

## Hymns of America



Baptist Church, Danbury, CT

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christian preachers went out to the unorganized settlers. They competed against religious **ignorance**, but also against each other and the established churches. Their message of a democratic faith, in which the poor, the uneducated, and even the fallen, not just the pre-elected **elite**, could someday go to heaven eventually brought the upstart **Protestant** movements, such as Methodists, Baptists, and others, like Mormons, increasing success.

Later, over the course of the nineteenth century, middle-class Americans in great numbers formed and joined churches and by the twentieth century, they had made church-going a **norm**. Around 1900, some churches that **opposed** the growing role of science promoted "Old Time Religion" to protest against anything that they felt contradicted the Bible.

As a boy growing up in Connecticut, **Charles Ives** was raised on a steady diet of "Old Time Religion" hymns and by his **bandmaster** father, George Ives. Charles enjoyed the **cacophony** of different municipal bands marching in the same parade, each playing a different tune. Charles was taught by his father to sing songs in different keys from his piano accompaniments, thus exposing the young Ives to one of his future trademarks, **polytonality**.



Charles Ives (1874 -1954)

Charles Ives became the **salaried organist** for the Danbury Baptist Church (pictured above) at the age of 14 and became one of music's most unusual figures. He was not a composer by trade but was a very successful insurance man and would compose at night after work or on the commuter train to and from New York City. His music was not very popular during his lifetime but Ives has become one of the most famous American composers around the world.

# African American Hymns

Hymn writing, composition, performance and the publishing of Christian hymnals was prolific in the 19th-century and was often linked to the **abolitionist** movement by many hymn writers. Stephen Foster wrote a number of hymns that were used in church services during this era of publishing.

African-Americans developed a rich **hymnody** from spirituals such as **“Swing Low Sweet Chariot”** during times of slavery to the modern, lively black gospel style. The first influences of African American Culture into hymns came from Slave Songs of the United States.



The Watch Night service is a Methodist custom that African Americans adopted and adapted as a spiritual and political ritual during the time of slavery. It continues today around the nation, with many remembering the most important Watch Night service, that of Dec. 31, 1862.

This church was used by Harriet Tubman as a stop on the underground railroad and Frederick Douglass printed his North Star anti-slavery publication in the basement.



Skeptical that President Abraham Lincoln would keep his word about emancipation, African Americans, both free and slave, as well as abolitionists, prayed through the night and into the day. Abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass stayed at a church in Rochester, N.Y., until 10 p.m. on New Year's Day, awaiting a  **cable** that assured him that the Emancipation Proclamation had gone into effect.

Sources: **Made in America** by Claude S. Fischer; Wikipedia; Community Music Works program notes for Ives String Quartet No. 1; US Slave Blogpost





**Florence Beatrice Price** was an award-winning pianist and composer who became the first African-American woman to have her work performed by a major symphony.

Born in Arkansas in 1887, Florence Beatrice Price gave her first piano performance at the age of 4. She went on to attend the New England Conservatory of Music and would eventually settle in Chicago. There, her award-winning "Symphony in E Minor" was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. A major contributor to classical music, Price died on June 3, 1953, in Chicago, Illinois.

*Folksongs in Counterpoint* being played by the Quapaw Quartet includes American Folksong, *Clementine*, English Fok Song, *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, southern plantation folk song, *Short'nin' Bread*, and African American spiritual, *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*.

## Jazz

African traditions have combined with those of other cultures in the African American community. African rhythms are **prominent** in the music and dance performed across America today. Spirituals and work songs sung by slaves in America gave rise to "blues music," a jazz form that continues to be popular in America and around the world. Examples of jazz music performed by the Quapaw Quartet include **Ragtime** music by **Scott Joplin** and *Rags for String Quartet* by **John Novacek**.



**Dance:** The African American Dance Company from Indiana University is one of many across America that incorporates elements of African dance into modern classical dance.



Jazz **music** originated in the African American community and is now performed around the world. Drums, trumpets and saxophones are commonly used to play jazz music.

# Hoedown

In contest fiddling, a hoedown is a tune in fast 2/4 time. In many contests, fiddlers are required to play a waltz, a hoedown, and a "tune of choice," which must not be a waltz or a hoedown (typically it is a jig or a schottische). In modern Western square dance, a hoedown is a piece of dance music.



**Aaron Copland** was born on November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York. He was the youngest of five children and his first music lesson came from his older sister. By age 13, he was interested in composing music.

When he started composing, he wanted to develop American **rhythms** in traditional music structures. His teacher called them "odd rhythms," but they came from someone who grew up with the sounds of **jazz** and American pop, a new and disturbing sound to the European conductors.

Copland originally wrote *HoeDown* for a ballet called *Rodeo*. He then took four pieces to form *Rodeo Suite*. There are 3 main characters - the Cowgirl, the Rancher's daughter and Head Wrangler.

## Vocabulary

**abolitionist** – a person who fought against slavery  
**Appalachia** - a region in the eastern United States  
**Bandmaster** – a person who leads a band  
**blues music** – a type of music that developed over time in the African American culture of the U.S.  
**cable** - a message sent in a way that existed before telephones  
**cacophony** – music with clashing notes  
**counterpoint** - two or more musical lines together  
**elite** – very important or advanced  
**hymnody** – a collection of religious music  
**ignorance** – what a person does not know

**norm** – average or usual  
**opposed** – against  
**organist** – person who plays the pipe organ  
**polytonality** – using more than one scale of notes at the same time in a musical composition  
**prominent** – standing out among many  
**Protestant** – a Christian who is not Catholic  
**ragtime** – a kind of jazz music popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
**rhythm** – patterns of notes used in a piece of music usually set to an underlying beat  
**salaried** – paid to do a job on a regular basis

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