

**Bob Cerulli**  
*Celebration Overture*

Bob Cerulli's compositions and arrangements for orchestra cover a wide range of classical and popular styles, and are performed by orchestras all over the world.

Mr. Cerulli's composition for cello and piano, *Romance in D Major*, was performed at a recital by Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Cellist William Stokking, for whom the piece was written. In 1999, the Philadelphia Orchestra performed his original composition, *Celebration*. The Philadelphia Orchestra newsletter, *The Eighth Note*, characterized *Celebration* as an "...exciting and happy composition which highlights the different sections of the orchestra. *Celebration* was composed to honor the anniversary of an area college, and the festive style of the brass section shows us this."

"As the title implies, *Celebration*, written to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lancaster County Music Camp, is a joyous, superbly crafted work brimming with impact of heroic proportion," Mr. Cerulli said of his work. "Highlighting all sections, the drive and excitement contrast nicely with flowing sub-themes.

"While I was composing this piece, I wanted to convey a feeling of joy and festivity," Mr. Cerulli added. "I feel that the piece creates an imagery of colorful melodies and harmonies that convey uplifting qualities of light hearted joy."

Mr. Cerulli is the Principal Bassist with the Trenton Symphony and the Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra, and performs annually with the Alfonse Cavalieri Benefit Concert Orchestra. He also performed for two years with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Cerulli also is a freelance bassist, and has performed with Broadway stars and top recording artists alike, including Henry Mancini, Bill Conte, Michel LeGrand, Marvin Hamlisch, Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli. He also played *The Mike Douglas Show*.

He currently arranges and composes music for Warner Brothers, now part of the Alfred Music Company, which has published nearly three hundred of his orchestra arrangements and compositions. He also has published original compositions and arrangements with Columbia Pictures Publications, Shawnee Press, and Belwin Mills. Mr. Cerulli's *Young Orchestra Series* and *First-Year Pops for String Orchestra Series* are performed extensively in the United States and abroad. In addition, he was commended for his *15 Popular Solos for Violin, Viola, Cello and Bass* because of its wide acceptance in school music programs, and authored the *String Along Together* method books.

Mr. Cerulli taught music in New Jersey public schools for 29 years, and has taught undergraduate and graduate music courses at Rutgers University, Rowan University, and Immaculata University. He currently teaches music theory and composition at Burlington County College in New Jersey.

**Mario Lombardo**  
*Oboe Concerto*

Pianist and composer of more than 200 songs, four musicals, and numerous works for piano, chorus, concert band, and orchestra, Mario Lombardo was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He began the study of piano at the age of nine, and began composing at sixteen.

Mr. Lombardo's music has been performed throughout the United States and Europe, by the orchestras of Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Cincinnati and New Jersey, among others. *Drakestail*, his acclaimed symphonic tale for children, was performed at a Family Concert by maestro Travaline and the Philharmonic, and has been recorded by the Berlin Radio Orchestra. The work also recently was recorded by the New Jersey Youth Symphony, conducted by George Marriner Maull.

Mr. Lombardo has published a series of ten books of piano exercises, and is currently working on a four-volume study of piano improvisation. He lives with his wife, Adele, in Cranford, New Jersey.

Of his *Oboe Concerto*, Mr. Lombardo writes "The work begins dramatically, with the orchestra announcing the introduction, then subsiding in tone, with a solo violin cadenza setting the mood for the entrance of the main theme. With sustained strings and harp accompaniment, the oboe presents the lyrical theme with a flute countermelody. With increasing intensity, the orchestra reaches a dissonant chord, followed by a solo oboe cadenza.

"With a faster tempo, the work moves on as the flute introduces a sprightly motive accompanied by strings and woodwinds. The oboe develops the motive as interplay between soloist and orchestra, increasing in momentum and activity to an exciting tutti section, after which the orchestra strikes a succession of dynamic chords. The solo flute restates the motive under pizzicato strings, followed by an oboe solo echoing the motive at a slower tempo, coming to a quiet repose.

"With sustained strings and arpeggiated accompaniment by the cellos and harp, a horn solo presents the theme over an oboe counterline. In a lengthier cadenza, the oboe sings a plaintive melody, rising in pitch and movement to the final announcement of the theme by the entire orchestra. The music builds to a climax, as the strings, woodwinds, and harp play an ostinato figure over a joyous motive played by the brass, leading to a brilliant finale.

"The concerto is dedicated to my dear friend, Dr. Samuel Rodriguez."

**Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)**  
***El Salón México***  
**“Stomp Your Foot on the Floor,” from *The Tender Land***

*When composers are featured in the movies, they are often portrayed as lonely geniuses whose greatest inspirations come in the middle of the night, as they sit hunched over their pianos. But for Aaron Copland, it was a chance visit to a raucous Mexican dance hall that launched him on the path that was to make him one of America’s most beloved composers.*

In his most well-known works, Copland’s music evokes a land of wide prairies and endless expanse. Yet Copland himself was a product of America at its most urban.

The son of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York. When he was 21, he went to Paris, where he studied with the legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger from 1921 to 1924.

His early works combined jazz and neoclassicism, and earned him a reputation as an adventuresome young modernist. But his widest fame as a composer rests on the extraordinary series of ballets he wrote from 1938 to 1944.

In these works—*Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*—Copland drew upon folk songs, hymns, and jazz to create a uniquely American musical language, one that instantly appeals to sophisticated listeners and general audiences alike.

But it was *El Salón México* that laid the foundation for these iconic works.

Up until the 1930s, Copland was a staunch modernist, writing music filled with bracing dissonances and spiky rhythms. Then, as the Depression brought with it social unrest and a questioning of all that had gone before, Copland began thinking about finding a new musical language, one that could reach wider audiences.

“I don’t think any composer really writes entirely for himself,” he once wrote. “Even if he just wants to hear what one or two friends have to say about his composition, he is still composing for other people. I don’t consciously think about the public when I am composing, but I do want people to like my music.”

Copland heard a set of recordings of American folk music that the Library of Congress had recently released, and was struck by the power and simplicity of the songs.

But the inspiration he sought would not be found in Appalachian ballads and Southern field songs.

In 1935, Copland’s friend, the Mexican composer and conductor Carlos Chávez, invited him to Mexico to perform a concert. While there, Copland and his friends wandered into a local dance hall called “El Salón México,” where a mariachi band was playing

arrangements of Mexican folk tunes. The music made a powerful impression on Copland—so much so that he was inspired to write what would be the first of many “populist” pieces to come: *El Salón México*. Copland had found the new musical language he was seeking.

A few die-hard avant-gardists accused him of selling out, but a young Leonard Bernstein, in a letter to Copland, better understood what had been achieved: “It’s gonna be hard to keep this from being a fan letter. I can’t get the music out of my head. Timed to perfection. Not an extra beat. It’s a secure feeling to know we have a master in America.”

*El Salón* was the first of Copland’s populist works; *The Tender Land* was one of the last.

Like *El Salón*, the later work also had its origins in the Depression. In this case, the inspiration was *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a book of photographs by Walker Evans, with text by James Agee, of poverty-stricken farm families. The opera tells the story of Laurie Moss, the daughter of a Midwestern farm family, as she comes of age and has to decide how she wants to live her life.

Commissioned as a television opera for NBC, but never aired, it was finally premiered by the New York City Opera in 1954, the same year that Bernstein’s *West Side Story* appeared. (It must have been a busy time for the opera’s director, Jerome Robbins, who also choreographed *West Side Story* that same year.)

**Modeste Mussorgsky (1839 –1881)**  
***Pictures at an Exhibition***  
**(Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel)**

*Schubert left a symphony unfinished; but Mussorgsky could be said to have left his life unfinished. Only 42 when he died (a death that was probably hastened by a long history of alcoholism), Mussorgsky was unable to finish some of his most significant compositions.*

Maurice Ravel was hardly the first to put his own stamp on Mussorgsky. After the composer’s untimely death, his friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov helped prepare completed versions of the symphonic poem *Night on Bald Mountain* and the operas *Khovanshina* and *Sorotchinsky Fair*. Rimsky also re-orchestrated Mussorgsky’s masterpiece, the opera *Boris Godunov*.

Even though *Pictures at an Exhibition* was fully composed as a suite for solo piano, it too has been “finished” by being transformed into an orchestral showpiece. It’s easy to see why: Mussorgsky’s original piano writing is so dramatic and vividly pictorial that it cries out for the range and color that only an orchestra can provide. Maurice Ravel’s brilliant orchestration is the most-often performed, although nearly a dozen different

versions have been created by Leopold Stokowski, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Lucien Cailliet, among others.

*Pictures at an Exhibition* was composed as a tribute to Mussorgsky's friend, the Russian artist Viktor Hartmann, and was inspired by a memorial exhibition arranged after Hartmann's death in 1873. The suite comprises musical representations of ten of Hartmann's pictures; in addition, Mussorgsky provides a recurring theme ("Promenade") to link the opening sections of the work.

The following is a brief summary of the music:

1. **Promenade.** According to Mussorgsky, this theme represents the composer walking from one picture to another.
2. **Gnomus.** Hartmann's sketch of a nutcracker in the shape of a grotesque gnome.
3. **Promenade/Il vecchio castello ("The old castle").** A picture of a medieval troubadour singing before a ruined castle.
4. **Promenade/Tuilleries.** The dignified "promenade" theme is contrasted with a scene of children playing in the famous Parisian gardens.
5. **Bydlo.** A lumbering Polish oxcart with enormous wheels.
6. **Promenade/Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks.** Hartmann's costume design for a children's ballet.
7. **Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle.** Two Polish Jews, one rich and imposing, the other poor and whining.
8. **Limoges.** Frenchwomen quarreling in the marketplace.
9. **Catacombs/Com mortuis in lingua mortua ("With the dead in the language of the dead").** A self-portrait of Hartmann in the Parisian catacombs is followed by Mussorgsky's musical reflections on his departed friend.
10. **The Hut on Fowl's Legs.** Hartmann sketched a clock in the shape of a witch's hut; Mussorgsky transforms it into a depiction of the legendary Russian witch "Baba Yaga" riding through the air.
11. **The Great Gate of Kiev.** Hartmann's design for a ceremonial gate becomes a gloriously monumental tone-painting of a procession entering the city of Kiev, climaxed by the final return of the "promenade" theme.

### **Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990)** **Excerpts from *West Side Story***

*Was there anything Leonard Bernstein couldn't do? He wrote everything from symphonies to Broadway shows and movie scores. He introduced a whole generation to the classics with his televised "Young People's Concerts." And, he almost single-handedly revived the music of Gustav Mahler.*

Born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Leonard Bernstein grew up in Boston, and attended Harvard University in nearby Cambridge, where he studied under the composer Walter Piston.

In 1939, Bernstein came to Philadelphia to continue his musical studies at the Curtis Institute. In 1943, he was hired as Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic. His career was launched in November of that year, when, at the age of 25, he made front-page news by filling in at the very last minute for an ailing Bruno Walter in a national radio broadcast.

From 1958 to 1969, Bernstein served as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. In 1970, he began an association with the Vienna Philharmonic that would last for the rest of his life. He also enjoyed lasting relationships with the London Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic. He died in 1990, five days after announcing his retirement and conducting his final concert with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood.

Before there was *West Side Story*, there was *East Side Story*, a projected musical by Arthur Laurents and Jerome Robbins based on the Romeo and Juliet tale and set in the slums of New York. As originally envisioned, the story would have focused on the love between an Italian Catholic boy and a Jewish girl and the conflict between their two worlds. Feeling that the theme was already dated by 1949, Laurents and Robbins set the work aside until 1954. By then, the Italian gang of Jets had become more generically American and the Jewish Emeralds were reborn as the Puerto Rican Sharks.

But the most important change was that this time, Laurents and Robbins had the young Leonard Bernstein composing the music, and the even younger (27) Stephen Sondheim writing the book. Together, they created a show that stretched the bounds of the musical, and electrified audiences with a grittiness and kinetic energy unlike anything that had gone before.

It wasn't an easy task. As Bernstein later recalled in a *Rolling Stone* interview:

“Everyone told us that it was an impossible project...no one, we were told, was going to be able to sing augmented fourths, as with “Ma-ri-a”...they said the score was too rangy for pop music...Besides, who wanted to see a show in which the first-act curtain comes down on two dead bodies lying on the stage?”

Despite the challenges, the show was a sensation. One critic wrote after opening night: “The radioactive fallout from *West Side Story* must still be descending on Broadway this morning.” And another said of the music: “It takes up the American musical idiom where it was left when George Gershwin died. It is fascinatingly tricky and melodically beguiling, and it marks the progression of an admirable composer...”