CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

HOMOSEXUAL INFLUENCE ON CLASSICAL MUSIC

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Music, Performance

by

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California State University, Northridge
DEDICATION

To my beloved partner, Dr. Mario Pérez,
without whom this work would not have been possible.
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ABSTRACT

HOMOSEXUAL INFLUENCE ON CLASSICAL MUSIC

by

Rik Noyce

Master of Music in Music, Performance

Is it possible that something as seemingly unrelated as sexual preference could, in fact, help craft a musical style? Could one, despite social prejudices, utilize his sexual orientation to shape the musical direction, as well as the social awareness, of his community?

In preparing for this Graduate Flute Recital, I was compelled not only to present a challenging program of flute masterworks, but also to explore what relevant role, if any, homosexuality has played in the development of the classical music art form. Moreover, I wished to explore why in the early 21st century it is important to openly discuss the sexual orientation of music history’s greatest composers.

The connection between the composers represented in this recital, though spanning more than 300 years, is an intimate one. The common bond between them was something other than their talent, love of, and life in, music. They, along with uncountable others, were among those gifted musicians, composers and conductors who would today be defined as gay – perhaps not self-identifying as such as the term had not yet been coined – clearly honoring the sensibilities for which they likely would be otherwise marginalized.
Within the world of music, despite relative awareness and acceptance of its existence, homosexuality has been historically frowned upon and therefore seen as being incongruent with success. In fact, within the field of musicology, the recent discussions of homosexuality as it relates to the art form have caused heated debate, while at the same time, several of today’s leading musicologists have endured the threatening ramifications of such assertions. The very fact this debate remains so polarizing only further serves to illustrate the topic’s relevance and why bringing this discussion out into public light was so compelling, and in fact necessary, for me.
HOMOSEXUAL INFLUENCE ON CLASSICAL MUSIC

Introduction

Is it possible that something as seemingly unrelated as sexual preference could, in fact, help craft a musical style? Could one, despite social prejudices, utilize his sexual orientation to shape the musical direction, as well as the social awareness, of his community? In preparing for this Graduate Flute Recital, I was compelled not only to present a challenging program of flute masterworks, but also to explore what relevant role, if any, homosexuality has played in the development of the classical music art form. Moreover, I wished to explore why in the early 21st century it is important to openly discuss the sexual orientation of music history’s greatest composers.

The connection between the composers represented in this recital, though spanning more than 300 years, is an intimate one. The common bond between them was something other than their talent, love of, and life in, music. It was that which is intangible, yet recognized; that which was unspoken and yet known; that which was relegated to “the closet” and yet would have defining effect on classical art music. They, along with uncountable others, were among those gifted musicians, composers and conductors who would today be defined as gay – perhaps not self-identifying as such as the term hadn’t yet been coined – clearly honoring the sensibilities for which they likely would be otherwise marginalized.

In exploring what relevance homosexuality may have had on the development of classical art music, it becomes necessary to understand the ramifications of having been openly gay in society. Aside from risking one’s social status and acceptance, one very
seriously risked being imprisoned. Despite work by the likes of Havelock Ellis and Alfred Kinsey making it apparent that “homosexual behaviour has existed in a variety of different cultures, and that it is an ineradicable part of human sexual possibilities,” the common religious-based attitude has been to consider homosexuality a “deviance” and therefore something warranting a societal response, and hopeful repair. Even today, in 21st-century America, where tolerance and liberalism might be expected, people are routinely and lawfully discriminated against at the least, or beaten or killed at worst, simply due to their sexual orientation.

In other cultures throughout history, homosexuality has been not only tolerated but rather, integrated into society as in the “socially accepted pedagogic relations common to ancient Greece.” Still today, it is common for a Greek man to have a very close and often sexual relationship with a youth much younger than he. In some Native American tribal societies, homosexuality was actually sought out and revered, as in their “berdache,” (the transvestite balance of male and female roles), where male children who displayed homosexual characteristics, were seen as a vital bridge between the sexes. Despite these examples of acceptance, tolerance, and even reverence, homosexuals have been oppressed for several hundred years by western societal views. A brief look back in history illustrates one example.

In 1533, Henry VIII “first brought ‘buggery’ within the scope of statutory law … all acts of buggery were equally condemned as being ‘against nature’ … the penalty for ‘the abominable vice of buggery’ was death, and the death penalty continued on the

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2 Weeks, 99.
statute books, formally at least, until 1861."³ As this became statutory law more than a hundred years before the religious freedom flight that would settle the New England colonies, it is easy to connect this perspective with its arrival in American cultural thought and prejudice.

In the early 20th-century, though punishment by death was not often exacted, little else had changed from Henry VIII’s four-century-old decree. In 1942, a police raid on a Brooklyn gay house of prostitution, commonly referred to as a “black and tan,” resulted in among others, the arrest of composer and chief music critic for the New York Herald Tribune, Virgil Thomson.⁴ Though the raid may have taken Thomson and others by surprise, he was aware of the possibility as police stings in these Harlem clubs happened with regularity.

Most were aware of the very public Oscar Wilde case, and it had been less than two years time since Thomson’s fellow composer, Henry Cowell, had been released from his four-year imprisonment at San Quentin on common sodomy charges. Despite being granted a full pardon in 1942, Cowell’s career never fully recovered. It would be many more years of police raids, arrests and imprisonments before the 1969 Stonewall riots, which would become known as the birth of the modern gay rights movement, would bring to light these antiquated and religiously-biased laws along with their rather severe punishments.

“Every profession is a secret society. The musical profession is more secret than most, on account of the nature of music itself. No other field of human activity is quite

³ Weeks, 99.
so hermetic, so isolated.”\textsuperscript{5} These words of Virgil Thomson’s have deeper meaning than might superficially appear. If viewed from the vantage of “the closet” – that vernacular term coined to describe the keeping of one’s sexuality secret for the sake of living in society – there was, and for many still is, an isolation within the musical profession which extends beyond the study, discipline and practice of the mechanics of the idiom. Within the world of music, despite relative awareness and acceptance of its existence, homosexuality has been historically frowned upon and therefore seen as being incongruent with success. Thomson remembers, “You didn’t mention it [homosexuality], but you understood everything.”\textsuperscript{6} In fact, within the field of musicology, the recent discussions of homosexuality as it relates to the art form has caused heated debate, while at the same time, several of today’s leading musicologists have endured the threatening ramifications of such assertions. It was only recently, in 1990 that the very first open session on composers and sexuality was given at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society. The very fact this debate remains so polarizing only further serves to illustrate the topic’s relevance and why bringing this discussion out into public light was so compelling, and in fact necessary, for me.

\textbf{Georg Friedrich Händel}

The first two pieces on this program, \textit{Sonata G-Dur, HWV 363b} and \textit{Nachtigallenarie aus “L’Allegro, il Pensieroso ed il Moderato,”} composed by Georg Friedrich Händel, born 23\textsuperscript{rd} February 1685, might occur as surprising choices given the thematic thread of this recital. In fact, it was general research on the Baroque era, which

\textsuperscript{5} Hubbs, 13.
\textsuperscript{6} Hubbs, 51.
led me to relatively recent publications about Händel’s sexual proclivity, and ultimately, this topic.

Concrete evidence for Händel’s homosexual preference is, as one would expect, difficult to find. In Baroque Europe, the concept did not exist. Writings do allude to its existence, however little has been found written about any particular men – or women for that matter – in Händel’s life. However, the circumstantial evidence appears convincing, as there are stories of homoerotic interests while Händel was in Rome with the Cardinal Pamphili, in Florence with the Medicis and even in London where he ultimately experienced the bulk of his fame. Additionally, musicologist Ellen Harris, in her book *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas*, asserts a number of Händel’s patrons with whom he lived were gay, including noted Princes, Lords and Dukes. Harris seeks to identify embedded homosexual codes in the cantatas and discusses the role of Orpheus, “to whom the young Händel was often compared, [and who] was often treated in classical antiquity not only as the patron of music, but as the embodiment of erotic love between men.”

*Sonata G-Dur, HWV 363b* was first set to print in 1722, but was actually composed five to ten years earlier. As was common for the period, sonatas often saw slight revisions and re-assignment to alternate instruments. In this case, oboists have adopted this sonata as their own, transposed to F Major, the trumpet-like motive of the second movement’s *Allegro* being particularly idiomatic to their instrument. Following the practice of borrowing and re-assigning material, it is interesting to note the theme of

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the first movement's Adagio was taken by Händel from another of his works, the opera Rinaldo.

The third movement Adagio is particularly inviting of ornamentation given the very simple melodic flute line sitting above the weeping continuo. The concluding Bourrée angalise and Minuetto are typical dance forms utilized in many instrumental sonatas of the period. In this performance, the choice was made not to conclude the work with the Minuetto as written, but instead repeat the Bourrée, thus creating a sense of the more familiar ternary dance form.

The Nachtigallenarie, taken from the oratorio "L'Allegro, il Pensieroso ed il Moderato," was composed in 1740 in merely 17 days time. It was first performed on 27th February of that same year in London at the Theatre-Royal at Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Based upon the poetry of John Milton and Händel’s librettist, Charles Jennens, the title can be loosely translated as “Gladness, Melancholy and Moderation.” The extremely florid flute part, imitating a nightingale, was originally written as the foremost part along with the voice. The original string accompaniment was to have a subordinate role. Later editions of the work altered many lines to be doubled, or even be taken over, by the violins.

It is interesting to note that these bird-like, fluttering passages in D Major are actually more idiomatic and simple to execute on the one-keyed flute commonly used in Händel’s day. The one-keyed, or Baroque flute as it has become commonly known, plays a diatonic D Major scale as the flutist lifts each successive finger. Therefore, many

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of the tremolos—particularly those between F-sharp and D—are much more balanced in the flutist’s hand than when played on the modern, Boehm system flute.

As was common to the practice of the day, the original manuscript was virtually devoid of articulation markings, save for two sections in which Händel noted how he wished the flutist to phrase. Based upon what he noted, some other articulations were added by the editor (Hans-Jakob Seydel) for the flute. The vocal part had no additional articulations marked.

The text is as follows:

RECITATIVE
First, and chief, on golden wing, the cherub contemplation bring;
And the mute silence hist along, 'less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight, smoothing the rugged brow of night.

ANDANTE
Sweet bird, that shun’st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
I woo to hear thy evensong.

LARGHETTO
Or missing thee, I walk unseen, on the dry smooth shaven green,
To behold the wand’ring moon, riding near her highest noon.

Franz Schubert
Defining the sexual orientation of Franz Schubert, like that of Händel, is difficult due to the lack of specific mention in the surviving writings. Once again, arguably circumstantial material has been offered in support of the theory. Despite reoccurring rumors about Schubert’s sexuality, it wasn’t until the 1980s that the concept actually made it to print, spurring heated debate.
Schubert is reported to have left home at the age of nineteen to live with poet, Franz von Schober. Across the following twelve years of his life, Schubert set twelve of Schober’s poems, while also setting an erotic poem of Goethe’s and dedicating it to Schober. In addition to routinely living with Schober for extended periods of time, Schubert kept a close-knit circle of male friends, including another poet, Johannn Mayrhofer, as well as life-long school friend, Joseph Spaun. Most arguments in favor of Schubert’s homosexuality cite these passionate male relationships in addition to his overindulgence in the pursuit of physical pleasure, as support of the notion of his homosexuality.

The autumn of 1823 saw the composition of Franz Schubert’s well-known song cycle, Die schöne Müllerin, D. 795. Mere months later in January 1824, Schubert took the eighteen-piece cycle – specifically one movement entitled, “Trockne Blumen” – as inspiration for his Variationen über “Trockne Blumen,” D 802. Though speculation remains, it would appear the work was commissioned by Ferdinand Bogner, a friend, flutist and teacher in Vienna. The first printed score was published posthumously in 1850 by Diabelli et Comp. in Vienna as Op. 160. It was re-issued in 1872 as part of a collection of duos for violin and piano.

The work, particularly known for and representative of instrumental brilliance and virtuosity, begins quite true to the original with a funereal-like march presented by the piano in the Introduction. “The flute and piano then indulge in increasingly ornamental passage-work, coaxing each other along in order to arrive at a final triumphal march in
the major mode.”

It is noteworthy that Schubert himself discarded the original version of Variation V, preferring instead a slightly less difficult version, which he notated on individual manuscript, leaving the original piano part intact.

Ned Rorem

The American composer, Ned Rorem, especially known for his art song compositions, was born 23rd October, 1923, in Richmond, Indiana. The family’s peace-loving, Quaker doctrine supported Rorem’s interest in art, music and early study of piano. Rorem credits one particular piano teacher, Margaret Bonds, for introducing him to great French composers – especially Debussy and Ravel – which he felt were the basis for his Francophilia. To this day, Rorem refers to himself as being “French” in both his manner and compositional style. In a 2002 presentation at Brooklyn College, Rorem said in his usual forthright manner:

The world is divided into two aesthetic styles: French and German. The color red is German. The color blue is French. Men are German; women are French. Japan is French and China is German. German art is known for being profoundly superficial, and French art, for being superficially profound. I am French. If you disagree with my analysis, then you are German.

By the age of seventeen, Rorem was enrolled at the Northwestern University School of Music and only two years later, moved on to the Curtis Institute of Music as a

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scholarship student. By 1948, Rorem had Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from the Juilliard School of Music. That same year, he was awarded the George Gershwin Prize in composition while his song, *The Lordly Hudson*, was voted best-published song of the year by the Music Library Association. It was during this time of the 1940s, he worked and studied with both Virgil Thomson and Aaron Copland.

By 1950, Rorem had moved to Paris where he would rise to significant recognition. It was here that Rorem worked on and perfected his lyrical, French-infused compositional style while keeping record of his experiences in the musical and homosexual communities. He later published an extremely candid diary, *The Paris Diaries*, in 1966. This book, along with subsequently published diaries — *The New York Diary* (1967); *The Final Diary: 1961-1972* (1974); *The Absolute Gift: A New Diary* (1974); *Knowing When to Stop* (1994) — are considered by some to be little more than gossip and the outing of the private lives of many of the musical and political elite. But, they do offer valuable insight into the post-war era musical community, its intellectual climate, and their search for expression.

Interestingly, these diaries also proved to be a major component in the modern gay equality movement of the 20th-century, as they openly discussed the previously taboo subject of homosexuality, the love affairs and relations between iconic members of society, and the emerging movement to be free of the silencing societal bond which had long been imposed. In proper mid-century American society, such subjects had been
“considered either ludicrous or unmentionable, [which] helped make him a cult figure among gay readers who were not necessarily interested in his music.”

Rorem returned to the United States in 1957 and received the Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for his orchestral work, Air Music. Though being described by Time magazine as “the leading American composer of Art Songs,” Rorem’s instrumental and orchestral music is worthy of note and has been of significant contribution to the music of the 20th and 21st-centuries.

I would be remiss in discussing Rorem’s contributions in this era of music history without acknowledging and honoring the inconceivable loss the music and arts communities have suffered through the late 20th-century’s AIDS pandemic. Though the horrors of this disease have since crossed cultural, social, racial and continental divides, it was first the homosexual community in New York and, not coincidentally, the music and arts communities, which endured its ravages. In the course of slightly more than a decade, we lost nearly an entire generation of musicians and artists to a disease that was so misunderstood, it originally bore the moniker, “the gay cancer.”

Expressing the pain and prejudice associated with this pandemic fell to those musicians and artists who were still able. On 4th June, 1993, the inspiration of American baritone, William Parker, was realized. The AIDS Quilt Songbook, a song cycle by various composers written to poems by or about people living with AIDS, was performed at Alice Tully Hall in New York. Among the important composers in attendance and with a song in the cycle, was Ned Rorem. His song, A Dream of Nightingales, was

performed by baritone Kurt Ollman, with Rorem, himself, at the piano. William Parker continued to give performances around the United States until his final performance, in observance of World AIDS Day on 1st December, 1993. He died only three months later from complications of the very disease about which these compositions sought to express. We must recognize this particular song cycle, and Rorem’s part in its creation, as an important 20th-century social statement – one that changed the face of American music. With it, came a viable means of expression and an interest in classical art music that was otherwise waning.

Rorem, like many, saw far too many colleagues and friends pass away. Merely six years later in 1999, James Holmes, organist, music director and Rorem’s life partner for more than thirty years, died of AIDS. Rorem found himself again composing to express the inexpressible. Another Sleep, a cycle of nineteen songs based on texts by Milton, Shakespeare and Sappho, is in memoriam to James.

Rorem’s songs are a given – it is for what he is best known – however, it is his instrumental music which is in danger of being overlooked. He has, written three string quartets, which “rival any modern American efforts in the form.” His Violin Concerto (1985) was nominated for a Grammy Award, and his Flute Concerto (2002), the first in a series of commissions for the principal players of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was premiered by flutist Jeffrey Khaner, 4th December, 2003.

The Trio for Flute, Violoncello and Piano was composed in 1959 by commission of flutist, Bernard Goldberg and his ensemble, Musica Viva Trio. First performed in Pittsburgh, PA in 1960, the commission was intended to challenge the virtuosity of

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Goldberg, his cellist, Theo Salzman, and pianist Harry Franklin. The first movement, based upon only six notes is essentially a diminutive concerto for flute, while the third movement – based upon the same six notes – showcases the cello in a long, unaccompanied solo before the flute and piano join. Particularly interesting, is Rorem’s own description of the second movement,

…the Largo presents a whispered, idiotic conversation between flute and cello; whispered because both play muted and non-vibrato even at their loudest, idiotic because each voice says the same thing at the same time and neither listens to the other. 13

The work ends with a final Allegro in which all three instruments are on par exploring a four-note cell in a fiery and frantic manner.

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland could be considered one of America’s most notable composers. His music has become, for many, synonymous with American pride and 20th-century culture. It is the sound of “wide-open prairies and Appalachian springs” 14 and is heard in television advertisements, movie trailers and concert halls often in an effort to evoke some “spirit of America.”

Aaron Copland had studied in Paris and come away with a strong “Stravinsky-esque” modern style quite different from what we today commonly attribute to him. This style was growing out of favor with the masses and being criticized for being elitist. It

was Copland’s collegial relationship and gay friendship with Virgil Thomson, which caused him to consider, and ultimately compose in, a more simple and tonal way. It wasn’t until his 1938 ballet, *Billy the Kid*, that we would hear the sounds which would mark the beginning of a new style. This new “Americana” style became solidified as such by his rather quick succession of great compositions of similar ilk. The style exemplified the Midwest, open fields, and a resiliency of spirit, all of which were perceived as true American ideals.

Beginning in the early 1930s, the United States’ government actively sought inspirational and nationalistic icons, which would redefine America and take focus away from the collapse of the stock market in 1929 and the Great Depression. Thus, in an attempt to prove America’s cultural growth and value, it became imperative to identify not only a distinct American musical style, but also its composers.

For the first quarter-century, the development of American art music had not progressed well and an extremely low percentage of music being performed by America’s greatest orchestras was in fact, American. Attendance at symphony performances was at an all-time low. There was an overwhelming feeling that “the experimental and dissonant modern music of the 1920s and early 1930s had alienated many concertgoers,”15 while music appreciation in the country’s rural areas relied deeply on traditional folk styles, jazz, swing, and blues. Additionally, cuts in arts funding and education had caused formal music instruction to be unavailable to nearly two-thirds of the country’s children.

15 Kenneth J. Bindas, *All of This Music Belongs to the Nation*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 62.
Widespread musician unemployment encouraged the American Federation of Musicians to work closely with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration to create the Federal Music Project (FMP). The Federal Music Project became the central government agency charged with causing a musical awakening in the United States. “They hoped the FMP would help Americans listen to, study, compose and perform serious music more than at any other time in the country’s history,”\(^\text{16}\) and that its commitment to musical nationalism would be obvious. The Federal Music Project worked closely with the Music Teachers’ National Association in making music lessons available to school-aged children and, though instruction wasn’t the primary goal of the organization, it was accepted that musical instruction would cause the development of a better, well-rounded American citizen. This citizen, it was hoped, would then support the growth of American culture and nationalistic pride.

From its inception in 1935 to 1939, the Federal Music Project supported over 6,700 new American compositions, which were performed before nearly 150 million people.\(^\text{17}\) Thus wide, and relatively speedy, dissemination of new musical ideas supporting a nationalistic sense of pride, took place. The Federal Music Project’s high-profile goal of helping America discover its national culture helped bring to light Copland’s feelings that it was his duty to speak for, and to, the American people. Ultimately, Copland found great public acclaim with his new compositional style represented in *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Quiet City* (1940), *Our Town* (1940), *Rodeo* (1942), *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942), *Lincoln Portrait* (1942), *Appalachian Spring*.

\(^{16}\) Bindas, 15.
\(^{17}\) Bindas, 108.
(1944), and *The Tender Land* (1954). Truly, the development of a unique American music had found a renewed spirit in the 20th-century and in Copland.

"Manhattan during the war and up through the early 1950s was governed by Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, the father and mother of American music."\(^{18}\) According to Rorem, young composers chose one faction or the other. A third option, for those who were truly serious, did not exist. Though one might expect their differing compositional styles to be the crux of students’ choice of mentor, it often weighed less heavily than did the personality traits and sexual overtones of the great composers themselves.

Copland, was reserved in his flirtations, typically requiring meetings to be set by colleagues. Many such meetings were initiated simply by one’s fulfilling the prerequisite of being a young, male composer. It was widely understood that Copland was particularly interested in the type of relationship with young men he felt was exemplified by the pederasty of Greek culture. He felt “the man who lives the creative life in today’s world is, in spite of himself, a symbolic figure.”\(^{19}\) Copland took seriously his position as a mentor and felt there were great societal benefits from this type of mentoring and love relationship. He often referred to himself as an “ardent disciple” of André Gide whose book, *Corydon*, explained and defended the “intergenerational erotic and mentoring relationships between men and youths.”\(^{20}\) Because of this belief, Copland was typically in the company of young men; though many of these relationships were non-sexual, the homosexual overtones were well understood.

\(^{19}\) Aaron Copland, *Copland on Copland*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1963), 52.
\(^{20}\) Hubbs, 11.
Copland’s self-esteem, acceptance, even pride about his homosexual inclinations, caused him to act more freely in public and feel, at least apparently, less concerned with concealing this facet of his life. This sense of assuredness wholly supported his high-profile career and served to strengthen his position of success.

Wherever he may be or whatever he may say, he is in his own mind the embodiment of the free man. He must feel free in order to function creatively, for only in so far as he functions as he pleases, will he create significant work.\(^{21}\)

Copland clearly saw the need to be unencumbered by his lifestyle in order to fully self-express and provide leadership. Given this sense of freedom, he was better able to navigate his career paths in a socially “normal” manner, keeping him, for those in the mainstream, above reproach.

Clearly, Copland and Thomson’s roles as the “parents of American music” encompassed far more than mere social encounters or casual flirtations. Their style of work, as one would expect, spread to their students and therefore onward. This was further solidified by routinely introducing colleagues to one another, playing for one another in concerts and showcases, as well as socializing at known gay establishments.

Without falling prey to the enticing and yet treacherous trap of attempting to identify all those known, or probable, gay musicians potentially associated with the Copland-Thomson circle, it is helpful to follow a few of the intertwined threads which served to support this gay American composers’ network. Some notable members of this group, in addition to “father and mother” themselves, are Leonard Bernstein, Ned Rorem, David Diamond, Mark Blitzstein, and Paul Bowles. Outside the inner circle, gay

\(^{21}\) Copland, 53.
influences can be attributed to Gertrude Stein, Nadia Boulanger, Samuel Barber, Giancarlo Menotti, John Cage, Henry Cowell, Benjamin Britten, and Fran
cis Poulenc.

These far-reaching connections inevitably brought a sense of cohesion to a group of individuals, which might otherwise be marginalized and secretive. Within the social constructs of this chosen family, the progeny did continually turn to Copland and Thomson for both social and musical guidance.

Aaron Copland’s *Duo for Flute and Piano* was composed on commission by pupils and friends of the late flutist, William Kincaid, whom for many years, was solo flutist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Completed in 1971, it was first performed by Elaine Shaffer and Hephzibah Menuhin on 3rd October of that year at the Settlement Music School in Philadelpia, PA.

The work begins with a simple, flowing, unaccompanied statement by the flute built around the telltale Copland-esque intervals of fourths and fifths. The first duo moment between the flute and piano begins with another recognizably Copland treatment of dotted eighth and sixteenth notes reminiscent of the “Americana” style for which Copland is so widely-known. The second movement, *Poetic, somewhat mournful*, elides seamlessly with the third, *Lively, with bounce*, and unabashedly reminisces the sounds of *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*. 
CONCLUSION

Can we assert that there was, and is, something intrinsically different between straight and gay musicians? Can we point to an intangible sensibility somehow embedded in the homosexual tendency, which would directly cause the composition of a better music, a more evocative style, and arguably, a nationalistic pride that would necessitate its own term, "Americana," in an effort describe it? As enticing as this may be, I am not wholly certain.

Clearly, one can attest to the difference in sexual proclivity in an oppressive society necessitating, and indeed causing, a special creativity in order to well survive. Being faced with possible imprisonment, or even death, certainly would encourage one to assimilate, at least publicly. Is this very ability to transform oneself, and to do so stylishly and in plain view, the "sensibility" which is most often associated with the mix of male and female we have come to know today as queer or gay? If so, could this sensibility when applied to the art of musical composition readily produce a different, perhaps even better, product than would be possible without it? Certainly, one could argue that whatever creativity or sensibility might develop, it would most definitely have an effect on the compositions of the gay composer.

We can, however, correctly and historically connect an ever-expanding group of exceptional musicians, all of whom shared the additional commonality of their homosexuality. In this particular case of the Copland-Thomson enclave in early 20th-century Manhattan, they championed one another and thusly, encouraged musical and personal transformation. That transformation and growth was integral in the production
of an inspiring repertoire. That repertoire became synonymous with America, and remains so even to today. Ironically, it would appear that the quintessential, open prairie, "Appalachian spring," Americana-style of music, which on a visceral level produces instant feelings of pride and patriotism for much of the American people, is in fact born of the very thing for which prejudice has caused so much denial and pain.

After Thomson’s death, Leonard Bernstein, student of both Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, wrote for the *New York Times* a memorial, in which he said,

"[Thomson would] always remain rightly alive in the history of music, if only for the extraordinary influence his witty and simplistic music had on his colleagues, especially Aaron Copland, and through them on most of American music in our century." He went on to say, "I know that I am one twig on that tree and I will always cherish and revere Virgil, the source."²²

Given this acknowledgment and connection to this specific compositional lineage, it seems sensible at the very least, to acknowledge the deeply embedded homosexual influence on America’s 20th-century music, which did become recognized as the quintessentially American sound, "Americana.” Additionally, one would therefore have to acknowledge the contributions of all homosexual composers throughout history. Indeed, their contributions have been truly significant and worthy of respect and gratitude.

²² Hubbs, 42.


APPENDIX

Program

Rik Noyce, a student of David Shostac, performed the following program in a graduate flute recital on 31st March, 2007 at 8:00 p.m. in the California State University, Northridge Recital Hall, assisted by Linda Jackson, soprano; Saundra Sonderling, violoncello; and Paul Switzler, piano.

Sonate G-Dur, HWV 363b ..............................................Georg Friedrich Händel
(1685-1770)

Adagio
Allegro
Adagio
Bourrée anglaise
Minuetto; Bourrée

Nachtigallenarie aus “L’Allegro, il Pensieroso ed il Moderato” ....Georg Friedrich Händel
(1685-1770)

Recitative; Andante; Larghetto

Variationen über “Trockne Blumen,” D 802 .........................Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Introduktion
Thema
Variation I
Variation II
Variation III
Variation IV
Variation V
Variation VI
Variation VII

INTERMISSION
Trio for Flute, Violoncello and Piano ...........................................Ned Rorem 
   (b. 1923)
   Largo misterioso; Allegro
   Largo
   Andante
   Allegro molto

Duo for Flute and Piano..........................................................Aaron Copland 
   (1900-1990)
   Flowing
   Poetic, somewhat mournful
   Lively, with bounce

Encore: Lo! Here the Gentle Lark.......................................Sir Henry Bishop 
   (1787-1856)

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Program Notes

The connection between the composers represented in this program, though 
spanning a timeline of more than 300 years, is more intimate than what might initially 
seem evident. The common bond between them was something other than their talent, 
love of, and life in, music. It is that which is intangible, yet recognized; that which was 
unspoken and yet known; that which was relegated to the secrecy of “the closet” and yet 
had a defining effect on classical art music. These, along with uncountable others, were 
among those gifted musicians who would today likely be identified as gay. Perhaps they would not have self-identified as such – as in the case of most, the term had not yet been
coined – but they clearly recognized and honored the very sensibilities for which they would certainly otherwise have found themselves marginalized.

For some, it verges upon heresy to speak of the lives of these great composers in such a manner. In fact, several of today’s leading musicologists have endured the threatening ramifications of this assertion. The very fact this debate remains so polarizing and heated only further serves to illustrate the topic’s relevance. Even today, in the 21st-century, where at least a modicum of tolerance and liberalism might be expected, people are routinely and lawfully discriminated against at the least, or beaten and even killed at worst, simply because of their sexual orientation. Such discrimination, albeit much more subtle, has been particularly true within the musical community where, despite an awareness and relative acceptance of its existence, homosexuality has been historically frowned upon and therefore seen as being incongruent with success.

Virgil Thomson spoke directly to the difficulties historically associated with being an openly gay musician when he said, “Every profession is a secret society. The musical profession is more secret than most ... no other field of human activity is quite so hermetic, so isolated.”

Despite this barrier of secrecy in western art music through the recent centuries, we can connect an ever-expanding group of exceptional musicians, all of whom share the commonality of their homosexuality. One particular example, the Aaron Copland-Virgil Thomson musical enclave in early 20th-century Manhattan – which bore a lineage of students including the likes of Leonard Bernstein and Ned Rorem – shared this bond. They championed one another and encouraged mutual musical as well as personal transformation, which was integral in the production of an amazing repertoire.
Copland’s repertoire, ironically, became synonymous with the quintessential, open prairie, “Appalachian Spring,” Americana-style music that still today produces a visceral feeling of pride and patriotism for much of the American people. Indeed, the contributions of these gay composers have been truly significant and worthy of respect and gratitude.