

Graham School of Continuing Studies
American Masters

Course Description. American classical music has evolved its own heterogeneous identity, characterized by energy and optimism – from its Eurocentric beginnings, exemplified by composers such as MacDowell and Griffes, through the encounters of Americans abroad with such musicians as Boulanger and Stravinsky. We will trace this evolution from the New England School (especially Ives and his innovations) through populism (Copland, Harris) and neoclassicism (Piston, Sessions, Schuman), into new horizons inspired by popular idioms (Joplin, Gershwin) and indigenous forms of musical theater (Bernstein). A look at highly divergent recent trends (the Minimalists/neo-tonalists and academic/neo-expressionists) will conclude the course. Music literacy is not necessary.

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Syllabus

Note: works are subject to change.

Topic	Featured Works
Week 1 European antecedents. Second New England School. Edward MacDowell and the formation of American musical identity. Griffes the American impressionist	MacDowell, <i>Woodland Sketches</i> . Griffes, Sonata and <i>Pleasure Dome of Kublai Kahn</i> .
Week 2 Charles Ives part 1. The Yale years. Part-time composer.	Third Symphony. <i>The Unanswered Question</i> . Songs.
Week 3 Charles Ives part 2. Americanisms, masculinity, World War I, radicalism.	<i>Three Places in New England</i> . <i>Concord Sonata</i> , Second String Quartet.
Week 4 Gershwin & Copland. Modernism and populism. Successful careers. Copland's studies with Boulanger. Synthesis of European and American elements.	Gershwin: <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> . Copland: <i>Organ Symphony</i> , Piano Variations, and <i>Appalachian Spring</i> (original chamber version).
Week 5 - Samuel Barber and Leonard Bernstein Neoromantic elements in Barber. European influence in Barber. Bernstein and musical theater. Bernstein the educator.	Barber: Violin Concerto. Songs. Bernstein: <i>West Side Story</i> , Third Symphony ("Kadish"), <i>Mass</i> .
Week 6 - American Academic Tradition Piston, Sessions, Babbitt, Carter, Hansen, Perle, Crumb.	TBD
Week 7 - American Radicals Harris, Cage, Cowell, Varese, Feldman, Rzewski,	TBD
Week 8 - Minimalism, Postmodernism and Neoromanticism Del Tredici, Corigliano, Glass, Reich, Adams, Rochberg	TBD

Recommended Readings

David H. Cope, *New Directions in Music*

Aaron Copland, Vivian Perlis, *Copland 1900 through 1942*

Aaron Copland and His World

Selected Correspondence of Aaron Copland

Henry Cowell, *Charles Ives and His Music*

Charles Ives, *Essays Before a Sonata*

Richard Kostelenetz, *On Innovation Musicians*

George Perle, *The Listening Composer*

Vivian Perlis, *Charles Ives Remembered*

Andrew Porter, *Music of Three More Seasons*

Alex Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*

David Schiff, *The Music of Elliott Carter*

John Warthen Struble, *The History of American Classical Music*

Anthony Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson*

Read blog entries on
this topic at
www.holdekunst.com:
John's classical
music blog