



COPLAND

Symphony No. 3

Three Latin American Sketches

Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Leonard Slatkin



Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Symphony No. 3 • Three Latin American Sketches

Symphony No. 3 (1946)

Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra premiered Copland's *Third Symphony* in October 1946, a year after the end of World War II. In his autobiography Copland calls the work "a wartime piece – or, more accurately, an end-of-war piece – intended to reflect the euphoric spirit of the country at the time." Though this characterization is accurate, the narrative path traced in the 40 minutes of the symphony suggests that euphoria is achieved only after private reflection and collective struggle.

American composer Charles Ives was one of the first to include preexistent or newly composed hymn tunes within the symphonic texture to evoke nostalgia for another era; by Copland's time the device had become commonplace for American symphonic music. The first movement of *Symphony No. 3* is notable for its tight, integrated construction and unusual form. It cycles twice through three closely related themes, following a large-scale pitch scheme that grows naturally out of the melodic intervals in the opening. The violas and English horn introduce a tender second theme, which later appears in counterpoint with the first, and the trombones introduce a stern and more dissonant third theme. The movement builds to a fiery peroration that leads to an extended coda, in which the strings play an elongated statement of the opening hymn against a new bass line.

Composer David Del Tredici remarked that Copland was skilled at suggesting "that the music was as loud as it could possibly be... while at the same time saving something in reserve for an even stronger second and third repetition." This compositional strategy is clearly evident in the second movement, which opens with a bold ascending gesture in the French horn characterized by a Lydian (or raised) fourth. The motto reappears two more times; each time it is given expanded instrumentation and is stretched in time to sound even bigger. The middle section of the movement begins with a gentle oboe

melody that recalls Copland's musical evocation of the Western landscape in his ballet *Billy the Kid*.

The third movement is in a loose ternary form. At its opening the strings play an elegiac transformation of the third theme from the first movement. The following section contains a graceful dance, introduced by the flute, and dissolves back into the veiled texture and melodies from the opening, leaving the orchestra in a state of uncertainty. The movement proceeds without a pause to the finale, which opens by quoting one of Copland's most well-known pieces, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, first quietly in the winds, and then forcefully in the brass.

Copland wrote the *Fanfare* in 1943 at the request of Eugene Goossens, director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Goossens had solicited several composers for brief fanfares in support of soldiers, and Copland decided on his unique title after concluding that the common man was "doing all the dirty work in the war," and was therefore his most deserving dedicatee. He probably drew the phrase "common man" from a 1942 speech by vice president Henry Wallace, which challenged Americans to look beyond merely defeating Nazism as a goal of the War, and pursue broader social ideals.

The fanfare acts as an introduction to an extended sonata movement. The first thematic material includes scat-like syncopated passages that recall Copland's earlier jazz-influenced compositions. Fragments of the fanfare, played by the brass, provide a transition to a second theme, which is more song-like and marked by irregular rhythms. The development combines elements from the first theme and fanfare and builds to a point of crisis: a stinging, dissonant chord played by the entire orchestra. The piccolo tentatively reasserts material from the first theme, and other instruments, including the celesta, join in an ethereal recapitulation that weaves fragments of the fanfare with the opening theme of the first movement, giving a sense of returning full circle to close the whole symphony.

The movement concludes with a statement of the

second theme, now transformed into a stirring anthem in even rhythms. It is accompanied by a busy texture that combines the three themes heard previously with clanging anvils and other percussion instruments. Elizabeth Crist has suggested that the integration of the fanfare into the accompaniment, along with the unexpected transformation of a previous idea into something singable by many people, suggests that the end of the symphony creates "victory without conquest" – that is, it translates into musical terms Wallace's ideal of moving beyond military victory to an era of social cooperation.

David Heetderks

Three Latin American Sketches (1971)

It was in 1932 on a visit to Mexico that composer/ conductor Carlos Chávez took Copland to the popular nightclub El Salón México, and the visit resulted in the very famous short orchestral work of the same name. This nightclub also seems to have planted in Copland a great love for Latin-American music, and the composer would later produce the 1942 *Danzón cubano* and later still the *Three Latin American Sketches*.

In 1959, Gian Carlo Menotti, director of the famous Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, asked Copland to write a short orchestral work. Being in Acapulco at the time, Copland responded with *Paisaje Mexicano* (Mexican Landscape). However, when the piece was finished he realized that it was too short for concert use – so he quickly wrote a second piece and called it *Danza de Jalisco* (Dance of Jalisco, named for the culturally and economically rich Mexican state of Jalisco). Although both

pieces were completed in time for the concert, only the second, the *Danza*, was actually performed at the Festival in July of 1959. Under the title of *Two Mexican Pieces*, they were first performed together at a private invitation concert of the Pan-American Union in Washington, D.C. in April of 1965 with Copland himself conducting. In 1967 Copland made some revisions to the *Danza* for a two-piano version, and a few years after that conductor Andre Kostelanetz asked him to add a third piece, which became *Estríbillo*, based on a popular song from Venezuela. The newly-titled *Three Latin American Sketches* were first performed by Kostelanetz and the New York Philharmonic in June of 1972.

As Copland was preparing a recording of the work with the New Philharmonia Orchestra of London in 1974, he offered the following comments for CBS Records: "I would describe the character of the *Three Latin American Sketches* as being just what the title says. The tunes, the rhythms and the temperament of the pieces are folksy, while the orchestration is bright and snappy and the music sizzles along – or at least it seems to me that it does. Nevertheless, the *Sketches* are not so light as to be pop-concert material, although certainly they would be a light number in a regular concert, much in the same way as *El Salón México*."

In typical fashion, Copland based all three movements on traditional melodies, subjecting them to his own special blend of fragmentation and development. In them are found complex and unusual rhythms, unexpected dissonances, and novel orchestration, and they show off his skill in making the most out of simple, uncomplicated material.

Charles Greenwell

Conductor's note

There are few works as iconic as Aaron Copland's *Symphony No. 3*. Some even consider it the finest work in symphonic form by an American composer. What is less known is that after consultation with Leonard Bernstein, Copland made alterations to a few passages in this work. Only recently has the original version been made available to musicians. Most striking among these changes is the elongated coda, which adds a broader and richer palette of sonority to the already boisterous proceedings. It is this original version that we have chosen to record. Regardless of whether one believes the excisions were a good or bad idea, the *Third Symphony*

remains at the head of the class when it comes to true symphonic form presented from an American viewpoint.

Copland had a strong affinity for the melodies and rhythms of Mexico. Perhaps his least-known work expressing these feelings comes in the form of his *Three Latin American Sketches*. Although written for relatively small orchestral forces, they contain all the wit and energy we have come to associate with this composer's travels south.

Leonard Slatkin

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Leonard Slatkin

Photo: Nico Rodamel



Internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin is Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He also maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting and is active as a composer, author, and educator. Highlights of the 2015-16 season included a three-week Brahms festival in Detroit; engagements with the St. Louis Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the NHK Symphony in Tokyo; and debuts with Beijing's China Philharmonic Orchestra and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. Summer events included a tour of Japan with the ONL and performances of Barber's *Vanessa* in Santa Fe. During the 2016-17 season – in addition to his regular duties in Detroit and Lyon – he will return to St. Louis; tour the U.S.

and Europe with the ONL; conduct overseas with the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Verdi Orchestra in Milan, and San Carlo Theatre Orchestra in Naples; and serve as chairman of the jury and conductor of the 2017 Cliburn Competition. Slatkin's more than 100 recordings have garnered seven GRAMMY® awards and 64 nominations. His recent Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninov, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he has recorded the complete Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO (available online as digital downloads). A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor. He has received Austria's Decoration of Honor in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his book, *Conducting Business*. Slatkin has conducted virtually all of the leading orchestras in the world. As Music Director, he has held posts with the New Orleans, St. Louis, and National symphony orchestras, and he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He has served as Principal Guest Conductor of London's Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and the Minnesota Orchestra. For more information, visit leonardslatkin.com.

Aaron
COPLAND
(1900-1990)

Symphony No. 3 (1946) 45:09

- 1 I. Molto moderato, with simple expression 10:40**
- 2 II. Allegro molto 8:33**
- 3 III. Andantino quasi allegretto 11:02**
- 4 IV. Molto deliberato (freely, at first) 14:54**

Three Latin American Sketches (1971) 10:09

- 5 No. 1. Estribillo 3:17**
- 6 No. 2. Paisaje Mexicano 3:23**
- 7 No. 3. Danza de Jalisco 3:28**

Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Leonard Slatkin

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Cover photograph of Leonard Slatkin by Donald Dietz



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Première in 1946, a year after the end of World War II, Copland's iconic *Third Symphony* was described by the composer as 'a wartime piece – or, more accurately, an end-of-war piece – intended to reflect the euphoric spirit of the country at the time.' The fourth movement, heard on this recording in its original uncut form, opens by quoting one of his most well-known pieces, *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Copland described the *Three Latin American Sketches* 'as being just what the title says. The tunes, the rhythms and the temperament of the pieces are folksy, while the orchestration is bright and snappy and the music sizzles along.'

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Playing
Time:
55:18