

# Du Bois Live at Longy

8:00pm EDT | June 11, 2021

Thank you for joining us for our first performance following the pandemic that disrupted our musical endeavors.

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## Program

Pieces listed in concert order (Program at the bottom of the page)

Deux Sinfonies, by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges  
Romanian Folk Dances, by Béla Bartók  
St. Paul's Suite, by Gustav Holst  
Appalachian Spring Suite (for 13 Instruments), by Aaron Copland

## Orchestra

### Violin 1

Thomas Cooper\*, Concertmaster  
Peter Paetkau\*  
Victoria Pan  
Thomas Collum\*  
Fiona Wood  
Jessica Tsang

### Violin 2

Greta Myatieva\*, Principal  
Shadron Davis  
Sarita Red Thunder  
Avery Normandin

### Viola

Raymond Dineen\*, Principal  
Aleksandre Roderick-Lorenz\*  
Sébastien Ridoré  
Rebecca Elaine Miller

### Cello

Alexander Fowler\*, Principal

### Flute

Tiffany Hildebrand

### Oboe

Sachiko Murata, Principal  
Orlando Jose Salazar

### Clarinet

Yhasmin Valenzuela-Blanchard

### Bassoon

Laura Reyes

### Horn

Seann Trull, Principal  
Timothy Moy

### Piano

Daniel Steele

<p>Aaron Benavidez Andrew Koutroubas* Isabella Liu</p> <p><b><u>Bass</u></b> Christopher Hernandez*, Principal Ian Saunders</p>	<p><i>*Denotes string ensemble performing with winds in the Copland</i></p>
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## Program Notes

Thank you to Roger Hecht and Sam Hausman for consulting and contributing to these program notes.

### 1. **Deux Sinfonies, by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges**-----

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, was the first Western classical composer of African heritage and one of the most remarkable characters in music History. Joseph's father, George de Bologne de Saint-Georges, was the owner of a large plantation in the French Directory (government) of Guadeloupe, a Caribbean island to the southeast of Puerto Rico. Joseph's mother, known as Anne or Nanon, was a woman enslaved by George and a Guadeloupean of senegalese descent.

In 1747, Joseph's father accidentally killed a man during a duel. To escape being charged for murder, George Saint-George fled Guadeloupe, leaving authorities to seize his possessions. Two years later, George's title of nobility allowed him to obtain a pardon and return to the Caribbean, where he gave his son his first instruction in music and fencing. In 1753, Joseph moved to Bordeaux, France where he started school, after the arrival of George and Nanon, they all moved to Paris, where George worked as an aide to Louis XV. 12 months later, Joseph entered a boarding school where he studied humanities, fencing, and horsemanship. Joseph was given the title of Ecuyer in the position of Controller Ordinary of Wars, which led to a distinguished and impressive military career.

Joseph became an elite fencer, but his athletic skills spanned from skating to dancing and swimming, an activity he was said to do with one arm. Although he had broad talents and interests, his greatest love was music. Joseph studied composition with Francois-Joseph Gossec, and studied violin with Jean-Marie Leclair. In addition to composition, he performed as a violin soloist, was accomplished at harpsichord, and conducted two orchestras, notably the first-rate Concert des Amateurs ensemble. After Concert suffered several financial blows, Joseph's status as a Black Mason led the Masons to revive the orchestra and rebrand it as Le Concert Olympique, the ensemble that commissioned Haydn's Paris Symphonies in 1787. 10 years later, Joseph became the director of Le Cercle de L'Harmonie, and eventually, music director for the Marquise de Montesson. Joseph was still serving as a member of the image military while he led weekly concerts. One avid concert-goer and admirer of Saint-Georges, was none other than Marie Antoinette, a fine singer herself who studied piano with Gluck, and occasionally performed with Joseph soloing on violin.

Although Joseph had talent, prestigious titles, and influence, he was still subject to racial discrimination. The French government regulated the immigration of Africans and aided slave owners by perpetuating discrimination against Africans. Louis XV issued a "Code Noir" that required BIPOC to register as such with the Admiralty, and Voltaire stated publicly that his belief was Africans were inferior to Europeans. Despite Joseph's accomplishments, due to his half-African heritage, he was ineligible for nobility and its titles under this new French law. Joseph's career arc may have taken him to lead the Paris Opera, but three of the Paris Opera's leading female opera singers sent an appeal to the queen stating that their delicate conscience and honor could never allow them to submit to the orders of a person of color, leading Joseph to withdraw his name from consideration. Joseph died in 1799 at the home of his friend and colleague, Nicolas Duhamel. Saint-Georges's output includes six operas, though he turned more to instrumental music in 1776. Joseph composed in a wide variety of musical styles and genres, but what he is most famous for is his large ensemble work which you'll hear tonight. His music is Classical in style, vocal in characterization, elegant, refined, and leans more to Haydn than Mozart. It includes attractive melodies, French coloring with touches of the Mannheim School, as well as complex and soloistic solo parts and first violin quartet parts. Much of that describes his two symphonies, written around 1775 (the second is

essentially the overture to his opera, L'Amant Anonyme). The light, playful melodies are scored for two oboes, two horns and strings. The first movement is fast and lively, and the melody appears almost exclusively in the first violin (something to be expected, from a composer who was also a virtuoso violinist). The second movement is flowing and seamless, written for strings only, and easily could be confused for a second movement of an early classical string quartet. The melody, mostly appearing in the first violins once more, is punctuated with fanfare-like figures to close phrases and/or sections of the movement. The third movement finale is remarkably similar in style to a finale in a Haydn symphony.

## **2. Romanian Folk Dances, by Béla Bartók-----**

Béla Bartók was a massive presence of 20th century music, and is widely considered the greatest composer from Hungary. Beginning to compose at the age of nine, Bartók gave his first performance only two years later with one of his original compositions featured on the program. Following the death of his father, Bartók and his mother moved to Bratislava where he began to study piano with Laszlo Erkel, son of composer Ferenc Erkel. Later, Bartók enrolled in Budapest's Royal Hungarian Academy of Music where he furthered his studies in composition with Janos Koessler, and piano with Istvan Thoman. Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner were well known to Bartók when he first became serious about his musical studies, but it wasn't until he heard the compositions of Richard Strauss that he was inspired to become a serious and devoted composer. Bartók's early style is often described as Brahmsian, but the tone poem Kossuth (1903) about Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the 1849 Hungarian revolution, returned him to his roots. Bartók's Violin Concerto (1908) was more traditional in regard to form, but the sound at its root was Hungarian, hinting at Bartók's future compositional style. In 1907, Bartók's friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály returned to Hungary from his studies in Paris, and introduced Bartók to Debussy, which would later influence (along with Strauss and Hungarian folk idiom/speech patterns) Bartók's only opera, Bluebeard's Castle (1911).

Between 1906 and the end of World War 1, Bartók and Kodály began a lifelong project of studying, collecting, and classifying thousands of folk tunes using an "Edison" phonograph. These folk tunes provided tunes, rhythms, harmonies, and ideas for their compositions as well as scholarly monographs and a gigantic set of twelve columns containing their research from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Northern Africa. The intent behind this project was to provide examples of, foundation for, and a renaissance of authentic Hungarian music. Bartók and Kodály put together a huge catalog that was published in 1951. Bartók's friend and Hollywood composer, Miklos Rozsa, branded their work as the foundation for a new and authentic Hungarian nationalist style.

Bartók's work with folk music came more into play in his personal compositions following the completion of his project with Kodaly. His Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary (1915), later entitled Romanian Folk Dances, is a suite of seven dances for piano that remain astoundingly faithful to the originals he heard performed by the fiddlers and flautists in 1910 and 1912. Later, he transcribed them for chamber orchestra with modern harmonization that doesn't detract from the original writing. Additionally, his publishers issued a version for violin and piano by violinist Zoltan Szekely that Bartók often played with Szekely and Josef Szigeti. The suite is a short one, performed without pause. The fast dances are exciting and rhythmic; the slower ones dreamy and seductive. Harmonies are often quartal with a touch of Eastern coloring.

1. Joc cu bata: Stick Dance
2. Brail: Sash Dance
3. Topogpo/Pe loc: "In One Spot" is more serious and probably originally played by flutes.
4. Bucsumí tanc: "Dance from Bucsum." The original is faster than Bartok's tempo.
5. Poarga Romaneasca: "Romanian Polka."
6. Aprozo/Marun el: Two fast dances: one from Beiu and the other from Neagra.

*\*\*They are often listed as one because the first is so short.*

In many ways, Romanian Folk Dances are a prime example of Bartók's researched folk materials incorporated into his own personal compositional style. The melodies were found in the Transylvanian region of Romania, and originally performed on flute or violin. The Stick Dance was said to have been heard being played by two Gypsies, according to Bartok. The Dance from Bucsum, was a dance from a district in Romania that was originally called the Bucium, and the popular Romanian Polka follows. All of the melodies in these dances use the scales of the traditional modes which are the same scales that are used in Gregorian chant, and incorporated, the listener can also expect to hear influences of the Middle East. These dances, made up of infectious rhythms, exotic scales, and traditional folk dances, are delightful and fundamental, but also elegant, and a testimony to the unique orientation of this giant of twentieth-century music.

In this early work, the melodies he'd learned from his folk research retained their pitches and rhythmic content. This changed in his later compositions, when the folk idiom was so ingrained in his style that Bartok was able to invent his own melodic and rhythmic content. Bartok's composed counterpoint and harmony written to accompany these melodies was also clearly influenced by the folk music he recorded, and characteristic of his own idiosyncratic and recognizable harmonic language. The Romanian Folk Dances, in both their solo piano and orchestral version, remains one of Bartok's most popular and accessible compositions. The directness and immediacy of the folk dances allows the listener to clearly hear how his ethnomusicological interests permeated his later and more complex pieces.

In 1943, Boston Symphony conductor Serge Koussevitzky visited Bartok's hospital bed at the urging of Reiner and Szigeti to commission a work in memory of the conductor's deceased wife. Bartok did not think he would live to finish it, but the project rejuvenated him enough to complete what turned out to be the Concerto for Orchestra (1943) plus the Sonata for Solo Violin (1944). Piano Concerto No. 3 and the Viola Concerto followed, but he finished neither before his death. The Piano Concerto was nearly done, but the Viola Concerto was left in scraps. Both were completed by Hungarian composer, Tibor Serly. Bartok lived long enough to appreciate the success of Concerto for Orchestra and the beginning of his acceptance in the U.S. before dying on September 26, 1945.

### **3. St. Paul's Suite, by Gustav Holst**-----

Gustav Holst, in line with Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, was instrumental in resurrecting British composition. Between the death of Henry Purcell and the rise of Elgar, British composition had a 200-year gap where there were no strides being made in the compositional style. Holst stands apart from the Germans, French, and Italians, due to his style of 'mystical romanticism'. Its soft pastels reminisce of a misty day on the moors, creating a dark atmosphere that hints at secrets beneath the layers and asks the listener to pay close attention. Holst's works are primarily modal, with some of his works taking a celestial tone, while others are strong in austerity. He also writes walking and marching music with confidence that borders serenity, and sure to give the listener an earworm.

Holst's musical influence and education began with his father, a pianist and church organist who taught Holst's mother as well, hoping to make it a family tradition. Holst's neuritis in his right arm made it difficult to play challenging works for piano, though he did work as a church organist into his teens, giving him experience that influenced his later choral works. At age twelve, influenced by Arthur Sullivan, Holst wrote a plethora of small pieces and songs. At nineteen Holst entered the Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with Charles Stanford, although largely self-taught. There, he met fellow student Ralph Vaughan Williams and became lifelong friends, often exchanging views and critiques on each other's writing. After coming into financial trouble, Holst was forced to leave the Royal College of Music. He did work as a church organist and trombonist with the Carl Rosa Opera Company and the Scottish Orchestra. These experiences influenced his methods of orchestration, seen in his larger compositions.

Holst's first work of note was Cotswold Symphony (1900). In 1904, Holst's daughter, Imogen Holst, thought her father found his true voice in the regal and dramatic Mystic Trumpeter, a setting of Walt Whitman verses and the work where he first employed a bit of bitonality. After slow progress with little income, Gustav began teaching at St. Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith in 1905 where he worked for the rest of his life, eventually becoming its Director of Music.

St. Paul's Suite (1913) was written for the school's string orchestra, celebrating the opening of a new wing. "Jig" contains two ideas, both light-hearted, yet harmonically interesting. "Ostinato" is replete with subtle suggestions of flitting fireflies and a wisplike ending. "Intermezzo" begins as a wistful, Eastern sounding melody over pizzicato, then breaks out in quiet exuberance. After the opening melody returns tutti, quiet solos lead to a coda that combines the two themes. The last movement, "Fantasia on the Dargason," is a rescoring of the finale to Holst's Suite No. 2 for Military Band in F (1911). The deftly dancing "Dargason" begins the movement and is joined by the lyrical "Greensleeves" in a different time signature, and the two swirl delightfully to the end.

These four movements of this straightforward piece provide insight into Holst's development as a composer, and clearly reveal several of the influences he found most important to him. The first and last movements, "Jig" and "Dargason", illustrate the composer's fascination with British folk music. The second movement, Ostinato, demonstrates his interest in clever musical devices that facilitate the development of material, and the third movement, Intermezzo, undoubtedly the most interesting of the suite, illustrates two characteristics of Holst as a mature composer. The first interest is his lifelong love of the music and religion of the Far East, an influence vividly evoked by the solo violin. The second characteristic is

his penchant for combining seemingly unrelated and disparate styles of music. In *Intermezzo*, Holst is clearly still experimenting with this technique, juxtaposing the solo violin's mystical sound with the energetic interludes that are evocative of a British barn dance. By the time Holst composed his major piece, *The Planets*, he had clearly refined and mastered this technique, as the work masterfully combines all of his most important influences.

After the war, Holst became faculty at the University College in Reading, and at his alma mater, the Royal College of Music. At this time, *The Planets* was catching a lot of attention, making him famous although he spent the rest of his days struggling with his popularity. Holst experienced a major setback in 1923, when he struck his head after falling from the podium while conducting. Although he was cleared to travel, and continued to do so giving lectures, masterclasses, clinics, etc., the fall's long-term after-effects started his steady decline in health.

Holst was sent to the hospital for surgery, with surgeons giving him a choice between a limited operation leaving him with a restricted lifestyle, or an involved surgery with the promise of a more normal life. After choosing the involved surgery, the procedure put a great deal of strain on his heart, costing him his life only two days later.

#### **4. Appalachian Spring Suite (for 13 Instruments), by Aaron Copland-----**

Aaron Copland, dubbed the "Dean of American Composers", earned this moniker in part by being the first composer whose music was clearly and forever known as simply American. Prior to Copland, there were many fine American composers such as John Paine, George Chadwick, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Amy Beach, etc., but all had clear European influence. Copland's first piano lessons were with his sister, and later he began formal lessons at the age of twelve. After performing his first recital in a department store, his mother encouraged him to attend as many music performances as he was able and indulge in the musical culture of New York City. One performance in particular, a piano recital by Ignacy Paderewski in 1915, gave him the spark of interest in composition. After beginning his study of composition with Rubin Goldmark, Copland discovered composers Charles Ives and Maurice Ravel leading him to the conclusion that Goldmark was too conservative. He traveled to France in 1921 to attend the American School at Fontainebleau where he studied with Nadia Boulanger. For the entire three years he was there, he studied with her at her home in Paris. He also absorbed the work of French composers and writers and made important connections like Boston Symphony conductor Serge Koussevitzky.

Copland's output can largely be classified in four categories, the first being works influenced by Jazz. He hoped these works would appeal to American audiences as an alternative to European classical music, e.g., *Music for the Theater* and the ballet *Grogh* (later *Dance Suite*). None was well received. "They called me an ogre," Copland said. "They even claimed...Koussevitzky had programmed [the concerto] with the malice of a foreigner who wanted to show how bad American music is." Next came pieces, some influenced by Igor Stravinsky, including his *Piano Variations* (1930), *Short Symphony* (1933, later *Symphony No. 2*), and *Statements for Orchestra* (1935). None of those caught on, either. Copland's feelings of dissatisfaction with the relations of the music-loving public and the living composer led to the "modern" but accessible piece that he's best known for. Their sound is "Copland" as he is now described: open, quartal harmonies, changing meters and shifting accents that moved the beat around creating motion, and brilliant settings of American folk and cowboy songs that seemed to come from open prairies of the West—all written by a French-trained, Jewish composer from Brooklyn. The first major success was *El Salón México* (1936), rooted in Mexican folk music Copland heard on a trip to that country at the behest of Mexican composer Carlos Chavez. There followed the ballet *Billy the Kid*—his first work with cowboy songs—and *An Outdoor Overture* (both in 1938), another ballet, *Rodeo* (1942), *Letter from Home* and *Appalachian Spring* (both 1944), and the *Third Symphony* (1946). His *Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man* (both 1942) were an effort to boost the morale of soldiers and the country during WWII. For radio broadcasts, he wrote *Music for Radio* (1937), *John Henry* (1940), and *Letter From Home* (1944). Like many classical composers of his era, he also wrote film scores, most notably *Of Mice and Men* (1939), *Our Town* (1940), and *The Red Pony* (1948). The first three earned Oscar nominations with *The Heiress* (1948) being the piece that finally won.

*Appalachian Spring*, a Pulitzer Prize winning ballet, was written for American dancer Martha Graham, hence the original title, "Ballet for Martha." The two met with Graham, after hearing his *Piano Variations*, expressed to Copland that she would like to dance to it. Her *Dithyramb* was set to that work, and left Copland flabbergasted at how she was able to penetrate what he described as rhythmically complex and thematically abstruse compositions. While writing *Appalachian Spring*, Copland was thinking about Martha and her unique choreographic style. Her restraint, her simple yet strong demeanor, and her pride in being herself, lead Copland to see her as very American. The setting is a 19th century Pennsylvania farmhouse, meant to be a wedding gift to the newlyweds. "The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband

enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, which their new domestic partnership invites. An old neighbor suggests, now and then, the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house." Following is his description of the scenes.

- Very slowly. Introduction of the characters, one by one, in a suffused light.
- Fast. Sudden burst of unison strings in A Major arpeggios starts the action. A sentiment both elated and religious gives the keynote to this scene.
- Moderate. Duo for the Bride and her Intended—scene of tenderness and passion.
- Quite fast. The Revivalist and his flock. Folksy feeling—suggestions of square dances and country fiddlers.
- Still faster. Solo dance of the Bride—presentiment of motherhood. Extremes of joy and fear and wonder.
- Very slowly (as at first). Transition scene to music reminiscent of the introduction.
- Calm and flowing. Scenes of daily activity for the Bride and her Farmer husband. There are five variations on a Shaker theme. The theme, sung by a solo clarinet, was taken from a collection of Shaker melodies compiled by author Edward D. Andrews and published under the title "The Gift to Be Simple." The melody most borrowed and used almost literally is called "Simple Gifts."
- Moderate. Coda. The Bride takes her place among her neighbors. At the end the couple are left "quiet and strong in their new house." Muted strings intone a hushed prayerlike chorale passage. The close is reminiscent of the opening music.

The piece opens with tranquility. Copland beautifully establishes a sense of stillness in this early section, while also not simply holding one long chord. Every so often, the winds and piano punctuates as if to represent the languid ticking of a clock as one fights to get out of their warm bed in the early morning. After the piece mesmerizes the listener into almost a meditative state, Copland plunges you into the famous "Allegro" or fast section, waking the listener up as if doused in ice water. This section is one of the two most recognizable melodies in the suite, and can be considered the musical equivalent of running through a sprinkler on a hot summer day. It is refreshing, surprising, and upbeat - beautiful demonstrated by the playfulness of the orchestration.

From there, the "Moderato" is tender, calm, and loving. There is a deceptive simplicity to this piece that starts to fade around this moment. Conflict seemingly emerges, representing passion and strength in the instrumentation. The protagonist, the Bride and her Intended, are preparing for what is to come in their lives. The future is unknown and mysterious, but Copland uplifts that sentiment by acknowledging there is and can always be joy in the unknown, and pivots quickly into a square dance. This is a little reminiscent of his Rodeo Suite. Following this square dance, we get into the "Subito allegro", hearing elements of the earlier "allegro" theme, but faster and almost panicked, as if Copland is showing the listener how quickly time flashes ahead, and repeats upon itself. This section ends sweetly, with calmness and compassion. Copland deemed this style of Appalachian Spring as "homespun," a term that feels vibrant at the end of the "Subito allegro."

Copland then dips back into the first melody before introducing a variation on a Shaker melody known best as "Simple Gifts." This is the other well-known theme from Appalachian Spring. This movement grows and evolves so elegantly, passing the melody between the low strings, the bassoon - all while the piano playfully glistens in the background like stars in the night sky. After "Simple Gifts" evolves and passes through the ensemble like a warm summer breeze, we reach the "Moderato - Coda" - recalling the easy stillness of Copland's opening. By this point, however, the melody feels truly expansive, like a big field of wildflowers. The expansive and openness of the sound broadens the imagination and evokes powerful American imagery of wide open spaces and sky as far as the eye can see. This piece leaves you free to project whatever joys and fears you summon as it plays.