

PHILIP GENTRY

Leonard Bernstein's
The Age of Anxiety:
A Great American Symphony
during McCarthyism

In 1949, shortly after Harry Truman was sworn into his first full term as president, a group of American writers, artists, scientists, and other public intellectuals organized a "Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace," to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. They were joined by a number of their counterparts in the Soviet Union, or at least as many as could procure a visa from the US State Department. Most prominent among the visitors was composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who through an interpreter delivered a lecture on the dangers of fascist influence in music handcrafted for the occasion by the Soviet government. The front-page headline in the *New York Times* the next morning read, "Shostakovich Bids All Artists Lead War on New 'Fascists.'"¹

The Waldorf-Astoria conference was at once the last gasp of the Popular Front, and the beginning of the anticommunist movement soon to be known as McCarthyism. Henry Wallace's communist-backed third-party bid for the presidency the previous fall had garnered 2.4 percent of the popular vote, but the geopolitical tensions undermining the Popular Front coalition since the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 were out in plain view a decade later. Once-communist intellectuals, like Irving Kristol and Dwight MacDonald, vigorously protested Stalinist influence on the conference, and in an ominous preview of the populist attraction of anticommunism, thousands of New Yorkers protested on the streets outside. Some of these activists were receiving secret assistance from the CIA, and the conservative New York press played a substantial role in

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manipulating public sentiment, but there was also no denying that an anticommunist movement was gaining steam.²

One of the most prominent speakers at the conference was the composer Aaron Copland, the most famous ambassador of American classical music. Copland had a long association with communism and other left-wing causes.³ Although never a member of the party, he was the epitome of a "fellow traveler" who lent his name and money to many communist-associated causes and organizations. In the wake of the Waldorf conference, *Life* magazine published a photo of Copland in their list of communist "dupes and fellow travelers," and more direct repercussions soon followed.⁴ Most famously, a patriotic work that had been scheduled to be performed at the presidential inauguration of Dwight Eisenhower, the *Lincoln Portrait*, was pulled from the program after conservative congressman Fred Busbey objected. In 1953 Copland was subpoenaed to testify before Joseph McCarthy's Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The questioning was hostile, and although no further official action was taken, he had difficulty obtaining a passport for several years, and never again entered political life so directly.⁵

Before all of this, however, there was Copland's speech at the Waldorf conference. In it, he ruminated on how the onset of the cold war was beginning to affect artistic activity in the United States:

Artists, by definition, hate all wars—hot or cold. But lately I've been thinking that the cold war is almost worse for art than the real thing—for it permeates the atmosphere with fear and anxiety. An artist can function at his best only in a vital and healthy environment for the simple reason that the very act of creation is an affirmative gesture. An artist fighting in a war for a cause he holds just has something affirmative he can believe in. That artist, if he can stay alive, can create art. But throw him into a mood of suspicion, ill-will, and dread that typifies the cold war attitude and he'll create nothing.⁶

In this oft-quoted passage, Copland describes a scenario of the artist rendered mute by the surrounding age of anxiety. Copland's career after his experience during the red scare of the 1950s has often been read as a kind of self-silencing along these lines. Howard Pollack argues that, at the very least, Copland was politically silenced, no longer associating himself with contemporary political debates and denying his activist past.⁷ Jennifer DeLapp has linked Copland's "increasing abstraction" and his experiments with serial procedures to this changing political mood.⁸

As the most prominent composer ensnared by postwar anticommunism, Aaron Copland has long been a symbol of the relationship between music and McCarthyism. His story is typical of McCarthyist narratives, in which respected citizens were repeatedly forced in an atmosphere of cold war paranoia to denounce the "premature anti-fascism" of the in-

terwar years. Like many others, Copland was not brought forth to testify about current political activity, but about his activism of the 1930s. And the work removed from the Eisenhower concert was not a new work, but one written almost a decade earlier. It was at this moment Aaron Copland and other composers of his generation began to lose their central place in the institutional mainstream of classical music in the United States. Copland had another two decades of productive composition ahead of him, and remained a significant force in American music, but he was also no longer at its center. With the decline of Copland's influence also came the decline of his generation's cultural politics, with its vision of progressive politics melded with populist music.

The story of McCarthyism here is not the past as it looked from 1953, but on the future that McCarthy's inquisitions helped to shape. Thus we shall redirect our attention to a younger composer who was also present at the Waldorf-Astoria peace conference. Unlike Copland, Leonard Bernstein in the late 1940s and early 1950s was, for better and for worse, the future of "serious" music in the United States. As Joseph Horowitz has put it, "no other career so registers and illuminates the twentieth-century fate of classical music in the United States."⁹ If Aaron Copland's experience with McCarthyism was largely a matter of defending his past, Bernstein's own brushes with anticommunism served more to shape his future.

Not coincidentally, in the same year as the Waldorf-Astoria conference, as that grim future was coming into focus, Bernstein composed his second symphony, subtitled *The Age of Anxiety*. In that work, Bernstein faced directly the challenge posed by the Copland generation. Later in life, he could affect a certain cynicism about that challenge, famously quipping of Copland's Third that it had "become an American monument, like the Washington Monument or the Lincoln Memorial or something."¹⁰ But in the late 1940s, Bernstein still believed that there could be a "Great American Symphony," and that he could be the one to write it. That symphony was *The Age of Anxiety*. That such a cynical and ultimately antiheroic piece of music was his response speaks volumes about the emotional tone of the United States at the dawn of McCarthyism. It was, he later wrote, "my most American work."¹¹

The Age of Anxiety and The Age of Anxiety

Thanks to Bernstein's youth, his brushes with McCarthyism were comparatively small compared to those of Copland. Elizabeth Bergman Crist and Barry Seldes have both explored some of the details of his experiences, which included difficulties securing a passport and heightened sensitivity to the political resonances of stage works like *Wonderful Town* (1953).¹² More interestingly, as Crist in particular has shown, Bernstein's

music in the wake of McCarthyism evidences a distinctly new cultural politics when compared to that before. But this line of inquiry can be pushed farther—did McCarthyism, or at least this generalized climate of “fear and anxiety,” affect its inhabitants in the profound manner for which Copland seems to argue for? If true, then that influence would be found not just in overtly anti-McCarthy works of the mid-1950s such as Bernstein's *Candide* (1956) or Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) (or, indeed, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* [1957]), but more broadly as well. Such a question probes at the heart of the deep and robust musicological literature on the relationship between music and politics, especially in the wake of analyses that allow for a wider and more subtle variety of such relationships to be explored. Within the domain of mid-century American composers, for example, Crist has shown the utility in exploring not just the overt activism of a figure like Copland, but also the political dimensions of his aesthetic ideologies, showing convincingly how leftist politics of the 1930s and 1940s influence even an abstract work such as his *Third Symphony*.¹³

McCarthyism, however, presents a thornier problem. The status of McCarthyism as a coherent set of politics is not at all assured; historians still debate whether it was a genuine broad-based social movement or merely a cynical manipulation on the part of the Republican Party for electoral gain.¹⁴ Even if for the sake of argument we assume a political ideology on the part of McCarthyism, to examine its relationship with left-wing composers such as Copland or Bernstein involves analyzing political absences: the censorship, the self-restraint, the retreat into abstraction. Bernstein himself noticed the presence of absence during McCarthyism, remarking on the lacuna of documents from that period of his life when publishing the collection *Findings* (1982).¹⁵ This predominance of absence and silence is why I have argued elsewhere that John Cage's *4 33* stands as perhaps the best example of the relationship between music and politics during McCarthyism.¹⁶

At the same time, Copland's fear and anxiety can form an ideology of its own beyond just absence, and one that can be discerned in compositional practice. A useful place to look for evidence of McCarthyism's pull on American culture is in what might be a less obvious location than his more overtly referential stage works: Bernstein's symphonic writing. Bernstein is not known as a symphonist; he only wrote three during his long career, and none was an unqualified success. But as a genre the symphony carries unique power, having long been enlisted in the cultural work of nation building. In the late 1930s and 1940s, writing a symphony was akin to writing the Great American Novel.¹⁷ It was the generic location of a composer's most upwardly mobile aspirations, his or her chance to prove himself in the most prestigious venue possible, in a manner bespeaking a potential universality.

Bernstein wrote three "symphonies," although none can be considered completely traditional: *Jeremiah*, begun as sketches while he was still an undergraduate and completed in 1942, is a three-movement programmatic work for orchestra and mezzo-soprano. *The Age of Anxiety*, written in 1949, is a two-part programmatic work for piano and orchestra. The *Kaddish* Symphony, written in 1963 for the New York Philharmonic, marshals an orchestra, full choir, boys' choir, soprano, and narrator. Reviews of the Second Symphony were, and remain, especially mixed. Few were fully convinced by the piece, although there is little unanimity as to the source of its defects. Virgil Thomson, after praising the work's "lively" rhythms and "picturesque, expressive" textures, came down hard on its technical construction: "the work does not hold inevitably the musical attention. Its form is improvisatory. Its melodic content casual, its harmony stiff, its contrapuntal tension weak."¹⁸ Brian Ward, on the other hand, upon reviewing the score found it "considerably more interesting in the details of its craft than in its expressive content . . . much fascinating sound and fury is made, but the total significance impresses very little."¹⁹ The finale, in which the piano soloist sat mutely on stage, was particularly controversial; Olin Downes, writing in the *New York Times*, called it a "tinsel, bourgeois evocation of some distant plush paradise."²⁰

Bernstein based his symphony upon the long narrative poem by W. H. Auden, from which it takes its title and which had won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1946. Auden referred to his work as a "baroque eclogue," evoking in that phrase both a poetic genre typically on pastoral themes and the grand theatrical experience of baroque art.²¹ Set in wartime New York City, most of the action of the poem takes place in a bar near Times Square, where four strangers sit drinking and listening to news of the war. Auden, whose father was a psychoanalyst and correspondent of Freud's, intended the work to be a Jungian allegory. Each of the four characters represents one of the four differentiated functions of the psyche according to Jung. Malin, a doctor in the Canadian Air Force, represents "Thought," Rosetta, a Jewish department store clerk, represents "Feeling," Quant, a clerk, represents "Intuition," and Emble, a recent naval recruit, represents "Sensation."²² After a long discussion, the quartet enters into a surrealist dream, structured by Auden in "Seven Ages" and "Seven Stages," during which they attempt, unsuccessfully, to find some sort of meaning in life. Auden's second half brings the story back to reality, and brings the characters to Rosetta's apartment by taxi, where they continue to drink and try to have a good time. Malin and Quant eventually depart, and after a brief, abortive attempt at a sexual encounter, Rosetta and Emble fall asleep. In the morning they leave the apartment and immediately forget about one another. "It would be a bright clear day," wrote Auden, "for work and for war."²³

Bernstein claims, in his written preface, that he intended to take only

the basic structure of the poem and nothing else. Once the piece was written, however, Bernstein found that he had unconsciously created a piece of program music. In the preface to the published score, he wrote:

I had not planned a "meaningful" work, at least not in the sense of a piece whose meaning relied on details of programmatic implication. I was merely writing a symphony inspired by a poem and following the general form of that poem. Yet, when each section was finished I discovered, upon re-reading, detail after detail of programmatic relation to the poem—details that had "written themselves." Since I trust the unconscious implicitly, finding it a sure source of wisdom and the dictator of the condign in artistic matters, I am content to leave these details in the score.²⁴

In a program note written for the premiere, Bernstein went even further, claiming that in the "Masque," he subconsciously wrote a figure for the celesta that mimicked a clock striking four o'clock, as if reminding the characters of the lateness of the hour.²⁵ More overtly, however, it is indeed the structure that most noticeably takes its cue from the poem. Like Auden's poem, Bernstein's structure splits his symphony into two large-scale divisions: Part 1 includes the "Prologue," and a set of fourteen variations titled, after Auden, the "Seven Ages" and the "Seven Stages." Part 2 begins with a "Dirge," continues on to the "Masque," and ends with an "Epilogue." While some sense of the poem's narrative is thus made clear, ultimately Bernstein's reading of Auden reflects generalized themes and moods rather than a line-by-line musical setting.

Still, that mood is quite precise and culturally significant. In the passage from the preface quoted above, as Bernstein invokes his creative "unconscious" his debt to popular psychology becomes clear. Choosing the Jungian *Age of Anxiety* as the literary source for his symphony was no accident. The context for his interest is the fact that the immediate postwar period saw a massive popularization of psychoanalytic discourse in American culture. Although the psychological theories of Freud, Jung, and others had long been discussed among the intellectual class, the wholesale adoption of psychoanalytic methods in the Armed Forces during World War II led to much more widespread knowledge of the field.²⁶ Not only did psychoanalysis itself rise in popularity, but its terminology and premises filtered down into American culture at large, becoming widely referenced in popular media and influential outside of academic precincts. In fact, many important postwar artistic trends have been read as stemming from this popularization of psychoanalysis. Jackson Pollack used Jungian theories to explain Action painting; art history textbooks commonly refer to his drip paintings as a form of (unsuccessful) self-therapy. The depth psychology of the method acting theories of Stanislavski, though developed earlier in the century, became

widely popular in the 1950s thanks to the Actors Studio and the films of Marlon Brando.²⁷

This discursive trend is worth noting because the phrase “Age of Anxiety” does not arise out of nowhere. It is not that there exists an objective claim to be made that the historical period immediately after World War II was empirically more “anxious” than any other moment; that would be silly.²⁸ Nevertheless, there was a vogue in the late 1940s and early 1950s, especially amongst the urban intellectual class, for referring to their contemporary times as characterized specifically by anxiety, a vogue which must have stemmed in part from the rising popularity of psychoanalytic discourse. The concept of “anxiety” became a watchword for the period. The importance of this fashion is not merely terminological; the notion of a psychologized “Age of Anxiety” helped determine the culture production that followed. One might consider the important 1949 essay at the beginning of Arthur Schlesinger Jr.’s *The Vital Center*, titled “Politics in the Age of Anxiety.”²⁹ Further evidence appears in the 1950 bestseller by Rollo May, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, or even the ultimate crossover between political, cultural, and medical discourse, the invention and massive popularization of the first mass-marketed antianxiety drug in 1955.³⁰

“Anxiety” even became one of the early terms by which McCarthyism itself was analyzed, thanks to what Michael Rogin would call the “myopia of a traumatized intelligentsia” who were attempting to come to terms with the movement in the late 1950s.³¹ The key phrase was “status anxiety,” coined in a 1955 collection of essays on *The New American Right*, edited by Daniel Bell, and with contributions from a host of liberal anticommunist academics.³² Bell saw the book as an attempt to add a psychological element to more conventional political analysis. McCarthyism, Bell argued, could not be adequately explained in traditional terms, given that it was in some respects an “irrational” social movement: whatever danger organized communism might have once posed to the United States, the movement had largely been stamped out of existence by the time of McCarthy’s infamous 1950 speech claiming communist subversion in the State Department. Why then the “intense emotional heat” of McCarthyism?³³

The answer for Bell came in the collection’s central essay, Richard Hofstadter’s “The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt.” Hofstadter argued that one of the salient features of the new right wing movement was that pervasive status anxiety characterized not just an elite group clinging onto power, but also formerly marginalized groups now moving up in society. Case in point were the former Coughlinites and ethnic Catholics who made up the base of McCarthy’s support, third-generation immigrants who had long been marginalized along religious and ethnic lines. Now that they themselves had entered the middle-class establishment,

their politics melded seemingly contradictory elements: a simultaneous desire for, and a suspicion of, authority. Drawing from Theodor Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Hofstadter coined the label "pseudo-conservative," implying that although this new force in American politics aligned itself with traditional conservatism, some of its positions were in fact quite radical, such as abolishing the income tax or withdrawing from the United Nations.

As a historical argument this line of analysis was later thoroughly refuted by the political scientist Michael Rogin, who in 1968 painstakingly assembled the data to show that McCarthyism was far from being a mass-based political movement along the lines of earlier populist movements.³⁴ It was, rather, for the most part simply a continuation of longstanding conservative political practice that found particularly fertile ground in the foreign policy context of the 1950s, and also simply in reaction to a long period of Democratic dominance.

As is so often the case with such psychological analyses, however, the question is not so much one of their empirical truth (or lack thereof), but of how those psychoanalytic categories begin to determine the contours of the American political and cultural landscape, in a prescriptive rather than descriptive manner. Rogin himself gives us a particularly pertinent example of this phenomenon in analyzing Hollywood films of the early cold war, arguing that the psychological turn in American political history was in fact a revival and inversion of one of the classic cultural tropes of the Popular Front. Whereas cultural politics of the 1930s and 1940s had "subordinated private existence and internal political conflict to a sentimental American nationalism," Rogin tells us, anticommunism of the 1940s and 1950s inverted that trope to show the psychological damage inflicted by worldwide communism on individual Americans.³⁵ Popular anticommunist movies of the period, from *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (1951) to *The Manchurian Candidate* (1961), reveled in psychological trauma: the damage wrought by communist influence and the crippling potential for communist pathology in even the most normal American family. This transition from a cultural politics of the nation and the community to a politics of the self and the mind mirrors the generational and political changes represented by Bernstein's symphony.

The "Koussevitzky Manner": Bernstein and the American Symphony

Older cultural politics of nation and community provided the initial context for Bernstein's composition of the symphony. Inspired by his mentor Serge Koussevitzky's promise to perform the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Bernstein composed *The Age of Anxiety* over a two-year period from 1947 to 1949. The jazz-inspired "Masque" move-

ment was the first to be written, during Bernstein's concert tour to Israel. Next came the seven variations that make up the "Seven Ages," composed after the epic trip to New Mexico immortalized as an imaginary roadside conversation in *The Joy of Music*.³⁶ Another set of variations, the "Seven Stages," was composed back home in Boston, and the finale hastily completed shortly before the premiere while Bernstein was on tour with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.³⁷

Dedicating *The Age of Anxiety* to Serge Koussevitzky was not just a matter of social obligation but also an aesthetic statement. If moments from the symphony can seem strikingly ill at ease for Bernstein's more familiar musical idioms, it is because the context for understanding the work lies in the American symphonic tradition of the 1930s and 1940s, and the location of that repertoire within a more cosmopolitan view of trans-Atlantic modernism at mid-century. Before the late 1940s, Bernstein's vision of the special nature of American music dealt largely with its relationship to African American popular music, as for example in his Harvard undergraduate thesis "The Absorption of Race Elements in American Music."³⁸ By the mid-1950s, Bernstein would famously ask "What Ever Happened to the Great American Symphony?" answering his own question with a rousing defense of musical theater as the future of American music.³⁹

These positions are well known to critics and biographers of Bernstein, but a closer examination of his relationship with "American music" during the composition of *The Age of Anxiety* shows a subtle shift in his priorities. In a lecture Bernstein gave in Tel Aviv in October of 1948, just as he was composing the "Masque," the composer mused for a moment about the Russian maestro's influence on contemporary music, as voiced in another Koussevitzky commission, Copland's Third Symphony:

This is a work in the large manner, full of climaxes, orchestrated to the hilt, eloquent, evocative, moody, brilliant, and on a very grand scale. . . . One must not forget that the symphony was written expressly for Serge Koussevitzky, and the grandeur of that magnificent conductor must have had great influence on the shape and manner of the symphony. It is truly a symphony in the "Koussevitzky Manner."⁴⁰

There is an interesting triangulation at work here. Bernstein will on the one hand attempt to pay tribute to what was by then the standard history of American classical music: an explosion of creativity in the 1920s and 1930s in which native-born composers such as Copland struck out on a new and distinctly American modernist path. At the same time, however, he juxtaposes that history against the explicit aesthetic influence of a White Russian immigré-by-way-of France.

That juxtaposition between European, especially Russian, modern-

ism and the nativism of Copland runs throughout his musical thinking of this time. Another example comes in the summer of 1947, during a series of lectures on American music he gave during at Tanglewood.⁴¹ The first lecture was devoted to the question of nationalism, and what Bernstein called the "special problem of America." The United States, in Bernstein's view, was too young and "artificial" to follow the example of Europeans in the nineteenth century in creating a national music. Case in point for Bernstein was earlier American composers such as Edward MacDowell, especially in his mock-Native American tunes, and also the efforts of Dvořák, whose music he found artificial. He similarly derided, although more sympathetically, modernist composers of the 1920s who attempted to appropriate jazz elements into their music. The most successful composers, he argued, were those like Copland who let African American musical traditions unconsciously influence their work, rather than those who forced uncomfortable juxtapositions in the manner of Milhaud's *La création du monde* (1923).

Bernstein's historiography is familiar to any student of American music, echoing the mainstream discourse on classical concert music in the United States. But in his next lecture, when it came time to examine individual contemporary composers, Bernstein made some interesting choices. The first three composers profiled were Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, and Randall Thompson, whom he cheerfully called the "Triad Boys" of American music for their use of simplified harmonies and pandiatonicism. More than their musical similarities, however, Bernstein emphasized their common approach to the relationship between music and audience. In this approach, he wrote, all three were influenced by Shostakovich, who in his Fifth Symphony "re-instated himself with the people," in "direct opposition to Stravinsky and the chic or *distingués* in music that had grown up in Paris." Copland, Harris, and Thompson, Bernstein argued, "wanted music to mean something to people."⁴² In this telling, then, Bernstein reaches more explicitly for the romanticist mid-career work of Shostakovich.

This Russian connection leads us to the formal quality of these American symphonies to which Bernstein called attention, their reliance on "climaxes, orchestrated to the hilt, eloquent, evocative, moody, brilliant, and on a very grand scale."⁴³ Copland's Third Symphony was the exemplar here, with a final movement built on his soaring *Fanfare for the Common Man*, written four years earlier at the height of World War II. The finale, which extends and elaborates the *Fanfare* into a whole series of brassy climaxes, has been criticized for its lack of subtlety and militaristic bombast. In 1946, a year after Allied victory, one might be forgiven for hearing in its endless trumpet blasts nothing more than raw triumphalism. Bergman, however, has pointed out that *Fanfare for the Common Man* itself was inspired by a speech given by Henry Wallace, Franklin

Roosevelt's left-wing vice president, who would later run for president on the communist-supported Progressive Party ticket. Bergman argues that the presence of the *Fanfare* in the Third Symphony stays true to Copland's "musical and ideological vision of triumph without conquest."⁴⁴

Triumphalist or progressive, the brassy finale of Copland's Third, the exemplar of the Koussevitzky manner, bears a clear debt less to any American tradition but rather to the symphonic style of Dmitri Shostakovich in the late 1930s as disseminated by Koussevitzky. As Bernstein pointed out, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was a powerful influence on American composers working in the heroic tradition. It is difficult to hear the crashing timpani-and-brass D-major chords of Copland's work and not hear in them the echo of the famous D major with which Shostakovich ended the Fifth.

These sentiments might give the contemporary reader pause, as the story of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony has now become the archetypical story of state-sponsored musical repression, one composer's beleaguered response to Stalinist antiformalism. We must remember, however, that stories of Communist Party repression were only gradually leaking out at this time, and support for the Soviet Union was still a viable option for those on the left. Copland and Koussevitzky served on a State Department-supported "Sub-Committee on Musical Interchange" with the USSR, and both saw Soviet socialist realism as a model of populist accessibility that could sway the masses against fascism. In a 1943 speech Koussevitzky lauded the Soviet Union as an excellent example of a country where "art is a mighty weapon in the war" and urged American composers to follow its model.⁴⁵ As an anticommunist, Koussevitzky himself had a complicated and sometimes antagonistic relationship with the Soviet government, but during World War II he set aside his differences. One of the fruits of this relationship was in fact an exchange of musical scores that makes clear the artistic alliance between American and Soviet symphonic traditions: Roy Harris's Fifth Symphony, which Koussevitzky premiered to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Red Army in 1942, and which Harris dedicated to the "heroic and freedom-loving people of our great Ally," was microfilmed and sent to the USSR.⁴⁶ In return, the Soviet government arranged for the now-famous microfilm of Shostakovich's Seventh to be sent to the United States, where it received rapturous performances first by Toscanini on the radio, and then by Koussevitzky himself in its first public concert appearance. Shostakovich's symphonic style meshed so well with American ideals that even conservatives found breaking up hard to do. The *Life* magazine feature on the Waldorf-Astoria peace conference featured one protestor outside carrying a sign alluding to recent Russian defections to the West, and pleading with the composer to do the same: "Shostakovich! Jump thru the window!"⁴⁷

“A Mockery of Faith”: The Antiheroic Age of Anxiety

If the wartime symphonic tradition often reveled in the lush, stirring sound of melodies voiced in the lower strings—think Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* or Roy Harris’s Third Symphony—Bernstein’s *Age of Anxiety* begins with an opening theme that is the dialectical opposite. The long-lined melody, drawn from a sketch for Bernstein’s incidental music for *The Birds*, a Harvard-era student production, follows a fluid and irregular phrase structure. Here, however, the instruments barely sound above a whisper, and rather than the warm sounds of violas and cellos we hear the cold, crisp entrance of two clarinets. The purity of their tone, sounded quietly and without vibrato, resembles an organ. Bernstein marks them as “echo tones” (ex. 1).

With this opening melody, sonically emptied of human contact, Bernstein immediately stakes a claim for a symphony rooted in the American triumphal tradition, but also bearing witness to the passage of time since the end of World War II. If Copland aimed to represent a nation in his symphony, Bernstein’s act of *tesseration*, to invoke Harold Bloom’s formula of yet another trope of anxiety, was to focus the musical gaze not on the people, triumphant, but down to a single, anxious human mind.⁴⁸

A range of associations in the symphony departs from the Copland model. Most noticeable, of course, is the presence of the solo piano, which announces itself with what he calls a “pure and singing” melody at the beginning of the “Seven Ages.”⁴⁹ By engaging the narratographic tradition of the concertante soloist, poised as an individual distinct from the community of the orchestra, Bernstein already reaches for a historical tradition distinct from Shostakovich. We might also note the organ-like sonorities of the opening clarinets, and perhaps that melody’s origin in a production of a play by Aristophanes. Taken together, these associations point toward the neoclassicism of another Russian composer lurking over Bernstein’s shoulder, Igor Stravinsky.

Bernstein’s advocacy for the American symphonic tradition, and also for certain European composers such as Mahler, is well known. Stravinsky was a different sort of figure, less in need of advocacy, and Bernstein’s

Example 1. “Prologue” mm. 1–6. From *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2* by Leonard Bernstein. © 1949 by The Leonard Bernstein Estate. Boosey & Hawkes, Sole Licensee. Reprinted by permission.

public support for his music was somewhat muted. Nevertheless, he considered Stravinsky crucial to his musical development. Penning an appreciation in 1947, Bernstein wrote that ever since he heard a recording of *The Rite of Spring* at age fifteen, Stravinsky "has been a basic factor in my musical life."⁵⁰ He also paid the obligatory tribute to Stravinsky's rhythmic dexterity in the early ballets; with that image in mind, it can be hard to differentiate the mock-Puerto Rican-cum-Mexican Huapango dance rhythms of *West Side Story* from Russian primitivism. But a work by Stravinsky that must have been particularly influential to Bernstein in 1949 was one of the Russian composer's rare forays into the symphonic tradition, and one that like *The Age of Anxiety* included a solo piano: the *Symphony in Three Movements* (1946). Famously, this symphony featured some of Stravinsky's most sustained engagement with mass culture. The second movement was originally written on spec (and unsuccessfully so) as a film score. The third movement, Stravinsky later revealed, was influenced by the music of newsreels and radio broadcasts during the war.⁵¹ The finale of this symphony, the location into which Copland and Shostakovich poured their populist sentiment, ends suddenly and almost trivially, on the sound of a classic raised-sixth Hollywood chord.

Thus one can hear *The Age of Anxiety* as Bernstein torn between two great pillars of Russian modernism, each representing not only a unique aesthetic voice, but also a political one. We might say that if Shostakovich symbolized the sincerity and optimism of the past, Stravinsky stood in for a cynical future.⁵² In the fourteen variations that make up part 1, we feel that cynical presence looming large in the formal symmetry of the 7+7 structure, and also in the intricate detail of their construction. He avoids continuity at all costs. Variations would, formally speaking, seem to demand the careful balancing of contrast and continuity, of thematic conservatism and developmental progress. Bernstein, however, invents his own manner of variation, where each variation simply takes one feature of the preceding section and develops it. Thus, the slow descending chromatic scale played by the harp in the first variation becomes a fast, cacophonous line played by the piano in the second. The third variation seizes upon an incidental rising clarinet figure in the second variation and gives it to the entire string section in the fourth, creating an aural effect similar to the old party game of "Telephone." By the end of fourteen variations, there is no discernable relationship to the opening of the symphony. Heroic musical narratives often depend upon progression and development, but here that journey is replaced with a labyrinth.

Stravinsky's other influence, however, is more negative, as perhaps Bernstein's own anxieties begin to seep into the music. Bernstein himself could fit well the profile of Hofstadter's "status anxiety" as outlined in "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt." He was, after all, a child of im-

migrants, with an attitude toward authority that veered between the worshipful and the disdainful. But more fundamentally, the looming presence of Stravinsky imbues the symphony with a new set of cultural politics at odds with the mass songs of Copland and the populist appeal of Shostakovich. To trace this binarism further, let us focus briefly on the matched pair of part 2, the "Masque" and the "Epilogue."

The movement titled "Masque" draws from the scene in Auden's poem where the quartet of protagonists retreat to Rosetta's apartment and turn on the radio. The announcer proclaims:

Music past midnight. For men in the armed
Forces on furlough and their feminine consorts,
For war-workers and women in labor,
For Bohemian artists and owls of the night,
We present a series of savage selections
By brutal bands from bestial tribes.⁵³

Bernstein's setting is the most literally programmatic of the symphony—the soloist leaves behind his Steinway and transforms himself into a honky-tonk pianist. As Koussevitzky was reputed to have remarked about the symphony in his thick Russian accent, "and you know, the third movement, it is a *jezz*."⁵⁴

One of the major reasons critical treatment of Bernstein's symphonies has been so negative is that for many listeners they pale in comparison to the popular works he wrote for the musical stage in New York. From *On the Town* in 1944 to *West Side Story* in 1957, Bernstein's most successful musical compositions during the McCarthy era sought to engage a broader public in a way that a modernist work played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra never could. This is another central difference between Bernstein and his mentor, since Copland's generation of composers reached for different sources when attempting to achieve populist success. For them, populist music meant the use of folksongs, hymnody, and general Americana, and usually not the pop standards of Tin Pan Alley or more modern jazz.

The back-and-forth between frantic solo piano and the wild unrest of the entire orchestra dramatizes an ebb and flow of libidinal tension. Unlike the rest of the symphony—composed in haste in time for the premiere, and always with the looming presence of the modernist Russians in the background—Bernstein composed the "Masque" at leisure, and possibly linked it more explicitly to his own personal life. Many of the fast piano licks of the Masque he learned from the pianist John Mehegan, who had himself apprenticed with Art Tatum.⁵⁵ In many ways, Bernstein idolized Mehegan, who combined a proper upbringing—education at Juilliard, and academic positions at Juilliard and Yale—with a knowledge

of jazz technique Bernstein could never achieve. In fact, for most of the late 1940s, Mehegan had a standing weekly gig at a Greenwich Village jazz club, which Bernstein attended whenever able.⁵⁶

The other looming jazz influence in Bernstein's life was his famous championing of George Gershwin, in particular *Rhapsody in Blue*.⁵⁷ Allusions to Gershwin abound in the "Masque," or more specifically to Bernstein's own arrangement of *Rhapsody in Blue* that gave much of the musical material to a solo pianist—Bernstein himself. The alternating loud-soft dynamic produced by Bernstein's arrangement is especially mimicked. In addition to dynamics, the duality of the movements lies in the exchange of jazz riffs between the pianist and a celesta. Bernstein never says so explicitly, but it is easy to imagine that the dueling instruments represent Rosetta and Emble, the two characters who in this section of the poem are dancing together and coming close to a sexual encounter. Already fast as the movement begins, with a tempo of $q=120$ indicated in the score, the two soloists frantically try to do outdo each other at ever faster speeds.⁵⁸ Each time one of them starts to break down, the rest of the orchestra chimes with a shrieking Gershwin-esque melody that drowns out the duel. And then each time—the same basic pattern repeats three times, at increasing tempos—the noise suddenly stops and is replaced by the tick-tock, tick-tock of a wood block. The celesta may not literally chime four o'clock, as Bernstein claimed after the fact, but there is a clear sense of time running out.

The "Masque" seems a clear-cut representation of anxiety. The endless ticking of a clock implies a mechanical and inexorable rush forward to an uncertain fate. Following Neil Lerner, we might remember the Doomsday Clock, inaugurated two years prior in 1947 by a group of scientists as a symbol of our proximity to nuclear annihilation.⁵⁹ In fact, the "Masque" brings up a laundry list of possible anxieties. Katherine Baber has suggested the tension of his Jewish identity upon returning home from the new state of Israel.⁶⁰ Several biographers have pointed out that in Bernstein's own personal life, he was at this moment struggling with the possibility of a lifelong commitment to his fiancée; Joan Peyser has gone so far as to suggest that a relationship with John Mehegan, the possible source of those jazz licks, was the reason Bernstein temporarily broke off his engagement to Felicia Montealegre.⁶¹ These possible associations are exactly the point: anxiety is typically defined as the fear of the unknown.⁶² It is an emotion that allows one to fill in the blank with whatever referent fit bests, a quintessentially post-Freudian and postmodern state. If Ives were writing this piece, at this point the shrieking jazz trumpets would dissolve into transcendental hymnody; indeed, just such a gesture lies at the climactic moment of Ives's Fourth Symphony, a work with which Bernstein was intimately familiar. The anxiety of Bernstein's jazz, however, leads not to transcendence but to

emptiness, exactly as a symphony on the subject of anxiety should. Here he makes the final break with Copland.

For Copland, as for many symphonists of the last two centuries, the last movement of a grand symphony offered an opportunity for rousing climax, and if one needed to outdo the competition, to vanquish the enemies of the people, the solution was to pile climax upon climax, engorging the work to the point of turgidity. Bernstein certainly felt this way; he was a consistent and vocal critic of the finale of Copland's Third Symphony. He strongly encouraged his mentor and friend to trim things down as much possible, even suggesting that a ten-bar section in the middle of the movement could be cut entirely. In a letter from 1947, Bernstein wrote, "Sweetie, the end is a sin. You've got to change. . . . We must talk—about the whole last movement, in fact."⁶³ Copland reluctantly followed his advice, and Bernstein's cut was eventually reflected in the published score.

In Auden's poem, a finalizing anticlimax occurs literally. The young department store clerk Rosetta and the attractive naval recruit Emble feel a strong attraction to one another, and begin to kiss as the foursome dances about her living room. The two older men, sensing the situation, take their leave, and Rosetta walks them to the elevator:

When she got back to her apartment, she found that Emble had gone into her bedroom and passed out. She looked down at him, half sadly, half relieved, and thought thus:

Blind on the bride-bed, the bridegroom snores,
Too aloof to love. Did you lose your nerve
And cloud your conscience because I wasn't
Your dish really? You danced so bravely
Till I wished I were. Will you remain
Such a pleasant prince? Probably not.⁶⁴

There is certainly no triumphalism in Auden. And there is no literal climax. Symphonies since at least those of Beethoven have made use of the metaphor of sexual climax to provide a sense of urgency to the resolution of the end of a symphony. It is notable that Bernstein chose a text where the expected climax never materializes; simply as a matter of narrative, the story lacks any sense of conclusion. At the same time, Bernstein's challenge was to create a final movement for his symphony that contradictorily combined Auden's anticlimax with the Koussevitzkian need for grand climax. Rather than adopting the overt sincerity of Copland and his other predecessors, Bernstein ultimately used the grand manner as a self-referential, parodic, and ultimately ironic gesture. "My original idea," he later remarked, "was to produce a mockery of faith, a phony faith."⁶⁵ Or more succinctly, as he told a friend at the time, "the

last movement is strictly Warner Brothers."⁶⁶ What exactly makes this movement so "phony"?

Like any proper final movement, the "Epilogue" of *The Age of Anxiety* attempts to draw in themes from the entire progression of the symphony. As the frantic Ivesian bluster of the "Masque" dies off, the quiet off-stage piano continues on with fast passagework of the previous movement, slowly fading away to be replaced by a muted trumpet. The trumpet's melancholic succession of perfect fourth descents recalls a similar gesture played by violas at the beginning of the "Seven Stages" series of variations. In that case, an ominous *Dies Irae* motif in the piano accompanied those descents; here, they grow out of the Ivesian noise of the "Masque" to stand by themselves. Quickly, however, the "Brahmsian" strings from the "Dirge" interrupt, playing the opening melody of the piece, as originally voiced by clarinets. Bernstein writes in the preface that in this final movement, the perfect fourth theme voiced by the winds stands for "something pure," while the strings represent "loneliness." Bernstein amplifies the lonely affect by adding onto the melody a yearning upwards triplet figure that will become increasingly crucial as the "Epilogue" progresses. Ultimately, Bernstein writes, the strings will "all at once . . . accept the situation." This analysis foreshadows a central element of the "Epilogue" that distinguishes it from previous American symphonies, and indeed the broader symphonic tradition. Note that the tension is not resolved, as a heroic composer might more typically claim, or at least vanquished. Instead, the tension between purity and loneliness is simply "accepted."

At rehearsal D, the increasingly lyrical strings are replaced by a restatement of the "purity" theme, now voiced in a final form by the flutes and clarinets. In this orchestration, it is now much easier to hear Bernstein's inspiration: Copland's Third begins with exactly this same gesture, also voiced by clarinets and flutes. With its lulling, wave-like movement up and down by fifths, it is easy to hear what Downes called Bernstein's "tinsel, bourgeois evocation of some distant plush paradise" (ex. 2).⁶⁷ The ascending Lydian scales, voiced for the most part in the lower strings and brass, add some harmonic interest, and evoke the common technique of using "sharp four" sonorities to evoke heavenly associations in film and other programmatic scores. Otherwise, the "purity" theme is static overall. It rocks back and forth endlessly among its stacked pan-diatonic fourths, and this is more or less what Bernstein does, transposing it louder and louder as the theme repeats.

The "loneliness" theme, on the other hand, derived from the opening clarinets duet, has a certain amount of tension built in, the yearning triplet figure outlining a minor triad (see ex. 3). Tension, however, might be a strong word. Our desire for release is not the result of harmonic movement or leading tones. Rather, tension builds up repetition, as the minor triad is repeated dozens of times, simply moving up by scale degree. The

Example 2. "Purity," mm. 40–43. From *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2* by Leonard Bernstein. © 1949 by The Leonard Bernstein Estate. Boosey & Hawkes, Sole Licensee. Reprinted by permission.

Più andante (♩ = 69)

moment of "acceptance," as Bernstein calls it, comes at rehearsal I, when the strings, rather than outlining a minor triad when falling back down, skip the middle note and simply go down a fifth, thus falling into accord with the sound world of the "purity" theme. Bernstein makes up for the lack of dialectical harmonic resolution here with lush orchestration that clearly signals the importance of the moment: the strings finally play together in unison, with heavily expressive vibrato.

In the 1949 version of the "Epilogue," Bernstein now attempts to combine "purity" and "loneliness" in a single melody for flutes and strings (see ex. 4). This combination falls in line with his general compositional practice; Paul Laird and Jack Gottlieb have both remarked on fondness for building larger forms out of smaller melodies, or what the latter calls "melodic manipulation."⁶⁸ As Laird rightly points out, there is nothing exceptional about this practice within twentieth-century music, and Bernstein's technique is not complicated.⁶⁹ The general intervallic contour of the "loneliness" theme is maintained, but without the articulation of the triplet rhythm it no longer evokes the previous yearning quality.

Example 3. "Loneliness," mm. 49–50. From *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2* by Leonard Bernstein. © 1949 by The Leonard Bernstein Estate. Boosey & Hawkes, Sole Licensee. Reprinted by permission.

Tutti *con sord.*

Example 4. "Purity" and "Loneliness" combined. From *The Age of Anxiety, Symphony No. 2* by Leonard Bernstein. © 1949 by The Leonard Bernstein Estate. Boosey & Hawkes, Sole Licensee. Reprinted by permission.

With serenity

Now, in 1949, it is simply a question of when to stop. Since the movement has no obvious large-scale harmonic plan, the listener has no teleological sense of when that end might come. The horns and violas participate in a rising diatonic line intended to propel us forward, and whose Lydian flashes intermittently clash with the "bourgeois" violin melody. Overall, however, the orchestra simply rocks back and forth between C sharp and G sharp, G sharp and D sharp, as it has been doing the entire movement. Finally, at an arbitrary moment, the orchestra stops on a G-sharp major chord. The solo piano, in its only contribution to the last movement, responds with a G-sharp major chord of its own by way of confirmation. Then, one more G-sharp major chord by the combined forces, and it is over. There is not even a final cadence. Here, Stravinsky rears his head again. The ending of the *Symphony in Three Movements* ended with nearly the exact same raised-sixth chord. For Stravinsky, this Hollywood gesture, slipped in suddenly at the last moment of the piece, was the ultimate in ironic detachment. For Bernstein, the same expressive resource conveys detachment, but also perhaps a disappointment.

To note this detachment and disappointment, to realize that a symphony in the American tradition might not convey a wholly positive message, is not to register a criticism of the work. Bernstein's characterization in his written preface is honest: he provides no resolution, simply (exhausted) acceptance. What Bernstein intended in 1949 is exactly what he said years later: there are no great truths to be found in *The Age of Anxiety*, but purposefully so. It evokes the Koussevitzky manner by way of orchestration and sheer volume, but with all the earnest sincerity emptied out.

There is of course disagreement on this point. Barry Seldes, for instance, in his recent study of Bernstein's political life, argues that in fact Bernstein departs from Auden in the symphony's conclusion by writing a "long orchestra passage of optimism and resolution that depicts faith intact—or at least his hope of some kind of reconciliation between man and cosmos."⁷⁰ Bernstein himself appeared to give credence to this view in 1975, telling an interviewer that despite other remarks to the contrary, he had "meant every note" of the finale.⁷¹ Differing interpretations aside, there is one particularly good reason to believe that Bernstein's sentiments in 1975 are wishful thinking: the decade prior, Bernstein had significantly revised the score, producing the version widely heard today. The stated reason for the revision was to make the work more attractive to pianists, who supposedly disliked sitting on stage mutely for the final movement, and indeed the most important change was the insertion of the piano into the "Epilogue." Bernstein gives several statements of both the "purity" and "loneliness" themes to the soloist and, most important, a substantial cadenza was inserted just before rehearsal J in the original score. This addition has the effect of building up a new level of dramatic tension; where before, the vibrant acceptance that occurs at rehearsal I slowly tapers off into the purity theme, there is a new and dramatic cadenza for the solo-

ist, which brings a completely new sound world into play. The cadenza is dramatic, even dialectical, as if the pianist attempts, single-handedly, to improvise a resolution of the work's thematic tensions: loud, crashing *pesante* chords that are left to echo into silence, and even a brief re-entrance of the jazz piano theme from the preceding "Masque."

One other small alteration tells a slight moral about this 1965 approach, in which the traditional role of the finale as dialectical climax returns to the symphony: in the original 1949 score, both as published and in his autograph score, the last chord, held for three bars, is marked *fortissimo* as it is attacked. In the revised version, this ending was not enough. Bernstein pastes another *fortissimo* onto the last measure of the chord, ensuring that the orchestra will relentlessly maintain its volume. It seems that he was concerned that this last chord was not packing enough of a punch. Apparently 1965 was a very different time than 1949. By 1965 cold war liberalism had been swept into power by the Kennedy-Johnson administrations. His other grand symphonic gesture of the 1960s, the *Kaddish* symphony of 1963, harkens back to the heroic style. Stravinsky is gone; Shostakovich remains. But in 1949, the mood of disappointment and cynicism is at its height.

Put simply, Bernstein's approach to the second symphony was an inversion of the Popular Front approach of Aaron Copland, rewriting the American symphonic tradition to focus on details of the mind rather than broad political issues. In the ironic, even cynical finale of *The Age of Anxiety*, the most dispiriting lesson is that even after a symphony's worth of exhausting, minute examination of human subjectivity—and here Bernstein truly diverges from Copland and Shostakovich—ultimately no "inner" truth will be discovered. This is the ironic coda to the earlier discussion of the prevalence of psychological discourse in the period. There seems almost to be an inverse relationship between the amount of effort spent studying the human psyche and the results of that study. Here lies the ultimate anxiety of the age of anxiety: as the grand ideologies and meta-narratives of the first half of the century faded from view, it seemed that none might replace them.

This nascent postmodernism forms part of the poetics of the McCarthyist period: deeply held truths have little place in contemporary society; they can sometimes get in the way of realistic, hard-headed action in a cold new international world of conspiracies and subversion. Truth itself was called into question; the history of the early days of the cold war is, after all, the story of increasingly pervasive secrecy, forgery, and the creation of national agencies for espionage and counterintelligence. Historian Ann Douglas, in a provocative essay on these matters, asks what could be more postmodern in its denial of truth and embrace of simulation than the National Security Act of 1948, with its doctrine of plausible deniability? Or, as one of Eisenhower's military advisers called the new approach, "a national program of deception and concealment."⁷²

Deception, concealment, fear, and anxiety: these were the new tools of the trade for an American composer. Ultimately, this was the lesson that Bernstein and his colleagues learned from their experiences in 1949, beginning with the Waldorf-Astoria conference. The *Life* magazine profile of the conference (“Red Visitors Cause Rumpus”) cast the event in terms of free speech, with the magnanimous US government giving travel visas to some Russian speakers, such as Shostakovich, in service of the free exchange of ideas, while inside the organizers barred the doors against anticommunist speakers. But of course, by publishing photographs of prominent liberals and leftists—Bernstein is joined by everyone from Albert Einstein to Olin Downes—in the style of mug shots, *Life* made it clear that if the government was not willing to intercede, private enterprise could step up to the plate. A year later, a secretive organization called the American Business Consultants published *Red Channels*, a guide to communist influence in the entertainment industry. For years afterwards, the less powerful or media-savvy musicians on those lists found themselves hounded at every turn. Pete Seeger and Burl Ives lost record contracts. The harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler was forced to move to England, and the conductor Dean Dixon found refuge in Sweden. Perhaps this was what Bernstein learned early on, early enough to save his own career: sometimes it is better not to say anything at all.

At the same time, Leonard Bernstein obviously was not content to remain mute; he simply needed to change genres to find a voice. This is the political subtext behind his lifelong agonizing between writing “serious” music and music for the popular theater. In famous essays like “Whatever Happened to the Great American Symphony?” (1955) he struggles to find relevance for the American symphonic tradition, with its occasional “unusual chords” and “screwy forms,” but ultimately sides with a vision of the theater as the future of American music.⁷³ For the rest of his career he would remain a proponent of the older symphonic tradition, and still occasionally try his hand at adding to it, but after McCarthyism, the nail was in the coffin.

NOTES

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1. *New York Times*, March 28, 1949, 1. For more on Shostakovich’s role in the conference, see Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 172–73.

2. For an interesting contemporary analysis of the overwhelmingly biased and often inaccurate press coverage, see Henry Singer, “An Analysis of the New York Press Treatment

of the Peace Conference at the Waldorf-Astoria," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 23 (1950): 258–70. Frances Stonar Saunders details the history of CIA intervention in this conference; see *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 1999), 45–56.

3. Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 270–87, 451–66. See also Elizabeth B. Crist, "Aaron Copland and the Popular Front," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56 (2003): 409–65

4. "Dupes and Fellow Travelers Dress Up Communist Fronts," *Life*, April 4, 1949, 42.

5. The most authoritative account of Copland's experiences with McCarthyism can be found in Jennifer L. DeLapp, "Copland in the Fifties: Music and Ideology in the McCarthy Era," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1997, 114–51.

6. Elizabeth Bergman Crist, *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland During the Depression and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 194.

7. Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 451–66.

8. DeLapp, "Copland in the Fifties," 100–106.

9. Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: Norton, 2005), 475.

10. Quoted in Pollack, *Aaron Copland*, 411.

11. This remark was part of a script Bernstein wrote for a 1959 television broadcast on American music. This topic was eventually dropped in favor of a rather bland discussion of Mozart. "Leonard Bernstein and the NYP: The Ageless Mozart [Nov. 22, 1959]," Box 77, Folder 15, Leonard Bernstein Collection (hereafter LBC), Library of Congress, Washington, DC. I am very grateful to Dan Blim for bringing the quote to my attention.

12. Elizabeth Bergman Crist, "Mutual Responses in the Midst of an Era: Aaron Copland's 'The Tender Land' and Leonard Bernstein's 'Candide,'" *Journal of Musicology* 23, no. 4 (2006): 485–527. Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). See also Carol Oja, "Bernstein's Wonderful Town and McCarthy-era Politics," paper presented at the American Musicological Society, November 3, 2007; and Elizabeth L. Keathly, "Postwar Modernity and the Wife's Subjectivity: Bernstein's Trouble in Tahiti," *American Music* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 220–56.

13. Crist, *Music for the Common Man*, 10–13. Her analysis draws upon Michael Denning's terms in his important book *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997).

14. The authoritative history of McCarthyism as an institutional phenomenon is Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). An older but still influential history of the movement is David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978). Studies of specific entertainment industries include Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930–1960* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980); Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*, Film and Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Brenda Murphy, *Congressional Theatre: Dramatizing McCarthyism on Stage, Film, and Television* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

15. Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 10. To be sure, he also notes absences surrounding Hiroshima and "Boulez-Stockhausen."

16. Philip Gentry, "The Cultural Politics of 4'33'" in "The Age of Anxiety: Music, Politics, and McCarthyism, 1948–1954," Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 2008, 165–229.

17. For the role of the symphony in the "Toscanini Cult" of mid-century American musical culture, see Joseph Horowitz, *Understanding Toscanini: A Social History of American Concert Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). See also Nicholas Tawa, *The Great American Symphony: Music, the Depression, and War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

18. "Age of Anxiety: New Symphony Is Heard in Boston," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 9, 1949.

19. Brian Ward, review of Leonard Bernstein, "The Age of Anxiety," *Symphony 2, Notes 7* (1950): 626.

20. Olin Downes, "Bernstein Offers His Own Symphony," *New York Times*, Feb. 4, 1950, 26.

21. W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue* (New York: Random House, 1946), 3.

22. See Edward Callan, "Allegory in Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 10 (1965): 155–65. For more on Auden's writing of the poem, see Humphrey Carpenter's *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 238–41.

23. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, 135.

24. Leonard Bernstein, *The Age of Anxiety: Symphony No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra (after W. H. Auden)* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1949).

25. Joan Peyser, *Bernstein, A Biography* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1978), 178.

26. Nathan G. Hale Jr., *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 245–56.

27. For one example of an interpretation of these phenomena along such lines, see Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

28. The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Auden's poem with coining the phrase, which, it carefully specifies, can be applied "to any period characterized by anxiety or danger."

29. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949),

30. Andrea Tone, *The Age of Anxiety: A History of America's Turbulent Affair with Tranquilizers* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

31. Michael Paul Rogin, *Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 2.

32. In 1963 Bell published an expanded version of the collection under the title *The Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 1963). The 1955 essays are reproduced in the original form, and it is this edition cited here.

33. Daniel Bell, *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books Print, 1955), 56.

34. Rogin, *Intellectuals and McCarthy*.

35. Michael Rogin, "Kiss Me Deadly: Communism, Motherhood, and Cold War Movies," *Representations* 6 (1984): 10.

36. Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959).

37. For an overview of the composition of the symphony, see Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 189–93.

38. Reprinted in his *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 36–99.

39. "Whatever Happened to That Great American Symphony?" in *The Joy of Music*, 40–51.

40. Leonard Bernstein, "Concert Talk or Lecture [October 1948]," Box 71, Folder 49, LBC.

41. There is no recording of these lectures, or formal script, but among his papers at the Library of Congress he did leave detailed outlines, upon which this discussion is based. "Lecture on American Music," Box 71, Folder 27, LBC. Bernstein drew directly upon these lectures for a Young People's Concert Series performance in 1958, with Aaron Copland himself as guest conductor for his Third Symphony. See "What Makes Music American?" in Bernstein, *Young People's Concerts* (New York: Amadeus, 2006), 33–52.

42. "Lectures on American Music," unpaginated typescript, July 23, 1947.

43. Leonard Bernstein, "Concert Talk or Lecture [October 1948]."

44. Crist, *Music for the Common Man*, 181, 191.

45. "The Mission of Artists in the World Today," Koussevitzky Collection, Library of Congress, quoted in Crist, *Music for the Common Man*, 179.

46. Hugo Leichtentritt, *Serge Koussevitzky, The Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the New American Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 136.

47. "Red Visitors Cause Rumpus," *Life*, April 4, 1949, 39.

48. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 49–76.

49. Bernstein, "Preface" to *The Age of Anxiety*.

50. "A Note on Stravinsky's Variety," typescript, Box 71, Folder 30, LBC.

51. For more background on the Symphony in Three Movements, see Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 211–26.

52. It is crucial to note that these stances were merely symbolic, and largely a matter of American reception; Shostakovich was of course deeply capable of irony and cynicism when not composing under the gun, as it were.

53. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, 110. Italics are in the original.

54. Peyser, *Leonard Bernstein*, 181.

55. Mehegan later became a well-respected jazz pedagogue, authoring several textbooks. Biographical study has been scant; his personal papers are housed in the Irving Gilmore Library, Yale University.

56. Peyser, *Leonard Bernstein*, 166. Katherine Baber explores the jazz tropes in *The Age of Anxiety* in much greater detail, see her "Jazz as Rhetoric of Conflict in the Symphony No. 2 *Age of Anxiety*," from her forthcoming dissertation. I am extremely grateful for Katherine's generosity in sharing her work in advance of its completion.

57. Ryan Raul Bañagale, "'Each Man Kills the Thing He Loves': Bernstein's Formative Relationship with Rhapsody in Blue," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 3, no. 1 (2009): 47–66.

58. Katherine Baber points out that in sketches for the "Masque," Bernstein initially notated a slower tempo, but thought better of it and increased the speeds. Personal communication, March 18, 2010.

59. Neil Lerner, "'Look at That Big Hand Move Along': Clocks, Containment, and Music in *High Noon*," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 104, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 151–73.

60. Katherine Baber, "Jazz as Rhetoric of Conflict in Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 2," presented at the annual meeting of the Society for American Music, Ottawa, Canada, March 18, 2010.

61. Peyser, *Leonard Bernstein*, 199.

62. Contemporary psychological discourse of anxiety is outside the scope of this essay, but the interested reader might consult Renata Salecl, *On Anxiety* (London: Routledge, 2004); or Eugene E. Levitt, *The Psychology of Anxiety*, 2nd ed. (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1980).

63. Quoted in Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 165.

64. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, 122–23.

65. Interview with Philip Ramey, 1975, quoted in Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 175.

66. Peyser, *Leonard Bernstein*, 184.

67. Downes, "Bernstein Offers His Own Symphony," 26.

68. Jack Gottlieb, "The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study in Melodic Manipulation," Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1964.

69. Paul Laird, "Leonard Bernstein's Musical Style," in his *Leonard Bernstein: An Annotated Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 38.

70. Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein*, 50.

71. Peyser, *Leonard Bernstein*, 184.

72. Ann Douglas, "Periodizing the American Century: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism in the Cold War Context," *Modernism/Modernity* 5 (1998): 74, 77.

73. Bernstein, "Whatever Happened to the Great American Symphony?" 55.