

THE CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MUSIC AND WORSHIP

PRESENTS THE

SENIOR PROJECT  
PRESENTATION

OF

EMILIE SCHULZE

MYSTERY OR MAYHEM?  
COPLAND AND COMMUNISM

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021  
3 P.M.

ROOM 103  
CENTER FOR BIBLICAL AND  
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

## ABSTRACT

In the midst of the second Red Scare, Aaron Copland, an American composer, came under fire for his supposed communist tendencies. Between the 1930s and 1950s, he joined the left-leaning populist Popular Front, wrote a mass (possibly protest) song, wrote *Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*, supported progressive candidate Henry Wallace, donated to communist-leaning organizations such as the American-Soviet Musical Society, and spoke at the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. Additionally, his travel to teach in Italy as a Fulbright Scholar and connections to Dimitri Shostakovich raised suspicions. Due to Copland's perceived personal communist leanings, Eisenhower's Inaugural Concert Committee censored a performance of Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* in 1953. HUAC (The House Committee on Un-American Activities) brought Copland to the committee and questioned him on his communist connections. Copland clearly denied any and all communist activities or affiliations. This raised the questions: what impact did the contemporary political climate have on Copland's music? What actual ties did he have to communism? Does it matter? To answer these questions, I examined the primary sources in the Copland Collection at the Library of Congress during the fall of 2019. In addition to selected secondary sources, I focused on the relevant letters, hearing records, and other materials contained in Box 427: the box on HUAC. In addition to the Performing Arts Reading Room Aaron Copland Collection, I utilized the Folklife Collection and their resources on Aaron Copland. I will conclude there is significant external evidence Copland associated with communists, but since Copland himself continuously denied the identity, it is difficult to conclude whether Copland was or was not in fact a communist. It is much easier to conclude that Copland was, at the very least, politically left-leaning, although his political beliefs held a secondary role to the musical style in his compositions.

Emilie is a student of Sandra Yang.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment  
of the Bachelor of Arts in music degree.

*No flash photography, please.*

*Please turn off all cell phones.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Timeline

#### 1930s

- Popular Front
- “May Song”

#### 1940s

- *Lincoln Portrait*
- *Fanfare for the Common Man*
- Travel with the State Department
- Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace

#### 1950s

- McCarthyism Intensifies
- *Lincoln Portrait* Censored
- HUAC and the Senate Hearing

#### Beyond

- The Fall of McCarthy
- The Rise of Copland

