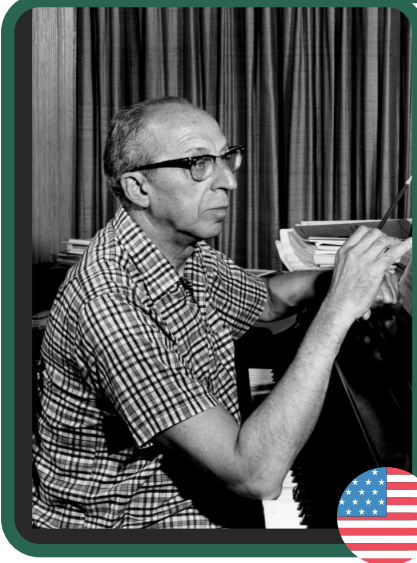




COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**AARON COPLAND**

BORN: November 14, 1900 ERA/STYLE: Neo-Classical

DIED: December 2, 1990 HOMETOWN: Brooklyn, New York

Aaron Copland was born in 1900 in Brooklyn, New York. He did not grow up in a musical family; his parents were Russian immigrants who never even went to a concert. However, when Copland was a teenager, he became interested in music. He learned to play the piano from his older sister Laurine, and in less than one year Copland had learned everything she could teach him.

Copland began formal music lessons and played in his first concert when he was 15. It was shortly afterwards that he decided to become a composer. When Copland graduated from high school he dreamed of studying music in France, and for the next several years, he saved his money and continued to practice. Finally, in 1921, Copland went to France to study at a new American school for music in Paris. He studied for three years in France, toured Europe, and then returned to New York.

Copland's musical works range from ballet and orchestral music to choral music and movie scores. He wrote music for American audiences with American themes. One of these pieces is Lincoln Portrait, a piece about Abraham Lincoln. His most famous works are the ballets Rodeo and Appalachian Spring, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1945.

Aaron Copland's early music mixed very modern musical ideas with the styles of Latin American jazz music. His style began to change during the Great Depression as his concern with modern techniques lessened, and his music emphasized simpler harmonies, broad melodies, and hints of folk melodies. While Copland never abandoned his more adventurous approach, he is best remembered for creating a truly American symphonic style.