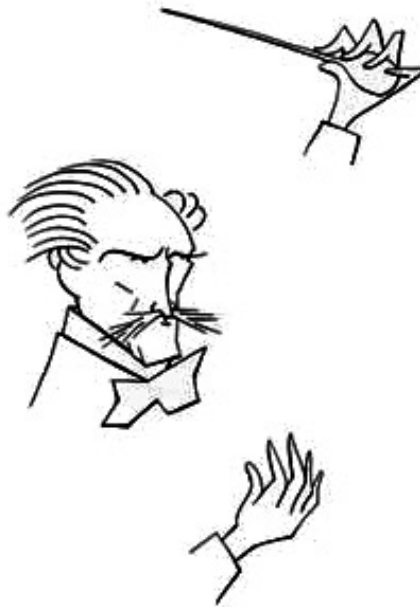


United States History through the Lens of Classical Music



Presented by
Jim Smith

www.ClassicalTyro.com
jameslsmith@icloud.com

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Classical Music in US History

1. Although classical music often seems to exist on the margins of American culture, it played a significant role in American politics and international affairs from World War I through the Cold War.
2. Two distinctive outlooks about music shaped the role classic music played in US history:
 - a. **Universalists:** classical music speaks a universal language that transcends politics
 - b. **Nationalists:** classical music should serve the national interest

Top 10 Classical Composers According to Phil G. Goulding, *The 50 Greatest Composers* (1995)

1. Johann Sebastian Bach – German
2. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – German
3. Ludwig van Beethoven – German
4. Richard Wagner – German
5. Franz Joseph Haydn – German
6. Johannes Brahms – German
7. Franz Schubert – German
8. Robert Schumann – German
9. George Frideric Handel – German
10. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – Russian

Top 10 Classical Composers According to Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times* (2011)

1. Johann Sebastian Bach – German
2. Ludwig van Beethoven – German
3. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – German
4. Franz Schubert – German
5. Claude Debussy – French
6. Igor Stravinsky – Russian
7. Johannes Brahms – German
8. Giuseppe Verdi – Italian
9. Richard Wagner – German
10. Béla Bartok – Hungarian

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Part One

The Development of American Classical Music

1. Until the late 1800s the US was generally a nation without classical music, lacking the orchestras, concert halls, instrument manufacturers, music teachers, and knowledgeable audiences necessary to sustain a culture of European art music.
2. Classical music in the US before 1890 was primarily performed by German immigrants who had transported their musical traditions to America.
3. The creation of a culture that embraced classical music developed slowly for two main reasons:
 - a. **Westward Expansion:** Frontier attitudes often rejected European culture as well as the culture of eastern American cities.
 - b. **Economics:** The American free market system was not conducive to the production of cultivated art.
4. The most notable classical music in the US before 1890 was performed by European sopranos.
 - a. **Maria Malibran:** Spanish soprano who came to the US in 1825
 - b. **Elizabeth Austin:** English soprano who came to the US in 1827
 - c. **Jenny Lind:** Swedish soprano who came to the US in 1850 for a tour organized by P.T. Barnum
 - d. **Adelina Patti:** Spanish soprano who came to US in 1861
5. Two significant changes in American society during the late 1800s helped create a culture of classical music.
 - a. **Urbanization:** The end of the frontier and the growth of cities encouraged the creation of cultivated art.
 - b. **Creation of Wealth:** Wealthy industrialists who possessed great fortunes were willing to use their wealth to patronize the arts.

We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat... See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" (1837)

Part Two

American Classical Music during World War I

General Information

1. German immigration
 - a. Germans had been immigrating to America in large numbers since the 1600s. Between 1850 and 1900, the number of Americans born in Germany had never fallen below one-quarter of the total number of foreign-born residents of the US.
 - b. Germans were known for assimilating well into the mainstream of American society.

2. Causes of World War I
 - a. nationalism
 - b. imperialism
 - c. militarism
 - d. national alliances
 - **Triple Alliance:** Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy
 - **Triple Entente:** France, Russia, Britain
 - e. lack of national self-determination for Czechs, Slavs, Serbs, Croats, and other “submerged” nationalities

3. World War I Timeline
 - a. **June 28, 1914: Archduke Ferdinand** assassinated in Sarajevo.
 - b. **July-August 1914:**
 - Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia
 - Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary
 - Germany declared war on Russia and France
 - German invaded Belgium (known in the United States as the “rape” of Belgium)
 - Britain declared war on Germany
 - Italy left the Triple Alliance and joined the Triple Entente
 - c. **August 4, 1914:** The US issued a **Proclamation of Neutrality**.
 - d. **May 7, 1915:** The **Lusitania** was sunk by a German U-boat.
 - e. **May 4, 1916:** The **Sussex Pledge** ended Germany’s unrestricted warfare.
 - f. **January 16, 1917:** The US intercepted the **Zimmermann Telegram**.
 - g. **February 1, 1917:** Germany resumed **unrestricted warfare**.
 - h. **April 6, 1917:** The United States declared war on Germany.
 - i. **December 7, 1917:** The United States declared war on Austria-Hungary.
 - j. **Spring 1918:** The **American Expeditionary Force** began arriving in France.
 - k. **July 15, 1918:** The Second Battle of the Marne ended the German offensive.
 - l. **November 11, 1918:** Signing of an armistice ending the war
 - m. **June 28, 1919:** Signing of the **Treaty of Versailles** (not ratified by the US Senate)
 - n. **August 25, 1921:** Ratification of the **United States-German Peace Treaty**

Anti-German Sentiment in the US, 1914-1918

1. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the US was “**neutral in thought as well as action.**” At the time, the largest number of foreign-born residents of the US came from Germany. In spite of Wilson’s neutrality proclamation, an intense anti-German sentiment slowly developed in the US between the years 1914 and 1917.
2. The American declaration of war against Germany on April 6, 1917, set off an outburst of anti-German sentiment and intolerance for criticism of the war.
 - a. **Committee on Public Information (Creel Committee):** created through President Wilson’s executive order for the purpose of shaping public opinion into supporting the war.
 - b. **Espionage Act of 1917:** made it illegal to disrupt the war effort or give aid to a nation at war.
 - c. **Sedition Act of 1918:** made it illegal to use language that was disparaging of the US government, its flag, or its armed forces.

Classical Music in the US during World War I

1. **Metropolitan Opera**
 - a. Two leading musicians at the Met became controversial as soon as the US entered the war. **Artur Bodansky**, conductor for the Met, was an Austrian who was well-known for performing works by Richard Wagner. **Johanna Gadski**, one of the world’s leading sopranos, was a German who was one of the world’s great interpreters of Wagner and the most popular performer at the Met.
 - b. In November 1917, the executive board at the Met announced it was canceling all performances of German opera. Although Bodansky survived at the Met until his death in 1939, Gadski was forced to resign from the Met in 1917 and did not resume her singing career until 1921.
2. **New York Philharmonic**
 - a. The New York Philharmonic received much criticism for scheduling music composed by Germans during the 1917-18 season. The orchestra was eventually forced to announce that German composers would be removed from its programs.
 - b. **Oswald Garrison Villard**, the president of the New York Philharmonic, was a civil rights activist and founding member of the NAACP. He opposed US entry into World War I and described the New York Philharmonic as a “citadel of peace.” He was forced to resign his position with the New York Philharmonic in early 1918.
 - c. **Josef Stránský**, a Czechoslovakian who had conducted in Berlin before replacing Gustav Mahler at the New York Philharmonic in 1911, endured endless attacks during the war. He survived as conductor of the New York Philharmonic until he left voluntarily in 1923.
3. **Philadelphia Orchestra**
 - a. **Leopold Stokowski**, a conductor of Polish descent, guided the Philadelphia Orchestra through World War I with little controversy.
 - b. As soon as the war began, Stokowski dropped Schubert’s *Unfinished Symphony* from the program, as well as all other works by German composers, replacing them with Russian music. Stokowski remained with the orchestra from 1912 to 1938.

4. **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

- a. **Frederick Stock** had become conductor for the CSO in 1905 and turned it into one of the finest orchestras in the world. Stock was a German who had protested against autocratic government and militarism when he lived in Germany.
- b. In 1918, the loyalty of several musicians in Chicago Symphony Orchestra came under attack. A Department of Justice inquiry led to a pledge from the board of trustees to dismiss all disloyal musicians. The Department of Justice placed Frederick Stock's name on a list of "enemy aliens."

5. **Los Angeles**

- a. Although Los Angeles did not have full-time orchestra until 1919, it had a vibrant musical culture with concerts performed in hotel ballrooms.
- b. In January 1918, several people walked out of a concert with Carl Maria von Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* on the program. The musician's union in Los Angeles responded by banning the performance of all German music, except for Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* and music by Beethoven.

6. **San Francisco Symphony Orchestra**

- a. **Alfred Hertz**, the German-born conductor of the SFSO, had made a name for himself conducting the Metropolitan Opera before moving to San Francisco in 1915.
- b. After the US declaration of war, the SFSO board banned all music by living Germans.

7. **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra**

- a. **Ernst Kunwald**, who was born in Vienna, became conductor of the CSO in 1912 after five years as an assistant conductor for the Berlin Philharmonic. Kunwald was widely recognized as one of the most distinguished conductors in the US.
- b. During the 1917-18 concert season, Kunwald, who refused to become a naturalized US citizen, came at odds with the US government as an "enemy alien." According to the US Proclamation of War, an enemy alien was subject to "summary arrest."

8. **Boston Symphony Orchestra**

- a. **Karl Muck**, conductor of the BSO, was a German-born conductor who had grown up in Switzerland and had become a Swiss citizen. Under his leadership, the BSO was considered one of the finest orchestras in the world. Although Muck was well-known for conducting music by German composers, he was also a universalist who believed music transcended national differences.
- b. The BSO had one-hundred members of which fifty-one were American citizens (seventeen were native born), twenty-two were German (nine had applied for US citizenship) and eight were Austrians. Other musicians were English, Dutch, Russian, French, Bohemian, and Belgian. The foreign diversity of the BSO made it a target for much animosity during the war.

Post-World War I

Anti-German sentiment continued after the war longer in some cities than others. By the mid-1920s, the ban on German music and attacks on German musicians generally vanished.

Part Three

American Classical Music during the Great Depression

General Information

1. After 1929, the US moved from an era of economic prosperity into a period of widespread business failure and unemployment. The Great Depression was characterized by banks closing, credit drying up, and hunger in the midst of plenty. The catastrophe was felt worldwide and caused many Americans to wonder whether capitalism had failed and democracy would survive.
2. The Great Depression coincided with the rise of fascism in Europe. For millions of Americans, however, the unemployment, homelessness, and malnutrition in the US were a much bigger issue than Hitler's dictatorship. Most Americans remained generally detached from Europe's problems until September 1939.
3. The Great Depression – Timeline
 - a. **1922:** Beginning of the agricultural depression
 - b. **October 1929:** The stock market crashed, ending the prosperity of the 1920s.
 - c. **March 1933:** Franklin Roosevelt began the New Deal.
 - d. **1937:** The Roosevelt recession began.
 - e. **1940:** The US became the “arsenal of democracy,” helping all nations fighting the Axis Powers.
 - f. **December 1941:** US entry into World War II ended the Great Depression.

American Classical Music during the Great Depression

1. The Great Depression transformed the way American composers wrote music. Rather than the modernist “noise” that characterized music composed during the 1920s, composers such as **Walter Piston**, **Roy Harris**, and **Leroy Anderson** began creating music in a populist style that was more accessible to American audiences.
2. **Aaron Copland**, the most famous American composing in a populist style, wanted to create music that would unite and inspire the American people, music that would give Americans a sense of ownership and pride in their nation's heritage. Copland wanted to compose music that celebrated the contributions of common people and helped people feel good about being American. Copland's most works composed in a populist style were *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *Lincoln Portrait*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, *Appalachian Spring* and *Symphony No. 3*.

Part Four

American Classical Music during World War II

World War II – General Information

1. **Fascism** is characterized by extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, racism, militarism, and anti-Marxism.
2. World War II – Timeline
 - a. **October 1922:** Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy.
 - b. **January 1933:** Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany.
 - c. **March 1936:** Germany occupied the Rhineland.
 - d. **March 1938:** Germany occupied Austria.
 - e. **October 1938:** The Munich Agreement opened the door for Hitler to take the Sudetenland.
 - f. **March 1939:** Germany invaded Czechoslovakia.
 - g. **September 1939:** Germany invaded Poland, setting off World War II in Europe.
 - h. **June 1940:** The Fall of France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain.
 - i. **March 1941:** The US Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act.
 - j. **June 1941:** Germany attacked the Soviet Union.
 - k. **August 1941:** The Atlantic Charter created an alliance between the US and Britain.
 - l. **December 1941:** Japan attacked the US.
 - m. **December 1941:** Germany and Italy declared war on the US.
 - n. **September 1943:** Fascism defeated in Italy
 - o. **June 1944:** Allied invasion of Normandy
 - p. **May 1945:** Germany surrendered
 - q. **August 1945:** Japan surrendered
3. The Nazi Holocaust – Timeline
 - a. **February 1933:** Hitler granted emergency powers after the burning of the Reichstag building. (The first concentration camps in Germany were established in March 1933.)
 - b. **September 1935:** Nuremberg Statutes deprived German Jews of all legal rights.
 - c. **November 1938:** Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass)
 - d. **September 1939:** Jews in occupied nations were placed in camps.
 - e. **July 1941:** Herman Göring gave the order “to make preparations for the solution of the Jewish problem within the German sphere of influence in Europe.”

Classical Music in Nazi Germany

1. After Adolf Hitler came to power the Nazi Party began to crackdown on “undesirable” musicians. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, regulated all German media and allowed Germans to hear only the music that glorified Aryan culture and Nazi ideology. Jewish musicians and composers, as well as American Jazz, were banned.
2. Music composed by **Richard Wagner** and **Anton Bruckner** was placed at the center of Nazi ideology. Within two weeks after Hitler came to power, the Nazis sponsored events throughout Germany commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner’s death.
3. What to make of Richard Wagner?
 - a. Wagner was a revolutionary anarchist who believed in economic socialism. He was also an extreme anti-Semite who believed in German nationalism, the superiority of the German people, and the destruction of parliamentary democracy.
 - b. Wagner’s music dramas are compositional masterpieces that use mythological settings to create allegories exploring universal themes such as love and heroism.
 - c. Wagner’s music inspired Hitler and had an enormous impact on Nazism. Hitler said, “Whoever wants to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner.”
 - d. With the exception of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, American orchestras and opera companies continued to perform Wagner’s music during World War II.

Classical Music in the US before World War II

1. Extraordinarily talented musicians fled Europe and moved to the US in the 1930s, changing American classical music for years to come.
 - a. **Bruno Walter** was a German-born Jewish conductor who worked primarily in Vienna. In 1933, he moved to southern California as a freelance conductor and worked as a guest conductor for the finest orchestras in the United States.
 - b. **Otto Klemperer** was a German-born Jewish conductor who had converted to Catholicism years before the Nazis came to power. In 1933, he moved to the United States and became music director for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.
 - c. **Erich Korngold** was an Austrian-born Jewish composer whose home in Vienna had been confiscated by the Nazis. In 1934, he moved to the United States and became a film composer in Hollywood.
2. **Arturo Toscanini**, an Italian conductor who led the New York Philharmonic from 1928 to 1936, was the best-known and most highly-esteemed conductor in the US. In 1933, he boycotted the Bayreuth Festival in Germany to show his opposition to fascism. From 1933 to 1945, Toscanini was the most high-profile musician protesting against Nazi ideology and Nazi control of Germany.

The undersigned artists who live, and execute their art, in the United States of America feel the moral obligation to appeal to your excellency to put a stop to the persecution of their colleagues in Germany, for political or religious reasons. We beg you to consider that the artist all over the world is estimated for his talent alone and not for his national or religious convictions.... We are convinced that such persecutions as take place in Germany at present are not based on your instructions, and that it cannot possibly be your desire to damage the high cultural esteem Germany, until now, has been enjoying in the eyes of the whole civilized world.

– Message sent to Hitler signed by Toscanini and other prominent American musicians

3. When Toscanini left the New York Philharmonic in 1936, **Wilhelm Furtwängler** was appointed to replace him. Furtwängler, a German-born musician, was the principle conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. As one of the world's leading conductors, Furtwängler seemed a logical choice to replace Toscanini. For many Americans, however, he was also seen as an official in the Nazi government, and his appointment caused widespread protest. So many subscriptions to the NY Philharmonic were canceled after his appointment that his selection became a serious financial problem for the orchestra, and the orchestra's executive committee was forced to rescind his appointment.
4. Throughout the 1930s, classical music in the US was a powerful lens through which to view European affairs and become exposed to the evils of European fascism. Recurring news reports about Nazi persecution of musicians and the attacks on artistic freedom in Germany helped expose Americans to the evils of fascism.

Classical Music during World War II

1. The American perception of Germany during World War II was much different than it had been during World War I. The idea of "enemy music" disappeared, and classical musicians generally performed whatever they wanted. German music faced virtually no hostility during World War II.

I call on the music-loving public to refrain from musical hysteria... Let there be no talk of banning or limiting the performance of German or Italian music. We are fighting for, not against, art.

– Ernest Hutcheson, president of Juilliard

2. American newspapers were full of editorials arguing that World War II was a war of ideas, not nationalities. Editorials also argued against the shameful way Germans had been treated during World War I and supported a belief that the war in Europe should not affect how Americans interacted with the best of German culture. At the same time that Germans were using classical music to support evil policies, Americans were generally expressing a belief that classical music would help create a better world.

Of all the arts, music is the most powerful medium against evil with a capacity to heal, comfort, and inspire. Music can protect the fundamental values for which our armies are fighting.

– Serge Koussevitzky, 1943

3. One of the few pieces of music that was not performed in the United States during World War II was **Giacomo Puccini's *Madam Butterfly***, an opera that presented a positive portrayal of the Japanese.
4. Throughout World War II, **Arturo Toscanini** was the most significant figure in classical music, placing his musicianship and fame in the service of fighting fascism. He was seen internationally as both a great artist and a symbol of anti-fascism.
 - a. On July 19, 1942, Toscanini conducted the American premier of **Dmitri Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony***, an event that ranked as one of the most famous radio broadcasts of World War II and also serves as the embodiment of the universal power of music.

- b. On September 9, 1943, one day after Italy's fascist state collapsed, Toscanini led the NBC Symphony in a special radio broadcast titled "**Victory, Act I.**" Before the performance, Toscanini said the broadcast would be the first of three victory concerts he planned to lead.
5. From the earliest days of World War II, **Serge Koussevitzky**, the Russian-born music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, expressed great love for the United States and his hope to inspire Americans. He became a powerful advocate for the US-Soviet alliance and gave concerts in which all proceeds were donated to Russian War Relief.

Let us write hymns of freedom; compose marches to vanquish the foe; lest us sing the song for faith in the ageless ideals of democracy. Let music become the symbol of the undying beauty of the spirit of man. Let us conquer darkness with the burning light of art.

– Serge Koussevitzky

6. After FDR died, classical music was used to as a way of consoling the nation. News reports of his death were mixed with solemn music and interviews with shocked citizens. The most famous piece of music broadcast over the radio in memory of FDR was **Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings**, a piece that was premiered on the radio on November 5, 1938 with Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra
7. After Japan surrendered in August 1945, concert halls throughout the US were filled with music representing patriotism, joy, and optimism — lots of John Philip Sousa and Beethoven.

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb. To that new order we oppose the greater conception—the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change—in a perpetual peaceful revolution—a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions—without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

– Franklin Roosevelt, Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941

Part Five

American Classical Music after World War II

Post-World War II – General Information

1. After World War II the allied powers attempted to purify German politics and culture of any remnants of Nazism. In a process known as “**denazification**” the allied powers held investigations to weed out Germans who had been members of the Nazi Party, as well as those who had cooperated with the Nazis. Anyone found guilty was denied the right to hold a position of power or influence in German culture.
2. The fear of Soviet communism that developed soon after World War II caused many Americans to quit thinking of the USSR as an ally and begin equating Stalin’s governance of the Soviet Union with Hitler’s authoritarian rule in Germany.

Denazification

1. **Wilhelm Furtwängler** was the music director of the Berlin Philharmonic (1922-1945) and frequent guest conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic. From 1933-45, the Berlin Philharmonic and Vienna Philharmonic were under the control of Joseph Goebbels and the Nazi propaganda ministry. After the war, Furtwängler was submitted to denazification trials in Austria and Germany.
 - a. Furtwängler’s fate rested on whether the following charges would keep him from ever conducting in Austria or Germany again:
 - Making anti-Semitic statements.
 - Conducting concerts for Nazi officials, including Hitler.
 - Accepting high honors from the Nazi government.
 - Escaping to Switzerland in January 1945.
 - b. Furtwängler claimed that he had never joined the Nazi Party, that he had no sympathy for Nazism, and that he had never given the Nazi salute. He also claimed he had tried to protect Jewish musicians, but was unable to keep them in his orchestra. Furtwängler said he was only an artist, and he believed that music was above politics.
 - c. Furtwängler was cleared on all counts in both Austria and Germany, and he was allowed to resume his career as a conductor.

*I am no more guilty than a potato dealer who continued to sell potatoes in the Third Reich.
– Wilhelm Furtwängler*

- d. In 1948, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra asked Furtwängler to become a resident conductor for the 1949-50 season while the orchestra looked for a permanent conductor. Furtwängler accepted the offer because he thought the CSO was one of the best orchestras in the world. The appointment led to considerable hostility and controversy, and the orchestra was forced to withdraw the request.

I knew Germany was in a terrible crisis; I felt responsible for German music, and it was my task to survive this crisis, as much as I could. The concern that my art was misused for propaganda had to yield to the greater concern that German music be preserved, that music be given to the German people by its own musicians. These people, the compatriots of Bach and Beethoven, of Mozart and Schubert, still had to go on living under the control of a regime obsessed with total war. No one who did not live here himself in those days can possibly judge what it was like. Does Thomas Mann [a German novelist who was critical of Furtwängler] really believe that in the Germany of Himmler one should not be permitted to play Beethoven? Could he not realize that people never needed more, never yearned more to hear Beethoven and his message of freedom and human love, than precisely these Germans, who had to live under Himmler's terror? I do not regret having stayed with them.

– Wilhelm Furtwängler

2. **Walter Giesecking** was one of the most esteemed pianists of his time. Born in France to German parents, he moved to Germany when he was a teenager. Giesecking remained a German resident throughout the Nazi regime and had supported the Nazis because they were anti-communist.
 - a. In 1947, he was cleared through the denazification program, and the US military government cleared him to perform in the US. Giesecking began a tour of US in 1949, causing much controversy and protest.
 - b. Two hours before Giesecking's first performance at Carnegie Hall, the concert was canceled after the US Immigration Service detained him. The Department of Justice then opened an investigation to see if he was an "undesirable alien." Giesecking decided to leave the US and go to France where he said there was more artistic freedom.
 - c. In 1953, Giesecking returned to Carnegie Hall for a recital. Hundreds of people marched outside protesting until the concert ended. Inside, he played to a packed house and a standing ovation.

A few rabid anti-German columnists and demagogues are able to make life in the United States impossible for anyone who remained in Germany during the war. Seventy million Germans should have evacuated Germany and left Hitler there alone.

– Walter Giesecking

3. **Kirsten Flagstad** was a Norwegian opera singer who was known as one of the great performers of Wagner's music.
 - a. Flagstad first performed in the US in 1935 singing Wagner at the Met. American audiences loved her and she decided to move to the US. Her return to Norway in April 1941 to be with her husband caused much controversy. (Her husband was a Norwegian lumber merchant who did business with the Nazis.)
 - b. All charges that Flagstad had cooperated with the Nazis were unsubstantiated. She was not a supporter of the Nazis, she had never performed for Nazis, and the Norwegian government cleared her of wartime collaboration.
 - c. In 1947, Flagstad returned to the US for recitals in several cities, setting off much controversy and protest.
 - d. In January 1951, Flagstad performed *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met with Fritz Reiner conducting. She had not performed at the Met in ten years. Although many police were stationed outside the concert hall, no protesters showed up.

4. **Herbert von Karajan (1908-1989)** was an Austrian conductor who became principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic from 1954 to 1989.
 - a. Karajan had an identifiable connection to the Nazi Party. He became a member of the Nazi Party in 1933 and worked with the Nazi government until the end of World War II. Denazification kept him from conducting until 1947 when he was cleared by allied military governments.
 - b. Karajan came to the US with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1955 as one of the world's leading conductors. Some of the musicians in the orchestra had belonged to the Nazi Party and about half had played for the Berlin Philharmonic during the war under an exemption from military service.
 - c. Although Karajan's tour met with some protest, the US State Department announced that all members of the Berlin Philharmonic had met the legal requirements for entry into the US, and none were "undesirable aliens."
 - d. Although Karajan is recognized as one of the greatest conductors in music history, his ties to Nazi Germany followed him the rest of his life. (Karajan served as the music director of the Berlin Philharmonic from 1954 until his death in 1989.)

5. **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)** was a German conductor, pianist, and violinist who is recognized as one of history's most accomplished and popular composers.
 - a. Although Richard Wagner's anti-Semitism and German nationalism still raise questions, Richard Strauss has been largely exonerated. Strauss often collaborated with Nazi cultural plans, but never joined the Nazi Party nor used the Nazi salute. Privately he expressed contempt for the Nazi treatment of Jews.
 - b. Strauss was originally classified by the American War Commission in the denazification program as "Class I: Guilty" — the most severe category. In 1948, he was cleared of any wrongdoing and allowed to live in Switzerland with his wife.

Putting It All Together

1. Karajan and many other artists who remained in Nazi Germany benefitted from the Cold War when the international focus shifted to the dangers of communism rather than Nazism. Protests against Furtwängler, Giesecking, Flagstad, and Karajan diminished as the fear of Soviet communism increased. The US, in particular, became much more interested in what was being exported from Moscow than Berlin.

2. Once an artist was associated with Nazism, it was difficult, if not impossible, to overcome for the remainder of their lives.

The Nuremberg Trial of the German war criminals was tacitly based on the recognition of the principle: criminal actions cannot be excused if committed on government orders; conscience supersedes the authority of the law of the state.

– Albert Einstein

Part Six

American Classical Music during the Cold War

General Information

1. During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union were allies fighting a common enemy. Joseph Stalin was known to Americans as “Uncle Joe,” and his crimes against his own people went unreported. As relations with the USSR deteriorated after the war, the American media began reporting extensively on the atrocities of the Soviet government, including Stalin’s mistreatment of artists.
2. The Cold War – Timeline
 - a. **1947** – Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment
 - b. **1948** – Marshall Plan
 - c. **1948** – Berlin airlift
 - d. **1953** – Death of Stalin
 - e. **1956** – The beginning of “peaceful coexistence”
 - f. **1960** – Francis Gary Powers and the end of peaceful coexistence
 - g. **1961** – Vienna Conference and the building of the Berlin Wall
 - h. **1962** – Cuban missile crisis
 - i. **1963** – Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
 - j. **1972** – SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty)
 - k. **1979** – SALT II
 - l. **1979** – Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
 - m. **1981** – Ronald Reagan and the “Evil Empire” speech
 - n. **1985** – Mikhail Gorbachev and the beginning of glasnost and perestroika
 - o. **1986** – Reykjavík Summit
 - p. **1988** – INF Treaty (Intermediate-Ranged Nuclear Forces)
 - q. **1989** – Fall of the Berlin Wall
 - r. **1991** – Fall of the Soviet Union

Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace – March 1949

1. In 1949, Harlow Shapley, an astronomer who was chairman of the National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, organized a conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. The US State Department granted visas to foreign visitors to join American participants at the conference. Supporters of the conference hoped it would help re-establish cultural relations between the US and USSR.
2. Protests against the conference spread throughout the US. Critics saw it as an attempt by the USSR to advance Moscow's global policies and the spread of communism. **The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** announced it would be monitoring the conference.
3. The conference brought a flood of protestors to New York, and the demonstrations became so intense that many American delegates decided not to attend. Shortly before the conference began, the protests intensified when delegates from England, France, and Italy had their visas rescinded due to their political views.
4. The conference included 2700 delegates attending numerous panel discussions on a wide range of topics — education, religion, economics, ethics, etc. Mass gatherings were held at Carnegie Hall where one of the most anticipated speeches of the conference was delivered by **Dmitri Shostakovich**.

The memory of Shostakovich still haunts my mind when I think of that day—what a masquerade it all was! God knows what he was thinking ... what urge to cry out and what self-control to suppress his outcry lest he lend comfort to America and her new belligerence toward his country, the very one that was making his life a hell.

– Arthur Miller, *Timebends: A Life*

5. The conference concluded with 18,000 people attending an event at Madison Square Garden broadcast live on radio. Shostakovich played a solo piano version of the second movement of his Fifth Symphony to a hushed audience while the streets outside were filled with protestors.
6. A national peace tour of the delegates after the conference was canceled after the US State Department issued orders for foreign delegates to leave the country. American delegates followed up by holding meetings in Newark, Philadelphia, and Chicago. These meetings featured a spotlight shining on an empty piano, representing the loss of Shostakovich.
7. The press in the US generally presented the Waldorf Conference as a failure. The *New York Time* reported that it had turned “peace” into “a fighting word.” Anti-communists throughout the US said the hotel had been filled with communists and fellow travelers.

Aaron Copland and the Red Scare

1. In January 1953, **Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*** was scheduled to be performed at **Dwight Eisenhower's** presidential inauguration. Congressman Fred Busbey (R-Illinois) wanted the piece taken off the program, attacking Copland for supporting "causes that seemed to be more in the interest of an alien ideology than the things representative of Abraham Lincoln." As a result of Busbey's attacks, Copland's music was removed from the inaugural program.
2. Shortly after Eisenhower's inauguration, **HUAC** charged that Copland belonged to numerous communist-front organizations. Copland was forced to testify in front of HUAC, as well as Senator **Joseph McCarthy's** Senate Committee on Government Operations and Investigations.
3. As a result of the accusations and investigations, Copland was blacklisted by the federal government, academic institutions, and performing organizations. His passport was also rescinded by the State Department.

I wish to state emphatically that any interest that I have ever had in any organization has been through my concern with cultural and music affairs. I say unequivocally that I am not now and never have been a communist or member of the Communist Party or any organization that advocates the overthrow of the United States government. As one who has benefited so greatly from the unique opportunities that American offers its citizens, I am far too grateful for the privilege of being an American to join any organization that served as a forum for communist propaganda.

– Aaron Copland, testimony to HUAC, 1953

Orchestras as a Weapon of the Cold War

1. After **Joseph Stalin** died on March 5, 1953, the new Soviet government under **Nikita Khrushchev** reached out to the US government with a policy of "**peaceful coexistence.**" One element of the new policy was the establishment of cultural exchanges.
2. In 1954, the House Committee on Education and Labor issued a report saying the USSR had undertaken an enormous cultural offensive against the US, presenting themselves as the "cradle of culture" and painting Americans as an uncivilized nation, a nation of "gum-chewing, insensitive, materialistic barbarians" who did not care about culture.
3. In response to the House committee's report the US State Department adopted a policy of using symphony orchestras to show that liberal democracy was superior to communism. In short, the US government decided to promote the national interest through artistic and cultural tours that focused primarily on sending US orchestras to foreign nations.
4. In August 1953, President Eisenhower created the **United States Information Agency (USIA)** in the State Department to encourage "positive attitudes toward the US." In 1954, the USIA established three performing arts panels—dance, theater, and music—under the President's Special International Program for Cultural Presentations.

5. The Music Advisory Panel of the USIA issued several guidelines for promoting American music in foreign nations.
 - a. American musicians should perform music by American composers.
 - b. American musicians should perform music by composers from the country they were visiting.
 - c. American musicians traveling abroad should be aware of their responsibilities as ambassadors of the American people and prepare themselves beforehand about the music of their own country, as well as the culture and music of the country they were visiting.
6. In August 1954, the US Congress passed legislation creating the President's Emergency Fund for International Affairs. The legislation appropriated three million dollars for overseas cultural presentations.

Historic Orchestral Tours

1. In 1956, the **Boston Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Charles Munch** and **Pierre Monteux**, became the first American orchestra to travel abroad as part of the State Department's cultural initiative. The orchestra visited twenty-seven cities across Europe, including Moscow and Leningrad where it performed several times as the first American orchestra to visit the Soviet Union.
2. In 1958, the **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by the legendary **Eugene Ormandy** traveled to the USSR. The orchestra's eight-week tour received euphoric reactions from audiences, especially behind Iron Curtain where the orchestra performed in eastern Europe and the USSR.
3. In 1959, the **New York Philharmonic**, conducted by **Leonard Bernstein**, went on a ten-week tour of Europe that included three weeks in the USSR. All told, the orchestra gave 50 concerts in twenty-nine cities and seventeen countries. At the final two concerts in the USSR, Bernstein brilliantly wove art and politics together, talking about the power of classical music to help reshape international relations.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

1. Bernstein was a gifted pianist who possessed extraordinary gifts as a conductor and composer. On November 14, 1943, Bernstein conducted the New York Philharmonic, replacing Bruno Walter on short notice after Walter came down with the flu. Bernstein became an overnight sensation after receiving an ecstatic response from the audience and glowing reviews.
2. Bernstein identified with several left-wing causes, and the US government had begun an investigation of his political affiliations in 1939. Eventually, the FBI labeled him a security risk, and he was blacklisted by CBS which had sponsored broadcasts and issued recordings of the New York Philharmonic. As the red scare diminished in the late 1950s, his career began to advance. In 1958, he was selected to be the music director of the New York Philharmonic, and in 1959, he was asked to represent the United States conducting a ten-week overseas tour with the New York Philharmonic.
3. Bernstein was well-known for explaining classical music to his audiences in terms that anyone could understand. His **Young People's Concerts** with the New York Philharmonic were broadcast live in the US and syndicated in over forty countries. Bernstein, who was a

staunch advocate for racial justice, peace, and international cooperation, often used idealistic language to describe the power of music.

It would be thrilling if we knew we would never again have to indulge the brutal sin of war-making. Instead of wasting our energies in hostility and our wealth on weaponry ... we could feed and house and clothe everyone forever. If our musical mission has contributed to that eventual state of affairs, we are humbly grateful.

– Leonard Bernstein, in Moscow, September 1959

Harvey “Van” Cliburn (1934–2013)

1. Van Cliburn was a twenty-three-year-old Texan who was the first winner of the **International Tchaikovsky Competition** in Moscow in April 1958. Although the competition was held during a time that concert halls had become places of ideological struggle, Cliburn won the admiration of people on both sides of the Iron Curtain.
2. Before Cliburn won the Tchaikovsky Competition, which was held over several days, newspapers in the US were filled with stories about how his performances were affecting Russian audiences. Ten minute standing ovations were common, and obtaining a ticket to a Cliburn performance was seen as a mark of great status.
3. Cliburn’s victory was big news in the US, and he returned to New York to “Cliburn mania.” Within days after he returned he performed at Carnegie Hall, giving a concert that was attended by the Russian ambassador, Sergei Rachmaninoff’s daughter, and countless VIPs from the world of classical music. He was also given a ticker tape parade in New York City that was attended by over 100,000 people. Cliburn was the first and to this day the only musician ever honored with a ticker tap parade.

Long after the Russian people have forgotten who won, they will remember that an American won it.... It wasn't to me that this happened, but to the fact that music is a language and a message we can all have at our disposal.

– Van Cliburn

4. Van Cliburn’s victory at the Tchaikovsky Competition amounted to a tremendous diplomatic victory for the US. Cliburn showed the world that the US was not a cultural backwater and won the great admiration of people in the Soviet Union. According to President Eisenhower, Cliburn made war between the US and the Soviet Union less likely.

I'm not a success, I'm a sensation.

– Van Cliburn

The Assassination of John Kennedy, 1963

1. The reaction of classical musicians to the assassination of John Kennedy provided many stories that have become legendary.
2. On the afternoon of the assassination, **Eric Leinsdorf**, the Austrian-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was scheduled to lead a live radio performance *The Golden Cockerel* by Alexander Pushkin. When Leinsdorf heard about Kennedy's assassination he canceled *The Golden Cockerel* and handed his orchestra the score for Beethoven's Third. The audience had not yet heard the news that Kennedy had been killed when Leinsdorf announced what had happened. He then played the funeral march from Beethoven's Third.
3. **Two days after the assassination, on a Sunday afternoon**, Leonard Bernstein led the **New York Philharmonic** in a live television broadcast of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony. This performance was the first time an entire symphony had been performed on American television. It was also the only non-news programming seen on network television that weekend.

We played the Mahler symphony not only in terms of resurrection for the soul of one we love, but also for the resurrection of hope in all of us who mourn him....

... We musicians, like everyone else, are numb with sorrow at this murder, and with rage at the senselessness of the crime. But this sorrow and rage will not inflame us to seek retribution; rather they will inflame our art. Our music will never again be quite the same. This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before. And with each note we will honor the spirit of John Kennedy, commemorate his courage, and reaffirm his faith in the Triumph of the Mind.

– Leonard Bernstein in a handwritten message explaining his decision to perform Mahler on the occasion of JFK's assassination

4. **Isaac Stern**, a Polish-American violinist, was in Dallas the day Kennedy was assassinated, sitting in a cafe at the Dallas airport and looking out the window at Air Force One which would carry Kennedy's body back to Washington. The next night, Stern was scheduled to play the Sibelius *Violin Concerto in D Minor* with the San Antonio Symphony. At the morning rehearsal he told the conductor that the piece by Sibelius seemed inappropriate and felt the only thing he should play was something by Bach. That night Stern quoted Augustine to the 4,000 people in attendance, stating that "he who sings, prays twice." He then asked that they pray together through the "soul-cleansing" music of Bach. Stern requested that the audience not applaud at the end, and he wept uncontrollably while playing the Bach "Chaconne." After he finished the piece, the audience remained silent. Stern put his violin back in its case, left the auditorium, and flew back to New York.

Orchestral Tours after 1960

1. Classical music did not make as much news in the national media after 1960 as it had from 1914 through the 1950s. Even so, classical music remained entangled in US politics and international relations until the end of the Cold War.
2. In September 1960, **Leonard Bernstein** and the **New York Philharmonic** traveled to a divided Berlin in a trip funded by the Ford Motor Company. Henry Ford II said he funded the tour as “an opportunity to aid the courageous people of West Berlin in their ideological battle with communist East Germany.”

If you tell me that here in your city of West Berlin, certain areas are terribly noisy, you're telling me a purely local fact. The noise neither bothers nor interests anybody except a Berliner.... But the moment we begin to develop this fact by probing, the magic begins to happen. Why is Berlin noisy? Because of the airplanes that are constantly landing and taking off at Tempelhof Airport, which is right in the middle of the the city. Because this city is a political island. Now, we have already made a leap from a local fact to one of national and international interest. And the causes of this abnormal isolation—into ways and means of overcoming it—of making a peaceful world in which men can live freely and harmoniously, then we have come all the way from a little fact about an airport to a universal search for truth that is of interest to all mankind.

– Leonard Bernstein, spoken to an audience in West Berlin

3. Other notable orchestral tours include the following:
 - a. In 1965, **George Szell** led the **Cleveland Orchestra** on a lengthy trip to Europe, including five weeks in the USSR, the longest time an American orchestra spent in the Soviet Union.
 - b. In 1967, **Zubin Mehta** and the **Los Angeles Philharmonic** went to Western Europe, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Cypress, Israel, Iran, and India.
 - c. In 1973, **Eugene Ormandy** and the **Philadelphia Orchestra** went to China, a trip that was requested personally by Richard Nixon in a phone call to Ormandy.
 - d. In 1979, **Seiji Ozawa**, a Japanese conductor, led the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** on a tour of China.
 - e. In 2007, **Lorin Maazel** led the **New York Philharmonic** on a two-day tour of North Korea, an event that placed classical music back on the front pages of American newspapers.

Putting It All Together

1. Orchestral tours exposed the world to cultural achievements in the US and demonstrated to the world that a liberal democracy was capable of nurturing and sustaining great art. American orchestras created beautiful music and shared that music with people in other nations, showing the world that the US was capable of doing much more than creating great wealth and powerful military forces.
2. A common thread running through all the tours was the ability of American orchestras to electrify audiences.

Postscript

Jazz as a Weapon during the Cold War

1. Louis Armstrong
 - a. In 1955, the *New York Times* published an article saying that **Louis Armstrong** was so popular around the world that he was helping the US in its conflict with the USSR. The article prompted the Eisenhower administration to begin a program to send jazz musicians on tours abroad.
 - b. In 1957, the US State Department scheduled Louis Armstrong to perform in the USSR. Armstrong eventually changed his mind, saying he did not want to be an ambassador for the US when Jim Crow was still the law of the land in his own country.
 - c. Two years later, the State Department asked Armstrong to perform in Africa. Although the request presented a dilemma for Armstrong, he agreed to take the tour to help promote the cause of independence in Africa. In October, 1960 He left on a twenty-seven city tour of Africa sponsored by the US government.
 - d. For the rest of his life, Armstrong carried the burden of having served as an ambassador for the US, a nation for which he was quite critical. In the early 1960s, Armstrong collaborated with Dave Brubeck to create *The Real Ambassadors*, a jazz musical that addresses issues surrounding the American Civil Rights movement and America's place in the world during the Cold War.

2. Nina Simone
 - a. In 1961, Nina Simone went to Nigeria for a festival organized by AMSAC (American Society for African Culture) to bring American and African artists together. AMSAC was a foundation with several prominent members, including novelist Richard Wright and poet Langston Hughes, and Nina Simone believed in its cause.
 - b. Unknown to Simone, AMSAC was a front organization for the CIA. Nina died in 2003 never knowing she had been used by the CIA to promote the interests of the US government.

* * *

Resources

1. Anderson, M.T. *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad* (2017)
2. Christ, Elizabeth B. *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland during the Depression and War* (2009)
3. Hitchcock, H. Wiley (with Kyle Gann). *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (2000)
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5. Rosenberg, Jonathan. *Dangerous Melodies: Classical Music from the Great War through the Cold War* (2019)
6. Ross, Alex. *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (2007)
7. Scherer, Barrymore Laurence. *A History of American Classical Music* (2007)