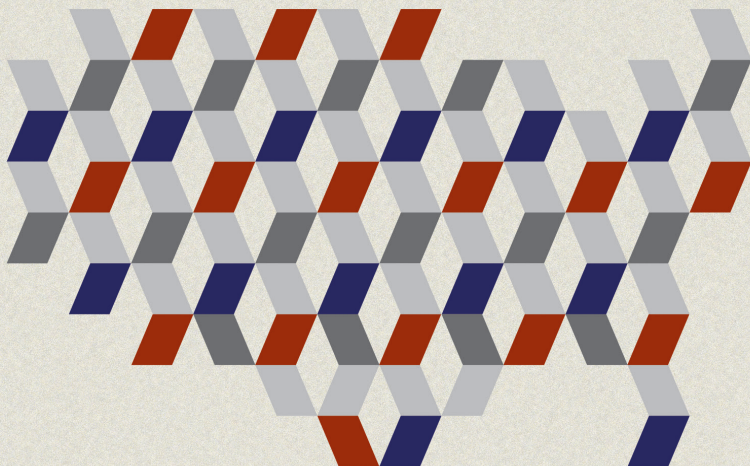
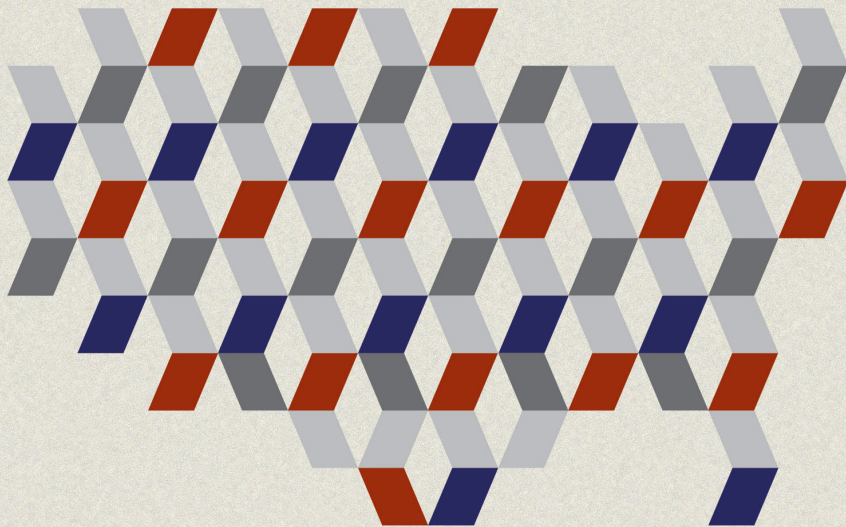


Aspects of America: Pulitzer Edition



OREGON SYMPHONY **CARLOS KALMAR**
PISTON • GOULD • HANSON





ASPECTS OF AMERICA: PULITZER EDITION

Walter Piston (1894-1976) Symphony No. 7 (1960, Pulitzer Prize 1961)

1	Con moto	7. 00
2	Adagio pastorale	10. 19
3	Allegro festevole	6. 22

Morton Gould (1913-1996) Stringmusic (1993, Pulitzer Prize 1995)

4	Prelude	5. 40
5	Tango	4. 10
6	Dirge	6. 39
7	Ballad	4. 02
8	Strum (perpetual motion)	5. 04

Howard Hanson (1896-1981) Symphony No. 4, Op. 34, "Requiem" (1943, Pulitzer Prize 1944)

9	Andante inquieto (Kyrie)	7. 22
10	Elegy: Largo (Requiescat)	4. 41
11	Presto (Dies irae)	2. 40
12	Largo pastorale (Lux aeterna)	7. 07
Total playing time:		71. 08

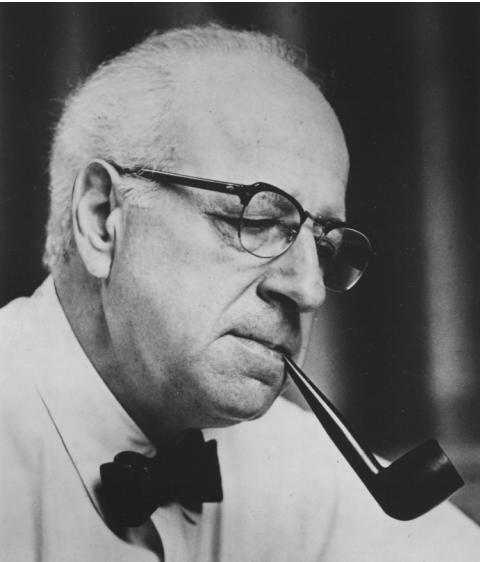
Oregon Symphony
Conducted by Carlos Kalmar

Walter Piston (1894-1976) Symphony No. 7

"The essential part of composition, the creative part, cannot be taught. A composer is answerable only to himself."
— Walter Piston

Any music theory or composition student knows the name Walter Piston. His textbook, *Harmony*, written in 1941, is still used by students today. After serving as a musician in U.S. Navy bands during World War I, Piston attended Harvard, where he studied composition and music theory. In 1924, Piston traveled to Paris to work with renowned composition teacher Nadia Boulanger and composer Paul Dukas. Piston's students at Harvard, where he taught from 1926 until his retirement in 1960, included Elliott Carter, Leonard Bernstein, John Harbison, and Daniel Pinkham, among others.

But Piston was as much a composer as a teacher. He enjoyed considerable success as a composer during his lifetime, garnering three New York Music Critic's Circle Awards and two Pulitzer Prizes (for his Third and Seventh symphonies, respectively). Piston's music was frequently programmed by American orchestras, particularly the Boston Symphony, during the 1940s and '50s.



Since his death in 1976, however, Piston's music makes only occasional appearances in orchestra concerts. Piston's music radiates life, craft, drama, and sophisticated wit; his fame as a teacher should not overshadow his substantial talent as a composer.

Piston won his second Pulitzer Prize for Symphony No. 7 in 1961. Biographer Howard Pollack calls it Piston's "pastoral" symphony, particularly for the primary theme of the *Adagio*, and for its resemblance to Piston's New England Sketches, which the composer explained were inspired by — but not literal descriptions of — nature. Rhythmic drive characterizes the dynamic *Con moto*, while Piston's mastery of orchestral timbre shows to great effect in the *Adagio pastorale*, which features a plaintive solo for English horn and later solo flute. The *Allegro festevole* combines the energy of the first movement with the brilliant colors of the second, and concludes with a jubilant shout.

Morton Gould (1913–1996)

Stringmusic

Composer, arranger, conductor, pianist, child prodigy: Morton Gould answered to all of these. His life and career traced the eclectic course of 20th-century American music, from vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley to Broadway and concert halls around the world. Gould made over 100 recordings, many of which became bestsellers, and a number of his compositions, including *Stringmusic*, are now part of the standard orchestral repertoire.

In January 1995, Gould told his biographer Peter Goodman, "I would love the Pulitzer Prize, which I will never get, by the way." Three months later, *Stringmusic* won the prestigious composition award, much to Gould's surprise and delight.

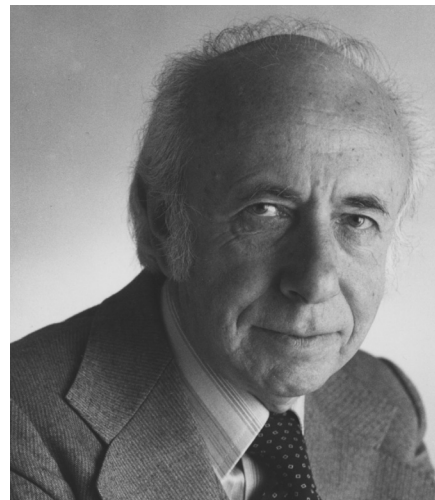
Stringmusic, which Gould composed for his friend and colleague Mstislav "Slava" Rostropovich, showcases all the possible

sounds and colors of a string orchestra. In his program notes, Gould wrote, "*Stringmusic* is a large-scale suite, or serenade, for string orchestra . . . I have been especially concerned with contrasts in terms of color and texture; there is a great deal of antiphonal writing — sometimes to the extent of suggesting two separate string orchestras. Frequently I have one section playing entirely *pizzicato* (plucked strings) while the other plays *arco* (bowed). Basically, *Stringmusic* is a lyrical work, built entirely on original themes and reflecting, in a way, the many moods and many facets of a man and musician we have all come to know for the intensity and emotion of his commitment to music and life."

"When Slava conducted my Latin American Symphonette in 1990 . . . he told me he especially liked the second movement, a Tango, because he is 'a tango expert,'" Gould recalled. " . . . After a somewhat strident Argentine-style tango episode,

with its pronounced rhythm, there is a striking change to a languorous, voluptuous episode for four violins, in the old Mitteleuropa cafe style — a sort of parody, but not quite."

The *Dirge* reflects "not only the intensity but in particular the sense of sorrow, loss, and even anger that must be associated with so much that Slava has experienced in consequence of his ideals and his loyalties,"



said Gould. "The cortege-like quality of this elegiac music, I feel, is in keeping with a prominent part of his personality." In the *Ballad*, which Gould describes as "a Lied for string orchestra, a sort of love note," the emotional tension dissipates, and the concluding *Strum* "starts very fast, with tremolo effects and double notes and lots of contrast, and takes off as a real virtuoso piece, unreservedly jubilant."

Howard Hanson (1896–1981) **Symphony No. 4, Op. 34, "Requiem"**

Howard Hanson, born to Swedish immigrant parents, fused American and Nordic identities in his compositions. Like his fellow Scandinavian Carl Nielsen, Hanson is best known for his instrumental works, particularly symphonies, as his primary means of musical expression.

Hanson's contemporaries regarded him as a neo-Romantic composer, and Hanson himself definitively rejected the austerity of

atonal and 12-tone music in his approach to composition. (Hanson did, however, incorporate dissonance and explorations of bitonality, or two key areas sounding simultaneously.) Hanson also credited Italian Renaissance composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina as a major influence on his style. "I learned an awful lot from Palestrina about letting the lines flow through the harmonies," said Hanson in a 1978 interview.



In 1921, after winning the Rome Prize for composition, Hanson moved to that city, where he immersed himself in Palestrina's music and studied orchestration with Ottorino Respighi. Hanson returned to the United States in 1924 to head the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. During Hanson's 40 years at Eastman, he taught composition, built Eastman into a prestigious and academically grounded music program with an international reputation, and championed the works of American composers.

Of his seven symphonies, No. 4, subtitled "Requiem" and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1944, was reportedly Hanson's favorite. He gave its four movements titles from the Catholic Requiem Mass for the Dead: *Kyrie*, *Requiescat*, *Dies irae*, and *Lux aeterna*. At just over 20 minutes, Symphony No. 4 is a taut, highly focused work. The notes of the *Kyrie* (Lord Have Mercy) are first sounded by four horns and later by cellos in variation. Lilted winds and a chorale

of trombones build towards a dissonant climax, which Hanson marks in the score with the words "Christ have mercy." *Requiescat* (a prayer for the soul of the dead) features a simple bassoon melody with a walking bass line. The agitation of the *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath) comes from its pulsing undercurrent and dramatic, sometimes frenetic, exclamations from the winds (especially piccolo), brasses, and xylophone. The transfixing calm of the *Lux aeterna* (Eternal Light) offers solace as it promises peace for both the dead and the living.

"This is not merely a solemn, ecclesiastic work of art," wrote composer Hugo Leichtentritt. "Opposing its religious emotions dealing with the mystery of death are the joys and sorrows, doubts and turmoil of human life. And the composition gains its peculiar individual character by this very mixture, this intertwining of the two fundamental conditions of the world of nature — life and death."





Carlos Kalmar

The Oregon Symphony

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chair

Peter Frajola, Del M. Smith
and Maria Stanley Smith
associate concertmaster
chair

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concertmaster chair

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Inés Volgar Belgique,
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Zachariah Galatis
Rachel Ordaz*

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English Horn

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Bass Trombone

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principal

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Brian Gardiner*
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Harp

Jennifer Craig, principal
Maria Casale*

* guest musician

^ not heard on this
recording

Acknowledgments

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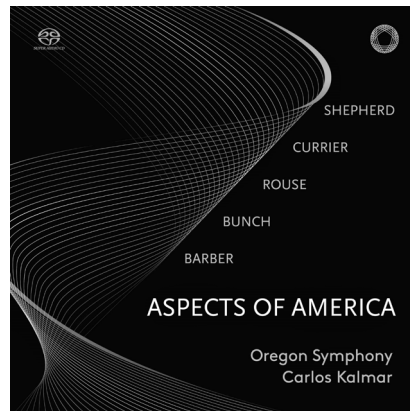
This album was recorded live at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland, Oregon, in 2017 (Gould) and 2018 (Hanson and Piston).

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