



Annegret Fauser, Ph.D.

Professor of Music

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Born in 1963 in Welzheim, Baden Württemberg
Studied Musicology, Art History, and Philosophy at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, and the Université de la Sorbonne-Paris IV

FELLOWSHIP
Marie Curie-Fellow

PROJECT

Sounds of War: Music in America During World War II

During World War II, musical life in the United States reflected - often closely - the dynamic of the war: the early apprehension, intense debates, and preparatory work in 1939-41; the trajectory from deep anxiety in 1942 to increasing confidence by 1944; and finally the shift to victory and peace in 1945-46, which brought significant efforts to promote new American music overseas. Composers, performers, and musicologists in America contributed to the war effort actively and consciously as musicians. Thus Marc Blitzstein, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, Colin McPhee, and Kurt Weill were all involved in the propaganda missions of the Office of War Information. Performers from Yehudi Menuhin to Lili Pons played and sang for soldiers at the front. Civilian commissions for new music focused on patriotic and "martial" subjects, most famously the series of fanfares that Eugene Goossens, the chief conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, requested from American composers and from European musicians in exile: Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man is a still much-performed result. Classical music was heard on the radio and in film scores; it was performed in the Armed Forces, for example by the Camp Lee Symphony Orchestra; and it even played a role in the intelligence-gathering work of the Office of Strategic Services. Indeed, classical music in 1940s America had a cultural relevance and ubiquity that is hard to imagine today, and it played an important role as a cultural counterpoint to the military effort as musicians and politicians were - in Henry Cowell's words - "shaping music for total war."

Recommended Reading

Fauser, Annegret. *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005.
___. "Gendering the Nations: The Ideologies of French Discourse on Music (1870-1914)." In *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800-1945*, edited by Michael Murphy and Harry White, 72-103. Cork: Cork University Press, 2001.

___. "Aaron Copland, Nadia Boulanger, and the Making of an 'American' Composer." *The Musical Quarterly* 89 (2006): 524-55. Special Issue on "Music & Identity", edited by Annegret Fauser and Tamara Levitz, published 2008.

Sounds of War: Classical Music in the United States during World War II

On the day after Pearl Harbor, New York's Group Theatre director Harold Clurman wrote to his cousin, Aaron Copland (1900-1990): "So you're back in N.Y. . . . ready to defend your country in her hour of need with lectures, books, symphonies!" Notwithstanding Clurman's wit, Copland would be one of numerous composers, performers, and musicologists in the United States of America who contributed to the war effort actively and consciously as musicians by carving out professional roles for themselves in government and private organizations, and by instrumentalizing music for the needs of their country at war. Thus Samuel Barber, Marc Blitzstein, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, Colin McPhee, and Kurt Weill were all involved in the propaganda missions of the Office of War Information (OWI). Performers from Yehudi Menuhin to Lily Pons played and sang for soldiers both stationed in army camps at home and deployed to the front. Scholars and educators such as Alfred Einstein, Alan Lomax, Bruno Nettl, Lilla Belle Pitts, Charles Seeger, and Harold Spivacke used their publications, research, and committee work to integrate music into the nation's war-related activities and discourses. Even musicians who were drafted or enlisted were often enabled to continue their work while on active service. Instrument makers, record producers, radio hosts, patronesses of music clubs—all joined forces to be a part of the great patriotic cause. Indeed, every aspect of musical production and reception was retooled for the new circumstances, lest music—and especially classical music—might be considered irrelevant in the shifting priorities of a global war. The effort paid off, for classical music had an ubiquity in the U.S. during the war that is hard to imagine today.

In order to discuss the role of classical music in the United States during these years, I will approach the phenomenon from three vantage points through specific examples: individuals' roles (a performer, Lily Pons, and a composer, Aaron Copland); institutions and their use of classical music (the Office of War Information); and the music itself (Marc Blitzstein: *Airborne Symphony*, 1943-44). I also hope to discuss with you possible critical and narrative strategies for a book that could speak to both the musical specialist and the general reader.

Supplemental Information:

1. I have created a website with music examples from this period so as to give colleagues who would want to prepare a small sample of sonic context. For access, see email notice.

2. Timeline Refresher (from a U.S. American Perspective):

1936 July: Beginning of Spanish Civil War

(American volunteers participate in the so-called "Lincoln Brigades")

1939 September: War breaks out in Europe

1940 September: U.S.A. introduces general draft (renewed in 1941)

1941 7 December: Pearl Harbor; 8 December: U.S.A. declares war on Japan

1942 U.S. Army surrenders at Bataan; U.S.A. establishes relocation camps for Japanese Americans; German Army defeated at El Alamein

1943 British and US military aircraft begin round-the-clock bombing of Nazi Germany

1944 6 June: Landing in Normandy; U.S. troops enter Paris

1945 8 May: VE Day; 2 September: VJ Day

Fauser, Annegret (Oxford [u.a.], 2013)

Sounds of war : music in the United States during World War II

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=731750519>

Fauser, Annegret (2010)

Carmen in Khaki : europäische Oper in den Vereinigten Staaten während des Zweiten Weltkrieges

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=895917912>

Fauser, Annegret (2010)

"Dixie Carmen" : war, race, and identity in Oscar Hammerstein's Carmen Jones (1943)

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=757525598>

Fauser, Annegret (2009)

Debacle at the Paris Opéra : Tannhäuser and the French critics, 1861

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=67071349X>

Fauser, Annegret (2009)

Cette musique sans tradition : Wagner's Tannhäuser and its French critics

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713481>

Fauser, Annegret (2009)

Hymns of the future : reading Félicien David's Christophe Colomb (1847) as a Saint-Simonian symphony

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713392>

Fauser, Annegret (2008)

"Wagnerism" : responses to Wagner in music and the arts

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713473>

Fauser, Annegret (2007)

Comment devenir compositeur? : les stratégies de Lili Boulanger et de ses contemporaines

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713570>

Fauser, Annegret (2007)

Oscarine and Réginette : ein komisches Zwischenspiel in der französischen Wagnerrezeption

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713503>

Fauser, Annegret (2006)

Rheinsirenen : Loreley and other Rhine maidens

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=670713619>