and that his interests lay solely in promoting American culture. He had, for example, joined a group, organized by the late Serge Koussevitsky, the famous conductor of the Boston Symphony, to promote a better understanding between American and Russian musicians. He was invited before the McCarthy committee, did not plead the Fifth Amendment, answered every question, and was never questioned further. In his enthusiasm to promote the welfare of American composers less fortunate than he, Copland stated he sometimes became associated with groups in which he would later find political motives appearing, in which cases he would withdraw, since his interests were purely cultural ones.

Dr. Copland has taught many summers at the Berkshire Festival in Tanglewood, and was recently awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Music by Princeton University.

Frankly, my proudest achievement since I joined the University Music Department over four years ago, is my successful negotiations with Aaron Copland. One hundred years from now, I believe he will go down in history as the composer most responsible for getting American music first recognized as the equal of the leading European schools. I rejoice that Buffalo is to have this American, even though it is for only four months.

I am also reminded that it might be desirable to recall that before *to you that* any instructor or professor at the University of Buffalo - or any other educational institution in this State - must in conformity with section 3002

Mr. Joseph P. McNamara

February 5, 1957

of the Education Law of New York State sign an oath of allegiance to the constitution of the United States of America and the constitution of the State of New York. The text of this oath is as follows:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of New York, and that I will faithfully discharge, according to the best of my ability, the duties of the position of _____ to which I am now assigned."

I am happy to write and to publish this answer, so that all may appreciate why our entire Music Department welcomes such an able colleague to our campus next fall.

Sincerely yours,

Cameron Baird

Cameron Baird
Chairman, Music Department

Letter from faculty member Dr. W. Leslie Barnette, Jr. to Cameron Baird in support of Aaron Copland's appointment as Slee Lecturer of Music
Courtesy of University at Buffalo University Archives

THE UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO

BUFFALO 14, NEW YORK

VOCATIONAL COUNSELING CENTER

5 Feb 57

Dear Cam --

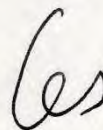
In regard to the letters in the public press about Copland and Red Channels. I was mad. As a private citizen and an alumnus of UB, I have written Mr McNamara a letter in protest -- not from the point of view of a faculty person either.

This is merely to say that you would find a lot of people here on campus who would feel as I do -- and we're delighted with the Copland appointment.

In the event that you need some faculty backing, I'd volunteer to recruit this for you. I would be ashamed of the University if it backed down on this issue in any way. I don't think it will -- but, if you need some support, let me know.

I think we're very lucky to have Copland here next year and I think you've done a big job here.

All my best --



W L Barnette, Jr

214 Crosby

Letter by Joseph P. McNamara in response to Cameron Baird's letter about Aaron Copland's appointment as Slee Lecturer of Music
Courtesy of University at Buffalo University Archives

63 Hedley Place
Buffalo, New York
February 8, 1957

Mr. Cameron Baird
Chairman, Music Department
The University of Buffalo
Buffalo 14, New York

Dear Mr. Baird:

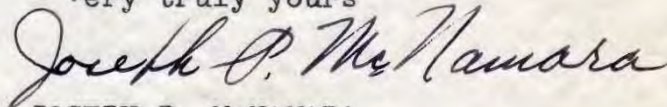
I have received your letter of February 5th, 1957, relative to Dr. Aaron Copland and I wish to thank you for your prompt and thoughtful consideration of my letter.

However, I am constrained to mention that your reply leaves unclear the critical point of whether the Dr. Copland engaged by the University of Buffalo is one and the same with the Aaron Copland, listed in the June, 1950, issue of "Red Channels" as connected with twenty-one communist controlled groups.

I wish to state that as one with considerable experience in the anti-subversive field I am cognizant of the consequences of the baseless charge and detest "witchhunting" in all its forms and accordingly, I will refrain from further comment on this subject until the question of the identity is clearly resolved and I have had an opportunity to study a transcript of Dr. Copland's testimony before the McCarthy Committee.

However, I think it is fair comment to state that the searching, inquiring intellect which has traditionally been the hallmark of the educated man stands, in my opinion at least, in stark contrast with the shocking and pathetic naivety displayed by any well intended person who would associate himself with any substantial number of communist fronts.

Very truly yours



JOSEPH P. McNAMARA
Chairman, Americanism
Committee, Eighth District
American Legion

Buffalo News or Buffalo Courier Express article about Cameron Baird's response to letters protesting Copland's appointment as Slee Lecturer in Music Courtesy of University at Buffalo University Archives

Friday, February 8, 1951

Never Was Member Of Communist Party, Copland Is Quoted

Chairman Cameron Baird of the University of Buffalo Music Department today declared that Aaron Copland, recently named Slee professor of music, told him he never had been a member of the Communist Party.

He also said Prof. Copland admitted he had become associated with groups "in which he would later find political motives appearing, in which cases he would withdraw."

Mr. Baird defended his appointment to Prof. Copland in a letter to Joseph P. McNamara, Americanism chairman, Eighth District, American Legion, who had requested that the university clarify the identity of the professor.

Mr. McNamara on Feb. 2, in a letter to Dr. Claude E. Puffer, acting chancellor, said that the name Aaron Copland was identical with that of a composer and writer listed in Red Channels, anti-Communist publication, as "a sponsor, affiliate, contributor or supporter of some 21 Communist-controlled organizations."

3-Month Negotiations

He suggested the university say whether the professor and the Copland listed in Red Channels are the same.

Part of Mr. Baird's letter is as follows:

"I negotiated with him (Prof. Copland) nearly three months before he finally agreed to come to the University of Buffalo because he insisted that he was so far behind in his commissions for various compositions. He finally felt, however, that a new Music Department could be a challenge to him to promote the cause of American music.

"The reason that I particularly wanted Dr. Copland was that he is the outstanding American-born composer today and is internationally known, not only for his typical American compositions, such as Billy the Kid, A Lincoln Portrait, Appalachian Spring, and his opera, "The Tender Land," but also for his dogged promotion of other American composers.

Interested in Culture

"It was with great surprise, therefore, that I should find his Americanism questioned. He has told me he had never been a member of the Communist Party and that his interests lay solely in promoting American culture.

"He had, for example, joined a group, organized by the late Serge Koussevitsky, the famous conductor of the Boston Symphony, to promote a better understanding between American and Russian musicians.

"He was invited before the McCarthy Committee, did not plead the Fifth Amendment, answered every question, and was never questioned further.

"In his enthusiasm to promote the welfare of American composers, less fortunate than he,

Letter from Aaron Copland to Cameron Baird in which he apologizes that his appointment was met with protests. He provides a brief history of the issues, mentioning the publication of Red Channels
Courtesy of University at Buffalo University Archives

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copyright owner.

AARON COPLAND

SHADY LANE FARM OSSINING, NEW YORK

Feb. 11, 1957

Dear Mr. Baird:

Needless to say I am very sorry to have caused you this extra side-issue trouble. On the other hand I am of course enormously pleased at the courageous stand you have taken in the matter of the Legion. If others were similarly courageous America would have less cause to feel ashamed of some of the hysteria engendered during the past few years, and now luckily subsiding, I believe.

My own difficulties began in 1953. Before that year no one had ever questioned my patriotism. On the contrary, the State Department had made use of my "good will capacities both in South America and in Italy. It was ~~the~~ that fact that produced the trouble--that, and the mood of the times, which permitted interested groups to apply a mechanical yardstick to different individuals. Lists were drawn up in haphazard fashion by unauthorized parties for their own purposes, and then repeatedly used as if they represented true statements of fact.

If you are going to have to engage in further polemics on this subject I think it essential that you read the Report on Blacklisting issued by the Fund for the Republic of the Ford Foundation. (My name is not in that book, by the way.) On page 1 of that book you can read:

" At the beginning of Red Channels there is a disclaimer pointing out that the listed activities or association may well have been innocent of subversive intent; Red Channels is only reporting them. This statement made it virtually impossible for the listed people to obtain legal satisfaction....The accuracy of some Red Channel sources have been successfully challenged, many of those named in its pages have since been "cleared"..."

For your own information I am sending you a copy of the statement that was sent to the press in 1953 in relation to Senator MacCarthy's interest in my Fulbright professorship. I would naturally prefer that this not be used unless you consider it absolutely necessary.

I was sorry to hear about your bad back and hope it is better by now.

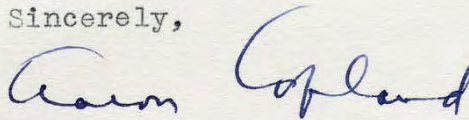
AARON COPLAND

SHADY LANE FARM OSSINING, NEW YORK

I am heading for Caracas on Feb 21st and plan to stay until about April 1st to take part in the Latin American Music Festival down there. My address while there is care of Hotel Tamanaco, Caracas, Venezuela. In future if ever you need me Boosey and Hawkes generally can supply my whereabouts if my personal phone is not answered.

It would help me to know how you expect to space my visits next fall so if you can mail me the dates I would appreciate it. For the rest, I suppose we can wait until Spring unless you decide otherwise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Aaron Copland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "A".

Aaron Copland

Letter to Buffalo News questioning Cameron Baird's justification for appointing Aaron Copland Slee Lecturer of Music
Courtesy of University at Buffalo University Archives

Everybody's Column—Reader's Opinions

Feb 14, 1957

Hits Federal Reserve Act . . . UB Appointment Debated . . .
Suburbanites Strike Back . . . Milk Price Boost Is Upheld

Resents Questioning Of UB Appointment

I read with interest a recent statement in The News by a Mr. McNamara of the American Legion who demands that the University of Buffalo explain the circumstances under which Prof. Copland was added to the faculty. It seems that some publication which specializes in fingering people who attach their names to organizations and causes it regards as dangerous to our way of life has listed the good professor as one who would bear watching by all alert patriotic individuals and groups.

Even though I am a veteran and, I think, as opposed to those who threaten our way of life as are Mr. McNamara and the American Legion, I believe he would

do well to take first things first. For instance, I'm sure the Legion might take the trouble to investigate the publication which has spotlighted Copland. Next, the university is a private institution and owes no explanation of any kind to Mr. McNamara for the people it hires.

I think that the question of "how good a teacher is Copland in his chosen field?" is much more to the point. Perhaps the American Legion would be doing itself and the country a service if it tackled some of the really difficult problems of our day, like how to reduce the national debt and combat inflation instead of playing the role of inquisitor on any subject. Because it does not, many another veteran, like me, has refused to join the Legion or similar groups.

ONLY 100% AMERICAN.
Williamsville, N. Y.

Defense of Prof. Copland Called 'Diversionary'

The explanation issued by Mr. Cameron Baird in defense of the appointment of Aaron Copland as Slee professor of music at UB appears to be a combination of wolf-cry and the usual diversionary tactics.

In the first place, nobody has accused Mr. Copland of being a member of the Communist Party. In the second place, it is well-known Communist Party policy that prominent fellow travelers do not hold actual membership. Nevertheless, the prominent perennial joiner of Communist fronts serves his purpose.

Most of Mr. Baird's explanation of Mr. Copland was an interesting, but irrelevant review of Mr. Copland's music, strictly a diversionary tactic. Nor was it necessary to clothe Mr. Copland in the aura of the late Koussevitsky, thereby attempting to get Mr. Copland out from under the stigma of his membership in at least 21 Communist-front organizations.

Attempting to gloss over Mr. Copland's connections with Communists, Mr. Baird infers that while Mr. Copland did join such outfits, he got out of them lickety-split when their political petticoats showed.

Did he? Let us see. Prior to the convening of the phony Red "peace" meeting in New York in March 1949, billed as the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, the readers of this newspaper will recall that the United States Government publicly denounced it for what it was, a gigantic Communist political propaganda effort to discredit American culture and promote the "virtues" of Soviet culture.

Mr. Aaron Copland not only was listed as a sponsor of this Communist political bull session, he also was listed as one of the speakers! G.A.R. AND C.
Williamsville, N. Y.

Second letter from Cameron Baird to Joseph P. McNamara in response to McNamara's letter in which he protested the appointment of Aaron Copland as Slee Lecturer in Music
Courtesy of UNiversity at Bufalo University Archives

February 26, 1957

Mr. Joseph P. McNamara
63 Hedley Place
Buffalo, New York

Dear Mr. McNamara:

In reply to your recent letter, I do not know whether there are two Aaron Coplands. As for Red Channels, I have never seen a copy, and have learned that the Erie County Library System does not carry it.

The Dr. Copland who has been appointed to the department of music for the fall semester, 1957, and who has signed the oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the State of New York is the outstanding American composer listed in "Who's Who in America," Fulbright Research Professor (which involves final approval by the board of foreign scholarships of the Department of State) in Italy in 1951, Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard in 1951-52, holder of an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Princeton (1956), and Assistant Director of the Berkshire Music Center, 1940-1956.

We believe this should sufficiently identify the Dr. Aaron Copland appointed to the faculty of our Department.

Before Dr. Copland left last week for Venezuela to teach and lecture about contemporary music, he wrote me again, confirming what I wrote you about his activities.

Very truly yours,

Cameron Baird
Chairman, Department of Music

CB:mm

Sources

State University of New York at Buffalo. University Archives.

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