

JOHN STAFFORD SMITH *The Star-Spangled Banner*

John Stafford Smith (1750-1836) was an English composer, organist, and musicologist. A tune that Smith composed for the English Anacreontic Society in the 1770s was later famously adopted by Francis Scott Key to accompany his poem “Defence of Fort McHenry” during the War of 1812. Smith’s tune and Key’s poem eventually became known as “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which was officially recognized as the U.S. national anthem by the U.S. Navy in 1889, by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and by a congressional resolution in 1931.

AARON COPLAND *Variations on a Shaker Melody from Appalachian Spring*

American composer, educator, writer, and conductor Aaron Copland (1900-1990) composed extensively for both the classical stage and Hollywood. Today he is most known for his vernacular “populist” works in which he endeavored to evoke the American pioneer spirit by incorporating traditional folk tunes into his music. Copland uses the familiar Shaker song “Simple Gifts” in his 1944 *Appalachian Spring*, which is a ballet depicting the festivities of 19th-century pioneers who have just completed the construction of a new farmhouse in Western Pennsylvania.

RUTH CRAWFORD-SEEGER *Rissolty Rossolty*

Crawford-Seeger was an American composer known for her dissonant, modern music in the 1920s and ’30s. After the Depression, she dedicated her career to transcribing field recordings of folk music and arranging them for piano and orchestra. *Rissolty Rossolty* was a result of this work and combines elements of multiple tunes plus a surprise twist ending. Her legacy continued with stepson Pete Seeger, whose rendition of “We Shall Overcome” became an anthem of the Civil Rights Movement.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART *Rondo for Violin and Orchestra in B-Flat Major*

Although he only lived for 35 years, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) composed more than 800 works in nearly every genre of his time, many of which continue to be performed extensively today. While employed as a court musician in Salzburg during the mid 1770s, Mozart composed a series of five violin concerti. The Italian violinist Antonio Brunetti later requested that Mozart compose the Rondo for Violin and Orchestra in B-Flat Major as a replacement finale movement for the first concerto.

CHARLES IVES *Mvt. II, Putnam’s Camp, from Three Places in New England*

Born in Connecticut, Ives grew up listening to marching bands directed by his father and would often hear multiple bands playing different tunes in the same town square—a clashing sound that greatly influenced his music. “Putnam’s Camp” depicts a boy who falls asleep during a Fourth of July picnic and dreams of a past battle on the site, while snippets of “Yankee Doodle” and the “Star-Spangled Banner” collide in his head. Ives also ran a successful insurance company, with many of his business partners never realizing he was an influential maverick composer.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Clair de lune*

Debussy was inspired by paintings and images and was not interested in following the rules established by earlier composers. His use of color and harmony was groundbreaking: *Clair de lune (Moonlight)* seems to shimmer and hover in the air, a musical picture of nocturnal serenity. This beloved piece is often found in pop culture, most famously in the final minutes of the film *Ocean's Eleven*.

GEORGE BIZET Symphony No. 1 in C Major

Bizet was a 17-year-old student when he composed his first symphony in 1855. Because it was never published, the piece remained unknown until it was discovered 78 years later, hiding in the Paris Conservatory library. When he died at the young age of 36, Bizet had no idea that this symphony would be so loved, or that his opera *Carmen* would become one of the most famous works in the history of music.