

nothing good about them, like violence, shipwrecks, or the Spanish Inquisition.

In its initial Broadway run, in 1956–57, *Candide* played for 73 performances — hardly a stunning success — and Bernstein would go on to alter the piece, again and again, for later revivals. Through all of the show’s transformations, the rollicking Overture remained essentially untouched.

Born in Brooklyn, **Aaron Copland** polished his composing technique in France but returned home to establish what became recognized as a profoundly American sound, a musical language rich in folk inflections and wide-open harmonies that proved irresistible to imitators.

His 1953 opera *The Tender Land* is a fine example of the lyrical aspect of Copland’s Americana. Set in the 1930s, it tells the tale of Laurie, a teenager who is about to graduate from high school and yearns for experiences beyond her life on a farm in the nation’s heartland. The first of the opera’s three acts concludes with *The Promise of Living*, in which Laurie’s family extolls the virtues of hard work

## Did You Know?

- Less than two months before *Candide’s* Broadway opening, **Bernstein** was named Co-Principal Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, alongside Dimitri Mitropoulos.
- The Overture was heard in the Philharmonic’s historic 2008 performance in North Korea, when it was played without a conductor, a tradition first adopted in tribute to Bernstein after his death.

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and neighborly friendship. This expanse has found more success than the opera overall, and it is often performed in a choral setting the composer prepared, with multiple voices rendering each line.

Copland’s *Rodeo* was also a stage work — a ballet choreographed by Agnes de Mille, who said:

It is not an epic, or the story of pioneer conquest. It builds no empires. ... There are never more than a very few people on the stage at a time ... one must be always conscious of the enormous land on which these people live and of their proud loneliness.

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## Overture to *Candide*

### Leonard Bernstein

**Born:** August 25, 1918, in Lawrence, Massachusetts

**Died:** October 14, 1990, in New York City

**Work composed:** completed in August 1956; Hershy Kay assisted with the orchestration

**World premiere:** October 29, 1956, in the first preview of *Candide*, at the Colonial Theatre in Boston

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** January 26, 1957, Leonard Bernstein, conductor

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** July 20, 2018, at Bravo! Vail in Colorado, Bramwell Tovey, conductor



Bernstein in the 1950s

## Did You Know?

- **Copland** grew up above the family store, H.M. Copland's, which he described as "a local Macy's," at the corner of Dean Street and Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn.
- **Hoe-Down** became an advertising staple in the 1990s as part of The Beef Industry Council's "Beef, It's What's for Dinner" campaign.

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The ballet, subtitled *The Courting at Burnt Ranch*, includes five sections: *Buckaroo Holiday*, *Corral Nocturne*, *Ranch House Party*, *Saturday Night Waltz*, and *Hoe-Down*. To capture the spirit of the subject, Copland drew directly from the well of American folk music. The high-stepping *Hoe-Down* section makes use of several traditional fiddle tunes.

*Rodeo* — which, by the way, Copland always pronounced "RO-dee-o," although many people call this piece "Ro-DAY-o" — was a smash hit at its premiere in October 1942. Its folk-song-infused score was perfectly in sync with wartime nationalism, but it has stood the test of time without fading. Never one to waste a good tune, Copland later assembled several sections into the Four Dance Episodes from *Rodeo*, in which guise this music is most often heard live.

**Richard Wagner** is known almost exclusively for his operas, works that were synthesized from distinct artistic disciplines including music, literature, the visual arts, ballet, and architecture. *Die Walküre* is the second opera in the sprawling, four-installment, fifteen-hour

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## The Promise of Living, from *The Tender Land* Hoe-Down, from *Rodeo*

### Aaron Copland

**Born:** November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York

**Died:** December 2, 1990, in North Tarrytown, New York

**Works composed and premiered:** *The Tender Land*, composed 1954; premiered April 1, 1954, at New York City Center by New York City Opera, Thomas Schippers, conductor. *Rodeo*, composed 1942; ballet premiered October 16, 1942, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York City, by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Franz Allers, conductor



**New York Philharmonic premieres and most recent performances:** *The Promise of Living*, from *The Tender Land*, premiered July 28, 1965, the composer conducting, with the Choral Arts Society; most recently performed, May 17, 1986, Zubin Mehta, conductor, with New York Choral Artists. *Hoe-Down*, from *Rodeo*, premiered July 8, 1945, Leonard Bernstein, conductor; most recently played, May 25, 2013, Case Scaglione, conductor

*Rodeo's* strong female character, the Cowgirl, as first danced by choreographer Agnes de Mille

series known as *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), also known as *The Ring Cycle*, which occupied him from 1848 until 1874. In 1872, two years after finishing *Die Walküre*, Wagner was named an Honorary Member of the New York Philharmonic. Two other composers represented in this concert would be similarly honored by the Orchestra: Aaron Copland (in 1970) and Leonard Bernstein (in 1984).

Wagner drew *The Ring's* complicated, multigenerational story from medieval legends of Germany and the Nordic lands. A central plot point involves the waning power of the god Wotan, who has nine warrior daughters, the Valkyries. Act Three of *Die Walküre* opens with eight of them on their winged steeds leaping about on a rocky mountain summit, gleefully shouting their signature cry "Hojotoho!" With the vocal lines deleted, this passage becomes the stirring orchestral favorite ***Ride of the Valkyries***, with a boisterous brass section slashing its thrilling phrases through an active background texture of strings and woodwinds.

## Did You Know?

- ***Ride of the Valkyries*** has often been played as an encore by the Philharmonic, as it was in Jaap van Zweden's first concert as Music Director last September.
- The Orchestra also performed it to the antics of Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd in the cartoon *What's Opera, Doc?* as part of *Bugs Bunny at the Symphony II* in 2015.

It wasn't just the Philharmonic that recognized the impact of Wagner's radical approach to music. His influence on later music, literature, and theater has been so pervasive that the ethos of his works remained unusually durable through ensuing generations. Among later works that strongly evoke the spirit (and to some extent the structure) of *The Ring of the Nibelung* are Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Dungeons and Dragons* and similar role-playing games, and the films of the *Star Wars* saga, in which John Williams's scores draw direct influence from Wagner.

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## ***Ride of the Valkyries*, from *Die Walküre***

### **Richard Wagner**

**Born:** May 22, 1813, in Leipzig, Saxony (Germany)

**Died:** February 13, 1883, in Venice, Italy

**Work composed:** 1854–56

**World premiere:** the opera, June 26, 1870, at the National Theatre in Munich, Germany, Franz Wüllner, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** November 22, 1879, Theodore Thomas, conductor

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** September 25, 2018, Jaap van Zweden, conductor



A frame from *What's Opera, Doc?*, from 1957