

Copland's America via France

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What I find appealing and inspiring in Aaron Copland, is his restlessness in searching for an identity. As the diversity of his work attests, Aaron Copland refused to be boxed into one category, save only the one of 20th-Century American composers.

Coming partly from a French cultural background myself, I am particularly interested in tracing Copland's French influences, during his formative years studying with Nadia Boulanger immersed in the 1920's intellectual scene of Paris. As a starting point, I will use Paul Anderson's essay "*To Become as Human as Possible*": *The Influence of André Gide on Aaron Copland*. I will also use Copland's interviews and writings. I will focus on his works *Piano Variations* and *Appalachian Spring*.

In view of our historical tour of American Music, I want to work out these puzzles:

- Copland went all the way to Paris to find his American sound.
- Copland never stopped searching for his identity, even after he was celebrated for celebrating America.
- Copland struggled to remain true to himself while appealing to the mainstream public.