

## **Men and Women Get the Blues: Incorporation of the Vernacular Into the Work of Five American Composers**

*Jan Harasim*  
T.H. Rogers K-8 School

### **INTRODUCTION**

So often we pay homage to the great European composers without considering the enormous contributions of men and women from our own country. There is no doubt that composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart should be regarded as master composers, but typically, education about American composers and the influence of our own cultural traditions are too often neglected. In addition, when we focus on composers, the contributions of American women are especially overlooked.

The unique characteristics of American culture have provided a wealth of material for 20<sup>th</sup> century composers to draw upon, from the folksongs of Appalachia and the work songs and sea chanteys of many generations, to the vibrant tapestry of jazz and the blues. This curriculum unit will delve into our broad American heritage of sounds, consider our unique cultural experiences, explore the influence of folk music, and examine the perspective of gender on 20<sup>th</sup> century American music.

The people and events in the United States have created a richly diverse society that expresses itself in a myriad of musical styles. The student population at my urban district school exemplifies this diversity. Our students speak as many as six languages, including American Sign Language (ASL). Our population includes multiply impaired, deaf, and gifted-and-talented (G/T) elementary and middle school students. This curriculum unit will be developed specifically with the gifted-and-talented in mind, but ultimately, the end product of their creativity will be shared with the entire school population.

A few of my G/T elementary and middle school students may be aware of the influences of jazz and blues in American culture, but certainly most do not understand how the music has affected composers of music. Students are even less familiar with the contributions that American women composers have made to music. For example, a recent personal survey of catalogs and educational materials sent out by established publishers for young students found only a few references to female composers of music.

In my many years of teaching music, I have not found any poster-size portraits, and few videotape recordings or juvenile books about female composers available for teachers. It is extremely time-consuming to find any recordings of music by women composers. There are not many readily available. Because so few materials about women composers are available, this curriculum unit will provide resources that will be helpful to the music educator in presenting a balanced study of composers in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM UNIT

In 1940, psychologist Carl E. Seashore wrote an article entitled, “Why No Great Woman Composers?” After elaborating at length about how musical ability is not a gender issue, he nevertheless concluded that, “. . . woman’s fundamental urge is to be beautiful, loved, and adored as a person; man’s urge is to provide and achieve in a career . . . education, environment, motivation, obligations, and utilization of resources, often regarded as determinants in themselves, are but incidental modes for the outcropping of these two distinctive male and female urges” (Seashore 21, 88).

Because of this prevailing attitude about women’s roles in the past, little had previously been done to recognize talented female composers. Thankfully, there was enough interest by 20<sup>th</sup> century music publishers and musicians to give a few women a chance to have their work acknowledged. Many of these works are available to those who research the archives. One of the best sources for American women composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the Library of Congress Deposits of Copyright collection. Because anyone can register music for copyright, the Library of Congress archive more accurately reflects the creative output of Americans than a publisher’s catalog does. Today, “research has shown that women have been composing music through the ages just as their male counterparts have” (*American Memory*).

Recognizing that musical talent exists in all of us, there is no reason why females should not be encouraged to compose music. It is incumbent upon music educators to inspire all boys and girls to explore creativity through musical composition, and to know about the achievements of all members of our society. Furthermore, it is essential that we help students understand that the music of their own country reflects who we are as a nation, just as the music of the European masters reflects the society in which they lived. The need for inclusiveness, then, is one important aim of this curriculum unit.

The five composers that I have selected for this study represent a fair sampling of diverse musical styles. All of them tapped into jazz and blues, as well as certain folksong elements. Some composed in traditional forms, a few went to the edge with dissonance, and all blended the American vernacular within their work. Influenced by the time period they lived in, all of these composers incorporated a social component that heightened their impact on American culture.

By studying George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Florence B. Price, and Ruth Crawford Seeger, students will discover how these composers distilled in their music the distinctive qualities of our American life. A comparison of these composers will help students understand how each of them responded to the world around them in his or her way. Students will have the opportunity to listen to representative examples of each of these composers. Presentation of biographical background information and discussion of the techniques, styles, and materials used by each composer will enrich the listening experience.

In addition to learning about these American composers' lives and their music, my students will develop strategies for composing their own music, responding to their world in their way. Using sounds available to them on compact disc recordings, the radio, the Internet, and television, they will learn about traditional and non-traditional forms that composers use for the expression of musical ideas.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the huge influence of technology led to the development of avant-garde musical expression and innovative techniques. From the rudimentary use of piano rolls and recording equipment to tape recorders, computers, and the current digital music technology revolution, my students will understand how technology has shaped the creation of music.

To further advance the use of technology and music, the students will be introduced to composing music with computer software as a tool. Examples of some of my compositions written with the use of a software program will be made available in various stages of development for the students to study. By focusing on the process, students will begin to understand the basic elements of a musical composition such as form, rhythm, melody, and harmony. They will also understand that learning to compose music starts somewhere; that is, it is possible for each of them to begin creating a unique sound, based on their knowledge of compositional technique that expresses their relationship to the world.

Each class will also collaborate on a piece of music, much like a jazz arrangement would be put together, based on short rhythmic riffs and improvised melodies. Students thereby will learn key components of musical expression, those of collaboration of ideas, careful and thoughtful listening, and performance as a duo or group. Using musical examples, a comparison will be made of jazz improvisation and the many ways that folk tunes were used to create new music. Students will learn the difference between improvisation and composition as they study the musical scores.

To further enhance an understanding of the ways in which a composer uses musical elements, students will sing a familiar folk song and then improvise ways to arrange it on a digital keyboard, using various instrumental settings, rhythms, registers, orchestrations and combinations of effects. By participating in this activity, students will experience directly how to compose and improvise.

During the course of this unit, and as a culminating activity, each student will develop a project that demonstrates research about an American composer and present the project in a school-wide *Festival of American Music*. This sharing of ideas might take the form of a display, a skit, an original song, or a historical research study. Using compositions developed in the curriculum unit, as well as pieces by Copland, Gershwin, Barber, Price, and Seeger, a concert of American music will be performed for the school community. Based on what they have learned, students may collaborate in a small group or work individually with music writing software to compose their original compositions.

Because American jazz is such an engaging musical style, and folk songs are familiar and generally part of their musical experience, students will respond well to the music of American composers. The influence of jazz, blues, and folk songs on American music will inspire the student to explore his or her own creativity by offering many possibilities of expression for future generations of Americans.

### **The Language of America: What the Folk Songs and the Blues Have Taught Us**

Nowhere are the blues more deeply felt than in the lives of African Americans, as they endured slavery and as they emerged after the Civil War into an America with no real place for them. The traditions of spirituals, blues, work songs and hollers evolved into a uniquely American style, segregated from the mainstream at first, absolutely powerful in its impact on listeners and performers. As society became more integrated, this music began to be infused with other musical styles. With new opportunities for education, African Americans began to be heard in many venues. “The blues was a musical response to the experiences of African Americans in the rural South . . . the blues evolved from spirituals, hymns, work songs, and field hollers—music used for religious work, and social functions. It is the foundation of jazz as well as the prime source of rhythm and blues, rock’n’roll, and country music” (Marsalis 6).

The blues became part of the American tapestry, but were not the only musical expression of the former slave and of their children’s children. African Americans ventured into the world of the trained musician, modeling their work on European traditions, so that there emerged an amalgamated American style, dependent on this cross-fertilization of musical ideas.

At the same time, more and more blacks, taking advantage of the new educational opportunities, took up the formal study of music, which in the late nineteenth century meant principally the study of European music. In the work of these composers, trained in the traditional European forms of composition—art song and symphony, march and overture—the native idioms appeared in new guise. (Ammer 173)

As black Americans integrated their music with European form and style, so white Americans became acquainted with the music of African Americans. There are many examples of how the blues became an important part of mainstream American music.

George Gershwin readily acknowledged that the so-called “father of the blues” W. C. Handy had a tremendous influence on his writing of the *Rhapsody in Blue* that debuted in 1924. For several years, the blues had dominated popular music of the time and had even permeated the work European composers like Stravinsky and Milhaud. Writing in a large orchestral form, Gershwin combined the new popular style with the traditions of European music.

As students study W. C. Handy's blues form and style, they will learn how Gershwin incorporated this style into his work using his famous *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) as an example. Musical vocabulary and techniques will be explored. The students will learn the blues scale, syncopation, note bending, improvisation, call-and-response, and twelve-bar form. Once students are familiar with the terminology, they can begin to listen for similarities and differences in the blues and in *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Another piece that students will study is Gershwin's *Three Quarter Blues* (1967). This short piano work is registered in the *Library of Congress Online Catalog* as a photocopy of the holograph. In a modern arrangement for saxophone and piano, Bill Perconti and James Marsh perform the simple theme in three-quarter time, with the theme played alternately by the saxophone and the piano:

Melody:        sol / Do do do / Do me me/ Me do do / Do  
 Rhythm:        ta / Ta ti ta / Ta ta ta / Ta ta ta / Ta

This would be an excellent study in how a “blue” note may be used to add flavor and interest to an otherwise simple, diatonic melody. The second of Gershwin's *Three Preludes* for Piano and “Summertime” from his opera, *Porgy and Bess*, would provide additional examples of how the blues influenced his compositions. The Second Prelude demonstrates the use of a left-hand repeated bass pattern in the blues form with improvisatory-sounding right-hand passages based on the fundamental dropped third so characteristic of the style (Rubinstein).

Works by Aaron Copland will be studied, including his Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra (commissioned by Benny Goodman in 1947), and his *Four Piano Blues* (1949) for piano solo. The Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra is comprised of three movements. The first movement seems quite pastoral with “Coplandesque sound and stamping” (Cole).

The second movement uses “. . . elements of both South and North American popular music, the latter based upon a Brazilian tune the composer says became ‘embedded’ in his mind while working on the piece” (Cole). The movement has an improvisatory style with a hot jazz swing flavor. The clarinet and piano evoke call-and-response style, developing a musical conversation that is highly syncopated.

The *Four Piano Blues* for piano solo represents two elements of Copland's characteristic compositional moods—reflective and jazzy. The first piece of the group, labeled “Freely Poetic,” uses a six/eight melody in an ebb and flow of tempos. Markings in the music instruct the performer to alternately “hold back” and “move forward,” adding a *poco crescendo* to create tension. Copland makes use of many “blue” notes like A flat and B flat in the key of C Major, and fluid changes in meter that add to the improvisatory quality.

Samuel Barber primarily follows European classical traditions of composition in his work, but incorporates the blues style in his *Excursions* (*Op. 20*, 1944). A note at the beginning of the piano score states “These are ‘Excursions’ in small classical forms into regional American idioms. Their rhythmic characteristics, as well as their source in folk material and their scoring, reminiscent of local instruments, are easily recognized” (Barber *Excursions* 2). Author of the liner notes insert for the sound recording of Barber’s *The Complete Solo Piano Music*, K. Robert Schwarz discusses the four movements of *Excursions*:

The first places a motoric, boogie-woogie-ish ostinato beneath a melody that is drenched in blue notes. The second is a slow, sultry blues, drawing on both the 12-bar structure and rhythmic freedom of the folk tradition. The third is a set of variations over a four-chord bass pattern, and the fourth (based entirely on tonic and subdominant harmonies) sounds like a jaunty hoe-down.

The work of Ruth Crawford Seeger demonstrates profoundly diverse styles. In her early work, Seeger, schooled in the avant-garde movement of her generation, wrote music using what was called “dissonant counterpoint and proto-serial techniques.” She also turned to the spiritual side of life and based many of her works on the theosophical, transcendental and mystical trends of the time. (Tick, “Ruth Crawford’s Spiritual Concept” 221-222) After the Great Depression, Ruth Crawford Seeger turned to another style of music. “Crawford would later abandon the high individualism of the avant-garde; as she herself described it, around 1936 she descended from the ‘stratosphere,’ a term that does indeed suggest both her spiritual as well as artistic affinities, down to earth, to the ‘highway of folk music’” (236).

Crawford used elements of American folk music elements in her composition, *Rissolty, Rossolty* (1939) (Ammer 168). This composition was orchestrated for ten wind instruments, drums, and strings. The opening theme takes the rhythm of the title, *Rissolty, Rossolty*, into a rollicking six/eight time pattern and eventually adds a “gallop, gallop” ostinato of pizzicato strings into the mix. All of this accelerates into a delightful hoedown-like section with the strings creating renditions of a fiddle tune called “The Last of Callahan.” As this section expands, the texture becomes increasingly thick. After several moments of this high and dense intensity, the final phrase suddenly restates a very light melody that trails off into silence. (Seeger, *Portrait*)

This work follows Seeger’s philosophical leanings to honor the oral traditions of folk music. It specifically uses three folk tunes, “Rissolty, Rossolty,” “Phoebe,” and “The Last of Callahan,” to emphasize women’s issues about home and family life, highlighting a woman’s perspective on male-female relationships. Charles Seeger provides information about the folk songs used for his wife’s work: “Rissolty, Rossolty” is a courting song in which the boy makes fun of the girl for being lazy and “Phoebe” is about how a wife works so much harder than the husband (Gaume 181). At the same time, the music represents a highly sophisticated new approach to the old traditions of American idioms.

“Rather than presenting the borrowed melodies as audible themes, she [Seeger] fragments and recombines elements from them in a sophisticated polyphony . . . her unusual, indeed exceptional ending for the work abstracted a quality she cherished most in tradition: an unselfconscious approach to music-making which symbolized being in life rather than on a stage” (Tick, *A Composer’s Search* 261, 264).

Florence B. Price proved to be one woman composer who expressed her African American roots in her music. Her works also reflected her formal training from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and the American Conservatory in Chicago. Price’s music includes art songs based on the poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, spiritual song settings, large symphonic forms, a violin concerto, and numerous works for piano and organ.

In the Sonata in E Minor for Piano, winner of the 1932 Wanamaker Prize, she expresses the rich flavor of a spiritual-like theme, makes use of blues harmonies, and includes syncopated rhythms all in a typical European sonata form. In another piano solo, *The Old Boatman*, Price exploits the use of syncopated melody over an ostinato pulse, with shades of an old antebellum work song written in ABA form (Waites).

## **BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE FIVE COMPOSERS**

### **Florence B. Price**

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1888, Florence B. Price studied music from a very early age with her mother who was an elementary school music teacher. Graduating from high school at the age of fourteen, Price then received her artist’s diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music. She also studied composition and counterpoint with George Chadwick at that time, and composed a string trio and a symphony as a student at the Conservatory. After holding several teaching positions in Arkansas, marrying Thomas J. Price, and while rearing three children, the family moved to Chicago to get away from the racial strife occurring in Little Rock. In Chicago, Price became well known when she won two 1932 Wanamaker Foundation awards for her Symphony in E minor and her Piano Sonata. Price died in Chicago in 1953 (Ammer 173-174).

### **George Gershwin**

The influence of living on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and later in Harlem during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed immensely to the development of George Gershwin’s music. Born of Jewish immigrant parents September 26, 1898, Gershwin first became deeply interested in classical music at the age of six when he heard Anton Rubinstein’s Melody in F in a penny arcade. At the age of ten, the experience of listening to his classmate “Maxie” Rosen play the violin brought him to an awareness of the beauty of classical music. By the time a piano was brought into the household in 1910, George Gershwin was able to sit down at the piano immediately and play a popular tune

of the day. By the time Gershwin was fifteen, and after a few years of piano lessons in the neighborhood, he had dropped out of school to become a song plugger.

Gershwin credits teacher and composer Charles Hambitzer with introducing him to Liszt, Chopin, and Debussy. Gershwin also studied with theorist Edward Kilenyi, who prompted serious work in harmony, part-writing, and orchestration. Another one of Gershwin's composition teachers was Rubin Goldmark, who also taught Aaron Copland.

Working his way into the New York music scene as a song plugger, Gershwin had the opportunity to perform his original music in the heart of Tin Pan Alley, and emerged as one of the leading composers of Broadway show tunes and popular music. In 1924, prominent bandleader Paul Whiteman premiered George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* as an "experiment" in melding together jazz and classical symphonic music. This piece became one of the most popular concert works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the course of his career, George Gershwin collaborated with his older brother Ira, as well as many others, and created musical stage hits such as *Strike Up the Band*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, *Girl Crazy*, *Oh, Kay!*, and *Lady, Be Good!* Also to his credit are concert works like the *Rhapsody in Blue*, Concerto in F, and *An American in Paris*. Profoundly interested in the blues, jazz and the folk music of African Americans, George Gershwin collaborated with Dubose and Dorothy Hayward in the creation of the opera *Porgy and Bess*, premiered in 1935 (Pollack, "Seminar Lecture").

In 1936, Gershwin traveled to Hollywood to compose music for films, but was overcome by a brain tumor. After falling into a coma, he died on July 11, 1937, just shy of his thirty-ninth birthday. Composer Arnold Schoenberg was one of Gershwin's admirers. He summarized his thoughts about Gershwin's contributions as a composer: "Many musicians do not consider George Gershwin a serious composer. But they should understand that, he is a composer—that is, a man who lives in music and expresses everything, serious or not, sound or superficial, by means of music, because it is his native language" (Schoenberg).

## **Aaron Copland**

The music of Aaron Copland brings a breadth, depth and emotional style unlike any other American composer of his time. At the beginning of his career, Copland's *Three Moods* (1921) for piano expressed the gamut of three vital components of his personality: embittered, wistful, and jazzy. These emotional underpinnings appeared throughout his work for his entire career. (Pollack, *Aaron Copland* 44)

Born to Jewish immigrant parents on November 14, 1900 in Brooklyn, New York, Aaron Copland absorbed the cultural surroundings of his middle-class neighborhood. Copland started piano lessons with his sister, Laurine, but quickly advanced to a private



teacher. At about the age of eight, he began to compose music, progressing to formal instruction with Rubin Goldmark in 1917 (25-33).

Copland describes his relationship to music and his development as a composer in this way: “Music was like the inside of a great building that shut out the street noises. They were the noises natural to a street, but it was good to have the quiet of the great building available, not as a haven or a hiding place, but as a different and more meaningful place” (Copland *Music and Imagination* 105-106).

Copland further established himself as an American composer when he used jazz and blues idioms in his Clarinet Concerto and *Four Piano Blues*, completed in 1947 and 1948. During the early 1950s, he immersed himself in setting American folksongs like “Simple Gifts” and “I Bought Me a Cat.” Other compositions included the use of American folksongs in operas, ballets, film scores, and orchestral masterworks.

Besides composing music, Copland contributed greatly to the discussion of and search for a uniquely American sound. In his 1951-52 Harvard lecture series, he described the contribution of the vernacular to 20<sup>th</sup> century American music and explained how the music of blacks has given American music its unique rhythmic characteristics. “The slave ships brought a precious cargo of wonderfully gifted musicians, with an instinctive feeling for the most complex rhythmic pulsations . . . it is just as alive today in the back streets of Rio de Janeiro or Havana or New Orleans as it was two hundred years ago” (Copland, *Music and Imagination* 91).

Aaron Copland died on December 2, 1990 in New York, and his ashes were buried at Tanglewood, according to his wishes. A farewell concert of his works in 1991 brought many musical friends together and concluded with a standing ovation (Pollack *Aaron Copland* 547). In his biography entitled, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*, Howard Pollack summarizes what makes Copland such an extraordinary person:

Indeed, Copland had perhaps the most distinctive and identifiable musical voice produced by this country so far, an individuality—in some part fashioned by vaulting melodies, jazzy polyrhythms, bright colors, open textures, bluesy harmonies, and collagelike structures—that helped define for many what American concert music sounds like at its most characteristic and that exerted enormous influence on multitudes of contemporaries and successors. (555)

### **Ruth Crawford Seeger**

In the traditions of early 20<sup>th</sup> century society, Ruth Crawford’s mother guided her daughter to become a “lady pianist.” Ruth Crawford became all of that and more, combining her career as a composer with her role as a mother and teacher.

This composer was my kind of heroine—a modern woman who I could understand as well as admire—someone who was living with messiness and grey patches of confusion and responsibility that afforded some relief from the starkness of dichotomies. The juxtaposition of the two concerns, one the creative self and the other, the relational, embodied the fundamental forces that are so unwisely seen as rivals when in fact they are twins—work and love. (Tick, *Excerpts*)

Born on July 3, 1901, Crawford enjoyed a comfortable childhood. Even though her father became ill and died during her childhood years, Ruth's mother was able to keep the family going and served as a hard-working role model for her two children. After high school, Ruth Crawford studied composition at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago under the tutelage of Adolf Weidig. While there, she began her development as a distinctive composer, became well known in the 1920s for her association with the musical avant-garde, and won the coveted Guggenheim Foundation fellowship for study abroad starting in 1930. After her studies for one year in Europe, Crawford returned to the United States and married her composition teacher, Charles Seeger. All of her training, experiences, and associations with other composers of this era culminated in the creation of a string quartet (1931), one of her most noted works (Gaume 60).

Ruth Crawford Seeger emerged from the Depression as an activist, with a sense of practicality about life and music. Although she would continue periodically to create music that reflected her earlier style, she turned mainly to compiling and arranging the rich treasure of folk songs that were beginning to be documented by musicologists like John and Alan Lomax. Her contribution to children's educational materials was extensive, as she published several volumes of folk song arrangements with her husband. Just when she had returned to composing her own distinctive music once again, Ruth Crawford Seeger lost her life to cancer November 18, 1953 (Gaume 115).

Recently, there has been a surge of interest again in her music, especially such pieces as Sonata for Violin and Piano, *Three Sandburg Songs*, *String Quartet 1931*, and "Chinaman, Laundryman," a politically-astute work that makes reference to immigrant worker class struggles during the 1920s (Hisama 61).

### **Samuel Barber**

At a very young age, Samuel Barber knew quite well his parents' expectations for him to be athletic and to choose what they considered to be a masculine profession. An early letter to his mother pleaded with her to let him follow his desire to become a composer: "I was meant to be a composer, and will be, I'm sure . . . Don't ask me to try to forget this and go on and play football, Please!" (Hennessee 3).

Born on March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Barber spent much of his childhood studying and composing music. His early compositional efforts include an incomplete opera, *The Rose Tree*, and several songs. While still in high school, Barber

was admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he wrote a violin sonata, *Dover Beach* for soprano and string quartet, and the overture to *The School for Scandal*.

Barber met Gian-Carlo Menotti at Curtis. They became close friends, living together in a home at Mount Kisco, New York. As professional colleagues they collaborated on several works, including the Pulitzer Prize winning opera *Vanessa*. The recipient of two Pulitzer Traveling Scholarships, Barber traveled through Europe where the premiere of his first symphony was performed. After returning to the United States, his first *Essay for Orchestra* and *Adagio for Strings* were introduced by Arturo Toscanini. The *Essay* may be used as an example of how the organization of literary form can provide a blueprint for musical development in a piece. This idea will be explored in Lesson Two at the end of this curriculum unit.

During his military service beginning in 1943, Barber continued to compose, completing *Excursions* for the piano in 1945, the year he was released from service. Later works include a ballet for Martha Graham, *Medea*; *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for soprano solo; a piano sonata; a piano concerto, and many other diverse works. After a highly successful career during which his music was widely-performed, Barber succumbed to cancer on January 23, 1981 (Hennessee 3-12).

Barber's style is characterized by a romantic lyricism. While his melodies are chiefly tonal, his later works employ considerable chromaticism, sometimes bordering on atonality. His harmonic textures often display polytonality, and his contrapuntal scores exhibit significant canonic and fugal elements. (12)

## SUMMARY

At the conclusion of this curriculum unit, students will achieve a clearer understanding of their American musical heritage. After they have studied the lives and music of five 20<sup>th</sup> century American composers, they will appreciate the contributions of women, minorities, and immigrants to the diverse tapestry of American culture. In addition to learning about American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, students will be given many opportunities to create their own music, working alone or in groups, developing skills in improvisation and formal structure. They will add to their musical vocabulary, as they learn new terminology and techniques. Finally, students will share their acquired knowledge with others in the school community, emphasizing the importance of American music in their lives.

## LESSON PLANS

### **Lesson One: Listening and Responding to the Expression of Musical Ideas**

One of the major goals in music education is to increase student awareness about how music relates to history and culture. The CLEAR music curriculum guidelines for the

Houston Independent School District state that “the student will develop a perspective on how art forms of the past and present express and reflect economic, political, environmental, and cultural issues of any culture within a given time period.” In addition, the fifth grade social studies guide states that the student will “identify examples of artistic expression [art, music, literature] from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”

### ***Materials***

- Music recordings or scores of the excerpts listed below in the listening lesson (see bibliography for complete information on available resources)
- Chart paper
- Blue and red marking pens to indicate contrast in the musical selections
- Keyboard instrument
- Compact disc player

### ***Objective***

In this lesson, the student will “increase knowledge of musical works and the composers who created them including time and place in which they were created.” (*CLEAR* MUS.CH.K-5.2.c) After listening to musical examples of some 20<sup>th</sup> century American composers, students will be able to identify similarities and differences in style and form. Over the course of several weeks, they will begin to recognize certain characteristics that make the music uniquely American.

Specifically, after listening to music selections listed in groups one and two below, they will understand the use of the blues scale, “blue” notes, syncopation, note bending, improvisation, and call-and-response. After listening to pieces from groups three and four below, students will identify distinctive instrumentation, harmonic structure, folk idioms, spirituals and work songs, dissonance, and various compositional techniques in the music.

### ***Activity One***

Using compact disc recordings or a live performance, students will listen several times to the following musical excerpts; they will discuss details of the music as outlined in the objectives above, brainstorm the similarities and differences, and then document them on chart paper. By comparing and contrasting their perceptions of the music, they will show them in the form of a Venn diagram. Attention to details such as syncopation, “blue” notes, and improvisatory style should be included in the description of each piece:

#### ***Group One***

- W. C. Handy: “St. Louis Blues”  
George Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue*  
*Three Quarter Blues*  
Preludes for Piano, II  
“Summertime” from *Porgy and Bess*

### *Group Two*

Aaron Copland: Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra  
*Four Piano Blues* (“Freely Poetic”)  
Samuel Barber: *Excursions, II*

### ***Activity Two***

To further experience the music of their American heritage, the students will learn to sing the spirituals, folksong, and fiddle tune listed below. When they have learned the melodies, they will be able to recognize them in the selections by Price and Seeger.

To identify and physically describe the traits listed in the objective, students will respond to the music using bodily movement activities. When they hear the use of a familiar melody, for example, they will show the shape and articulations with their arms while keeping a steady beat with their feet. To express the ostinato rhythm of “The Old Boatman,” students will use movements like rowing a boat. Then, using the same movements, they will sing one of the spirituals.

To feel the quality and texture of several melodies interwoven together, students should learn to sing “I Love the Mountains” in a two-part round, using the “boom-de-a-da” as an ostinato pattern. Explain to the students that this is a technique used by Seeger in *Rissolty, Rossolty*. Once the song is learned, each group will create appropriate movements and perform them while they are singing to show the interwoven, contrasting textures.

### *Group Three*

Florence B. Price: Sonata in E Minor for Piano  
“The Old Boatman”  
Spirituals: “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen”  
“Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit”

### *Group Four*

Ruth Crawford Seeger: *Rissolty, Rossolty*  
Traditional folksongs: “I Love the Mountains (Boom-de-a-da)”  
Fiddle Tunes: “Old Joe Clark”

### ***Evaluation***

Upon the completion of this lesson and over the course of several weeks, students will be asked to listen to and identify the musical examples studied. They will move to the music and show an understanding of contrasting meters, rhythms, dynamics, and phrasing, as well as the use of legato, staccato, accents, and other expressive qualities. On a written test, students will define characteristics that are a part of American music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as jazz, blues, and folk idioms. In a group, students will be able to perform the folk songs and spirituals learned together, emphasizing expressive qualities that make them unique.

## **Lesson Two: Developing the Creative Process through Improvisation and Composition**

One reason that it is important for students to understand various forms of musical expression is so that they will be able to relate the creative process to other disciplines as well. This cross-curricular approach will benefit the student greatly in their intellectual development. Once the students understand the differences between improvising and composing music, they will then compare a structured compositional form of music with a suggested format for writing an essay.

In this way, the student will develop a keen awareness of organizational patterns. Certain processes of creativity share common ground. On a very basic level, students will understand the relationship between sounds and their symbols in music. Likewise, they will apply structure and form to their essay writing. To further explain the process of essay writing, students will listen to Samuel Barber's *First Essay* for orchestra. A comparison will be made to the development of the music in this piece and the format of an essay (Barber *Essay*). In addition, any improvisation that is done in music class will be compared to stream-of-consciousness writing.

### ***Objective***

In this lesson, students will study the relationship between improvising music and composing music, and given certain information on which to base their creative expressions. The goal is stated in Houston Independent School District's CLEAR curriculum guide as follows: "The student will manifest aesthetic awareness of and creative expression in the fine arts disciplines through interpretation, invention, and improvisation."

### ***Materials***

- Keyboard instrument or soprano recorder
- Music staff paper and pencil
- Music writing software program such as *Sibelius*
- Tape recorder and blank audiocassette tape
- Review of musical excerpts demonstrating improvisation and composition
- Recording of Samuel Barber's *First Essay*

### ***Activity One***

Using a keyboard instrument or soprano recorder, each student will learn to play a blues scale starting on middle C, improvise a simple melody based on that scale, and perform syncopated rhythms on classroom percussion instruments. The syncopated percussion will be used as an ostinato pattern on which to build a piece of music. Students with advanced skills on the piano will play an eight-bar blues progression with a left hand pattern while improvising the right-hand blues melody. To build teamwork and ensemble

skills, one student will play the syncopated rhythms while another student improvises a melody. Then they will change parts.

### ***Activity Two***

With music staff paper and pencil, each student will compose a short, eight-bar piece of music. Depending on their knowledge of theory and experience in composition, students will notate an original piece. If digital keyboards are available with programmed instruments and rhythms, students will implement that technology to achieve a final product. For beginners, recording the piece on a blank cassette tape will document their work. For more advanced students, a computer software program will assist in preparing the composition for publication and performance.

### ***Activity Three***

As a culminating activity, students will be guided in their observations and comparisons of improvisation and composition. The following chart will be used to prompt the discussions:

#### ***Improvisation***

1. Music is made up as the performer plays or sings
2. Exploration of sounds occurs
3. “stream-of-consciousness” used

#### ***Composition***

1. Music is “set” in an imposed structure
2. The same music is performed each time in the same way
3. Musical ideas are patterned

When comparing musical composition with essay writing, the following guidelines will be implemented:

#### ***Musical Compositions***

1. Introduction: Key and meter established
2. Part A: Theme
3. Part B: Contrasting material or development
4. Part A: Return to Theme (recapitulation)
5. Coda: Special ending

#### ***Essay Writing***

- Introduction: Topic presented
- Main Idea
- Elaboration and support
- Summary of data
- Conclusion

### ***Evaluation***

To monitor student progress in skills and creative development, each composition will be performed for the class. Students will make constructive comments and suggestions. Musical excerpts will be played and students will determine if they sound either structured or improvisatory. To demonstrate an understanding of the components of essay writing as compared to musical composition, students will analyze a classmate’s work, make comments, and give feedback to that individual.

### **Lesson Three: Festival of American Music**

In collaboration with a regular classroom teacher, this lesson in music will be designed to complement and enhance a study of immigration in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Focusing on composers who were either born abroad and came to the United States or who were born of immigrant parents, students will learn of the issues, hardships and opportunities of the immigrant population. In this culminating activity, it will be important to emphasize how European traditions and classical forms incorporate richly diverse musical styles of the American people. They will learn how the uniquely American style of jazz had a direct influence on creative artists.

For the “Festival of American Music,” students will be given the opportunity to choose a format to share their acquired knowledge about American composers of the century. A concert performance will be given that includes music of Gershwin, Copland, Barber, Price, and Seeger. In addition, original blues pieces will be presented, depicting scenes, stories, and emotions of American immigrants. Visual displays will be mounted on posterboard, showing research reports, sample musical scores, and hand-drawn portraits of the composers. Some students will want to write original skits or dramatic scenes about the lives of the immigrant composers. To include technology as part of the curriculum unit, PowerPoint slide presentations will be developed to honor the musicians who have been studied.

#### ***Objectives***

Based on both music and social studies objectives, students will explore the impact of the immigrant population on American culture. According to the Houston Independent School District music curriculum guidelines, “the student will develop a perspective on how art forms of the past and present express and reflect economic, political, environmental, and cultural issues of any culture within a given time period” (*CLEAR* 6). Several social studies objectives provide the background fabric for musical studies in this unit. In the third grade, for example, one of the social studies strands focuses on identifying and explaining the significance of artists and their contributions to the cultural heritage of communities (SS.3.14 and 113.b.3.14 Culture) (*CLEAR* 8).

#### ***Materials***

- Internet access for research
- Biographies of several American composers
- Posterboard, art paper, tagboard, paints, markers, gluesticks, scissors
- Music staff paper or music writing software such as *Sibelius*
- Costume and scenery designs, prop list
- Journals to record ideas in small group planning sessions
- Folksongs, blues and other American musical examples to sing or play
- Musical recordings of Copland, Gershwin, Barber, Seeger, and Price
- Microsoft PowerPoint software program and floppy discs



### ***Activity One***

Each student will choose an American composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and research information about him or her. A strong emphasis will be placed on finding out more about women composers of this era. When enough research has been completed, the student will decide how to present the information. For example, a small group of students will write a skit depicting how the composer got started or obstacles encountered. Other students will compose an original blues piece, learn a folksong to perform solo or in an ensemble, or create a display or model of some aspect of the composer's life. As a class, the students will perform the music of American composers they have learned about. Student committees will be formed to plan details of the festival, and the adult directors will make sure that various modes of learning are exhibited.

### ***Activity Two***

In collaboration with the computer lab teacher, students will develop their own PowerPoint presentation accompanied by the music of an American composer. Depending on the grade level, it should be at least fifteen frames long, with pertinent biographical information related to the immigrant experience. Some students will collaborate with others and some will work individually. One or two of these productions will be displayed at the festival, projected on a large screen or television.

### ***Activity Three***

The "Festival of American Music and Contributions of Immigrants to American Culture" will be held as the final culminating activity for this curriculum unit on 20<sup>th</sup> century American composers. An evening program for parents and a daytime program for the students will be presented. Display boards of group and individual projects will be set up in the school cafeteria. Food samples will be served representing different nationalities. As part of the festival, PowerPoint slides and music clips will show how technology can help us to learn and share information. Students will perform their original blues songs and sing or play music of the composers that they have studied. Skits will demonstrate events in the lives of the American composers, and a connection will be made between the culture of the past, the culture we are presently immersed in, and the culture we will create in the future.

### ***Evaluation***

Students who attend the festival will respond to an informal questionnaire about their experience. Student participants will keep a journal of their activities. Participants will demonstrate their knowledge of American composers by identifying their music. They will write a poem or short personal essay explaining their favorite composer and why that composer appeals to them. The "Festival of American Music and Contributions of Immigrants to American Culture" will demonstrate the importance of music originating in the United States.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Works Cited

- American Memory: In Search of the Woman Composer: Finding Music by Women.*  
Library of Congress. 2 Feb. 2004. <[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awmusic8/search\\_composer.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awmusic8/search_composer.html)>  
This website provides valuable information about how to research women composers. As an introduction, the author discusses the issue of discrimination against the female composer. However, this field is wide open and many scores are now available. There are many deposits of copyrighted music submitted by women.
- Ammer, Christine. *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music.* Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001.  
This source gives an historical overview of women in music in the United States. Chapter Four discusses the cultural events that led to the development of the first “lady composers.” Chapter Six continues the thread with “Grass Roots: Composers in American Idioms.”
- Barber, Samuel. *Excursions (Op.20).* New York: G. Schirmer, 1945.  
This is the companion score to the compact disc recording listed in the discography. Students will look at the score as they listen to the music.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Essay for Orchestra (Op. 12).* New York: G. Schirmer, 1941.  
The score and its companion compact disc recording will provide insight for the comparison of a musical composition and the format of a literary essay. One example of a composer’s use of structure and form to shape his music.
- Cole, Edward. CD Insert. *Benny Goodman’s Collector’s Edition [sound recording]: Compositions and Collaborations.* New York: CBS Masterworks, MK42227, 1986.  
Edward Cole provides an astute analysis of the collaborative efforts of Aaron Copland and Benny Goodman. He gives details about the origins of the Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra.
- Copland, Aaron. “Freely Poetic.” *Four Piano Blues.* New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1949.  
Piano score for study guide and sight-reading. Some of my students may be able to play it. I will learn this music to play for my students.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Music and Imagination: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures.* New York: Harvard UP, Mentor Books, 1952.

This series of essays, originally presented as a lecture series, provides insight about influences of the vernacular on Copland's music. The chapter entitled, "Musical Imagination in the Americas," explains how the music of blacks and native peoples has given American music its unique characteristics.

Guame, Matilda. *Ruth Crawford Seeger: Memoirs, Memories, Music*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986.

This biography provides personal and professional information about the composer, as well as photos and other sources for further research. I will use it as a general overview and for locating the composer's work.

Hennessee, Don A. *Samuel Barber: A Bio-Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.

This work provides biographical information about Barber. It also suggests further reference works and materials.

Hisama, Ellie M. *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon*. Cambridge UP, 2001.

This source compares the life work of three American women composers, analyzing the musical style of each. It may help to clarify why women have not often been recognized or taken seriously as composers. Crawford's *Chinaman*, *Laundryman* is analyzed.

Houston Independent School District Curriculum Department. *CLEAR Curriculum Guide: Fine Arts, General Music, Kindergarten—Grade Five*. Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District, 2003.

This curriculum guide provides music goals, objectives, student expectations, and assessment correlations to other objectives as they relate to four strands: perception, creative expression and performance, historical and cultural heritage, and response and evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_. *CLEAR Curriculum Guide: Social Studies, Grade Five*. Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District. 30 Sep. 2003.

<<http://clear.houstonisd.org/clear/jsp?Header2.jsp>>.

This source outlines the social studies objectives as they relate to art, music, and literature from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Marsalis, Wynton. *Jazz for Young People Curriculum (Student Guide)*. Jazz at Lincoln Center. Scholastic, Inc., 2003.

This curriculum set offers a wealth of material for studying jazz and blues music. It includes a video of a studio recording session, ten compact disc recordings of various styles of jazz, and student curriculum guides. Each style is clearly defined and numerous examples are given.

Pollack, Howard. *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*. Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2000.

This biography of Copland offers a thorough historical perspective of his life and a detailed analysis of his music. It explains how events helped to shape the life and music of one of America's greatest composers.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Seminar Lecture on George Gershwin." Houston Teachers Institute. 27 Jan. 2004.

In a series of talks held Spring semester, 2004, Dr. Pollack detailed events of George Gershwin's life that led to the career of one of the most popular American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Schoenberg, Arnold. "Schoenberg on Gershwin." *Classical Net*. 08 April 2004.

<<http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/articles/gershwin/schoenberg.html>>

Schoenberg comments on Gershwin as a composer. Schoenberg defends his friend Gershwin in response to criticisms that Gershwin should not be considered a "serious" composer.

Schwartz, K. Robert. CD Insert. *The Complete Solo Piano Music*. Samuel Barber. Musical Heritage Society. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1994.

Schwartz gives the reader insights about the nature of Barber's piano piece *Excursions*. He explains the four contrasting movements and their relationships to the blues and other vernacular sources.

Seashore, Carl E. "Why No Great Women Composers?" *Music Educators Journal* (March 1940): 21-88.

This article reflects the view of an eminent psychologist in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will contrast this view with information now available about women composers.

Tick, Judith. *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

Recommended as an excellent biography of the composer. This source provides details about Seeger's personal life and her devotion to arranging folksongs for children.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Excerpts from Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*. 11 Feb. 2004. <<http://eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~rcs/excerpts.html>>.

This website provides links to other information about the composer, including compact disc recordings, books, articles, and scores that are available.

### **Supplemental Resources**

*Arkiv Music Company: The Source for Classical Recordings*. 11 Feb. 2004.

<[http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/Drilldown?a=b&name\\_id=2550&name\\_role=1](http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/Drilldown?a=b&name_id=2550&name_role=1)>.

A list of seventeen compact disc recordings by Ruth Crawford Seeger is available through this music company. I plan to purchase several of these for use in my curriculum unit.

Bortin, Virginia. *Elinor Remick Warren: Her Life and Music*. Composers of North America series. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1987.

By comparing lifestyles of Elinor Remick Warren, Amy Beach, Ruth Crawford Seeger, and other female composers, I will develop a clearer understanding of the socio-political climate of 20<sup>th</sup>-century America.

Briscoe, James R., ed. *Historical Anthology of Music by Women*. Indiana UP, 1987.

Examination of this collection should provide a general overview of contributions of women composers in America.

Grattan, Virginia. *American Women Songwriters*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Will be useful in listing types of subjects women composers have written about. Collection of names for further research.

Howard, John Tasker. *Our American Music: A Comprehensive History from 1620 to the Present*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed.. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1965.

This book typifies American Music History before the women's movement in the 1970s. Very little mention of any women composers is made. All of the photos are of men.

ISAM Newsletter. *Ruth Crawford Seeger*. Fall 2001, Volume XXXI, No. 1. Feb. 2, 2004. <<http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/isam/rcstraus.html>>.

Several articles discuss findings about the composer and provide further guides for research. One of the articles examines the unique contributions of the composer to modern American music.

Lomax, John A. and Alan Lomax. Arr. by Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger. *Best Loved American Folk Songs*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1947.

This compilation of 111 folk songs demonstrates the Seegers' devotion to the cause of getting the music to "the people." A section entitled "Deep River" contains arrangements of blues and spirituals.

Miksis, Alyssa K. and Jane Rubinsky. "Giving a Voice to Women Composers." *The Juilliard Journal Online* (Feb. 2003). Vol. XVIII, No. 5. 14 Feb. 2004.

<[http://www.juilliard.edu/update/journal/892journal\\_substory\\_0302.asp](http://www.juilliard.edu/update/journal/892journal_substory_0302.asp)>  
This article highlights the life work of Sylvia Glickman, Juilliard alumna and founder of the Hildegard Publishing Company, specializing in music of women.

She has now affiliated with Theodore Presser, ensuring that more and more women enter the mainstream in music publishing.

Raeburn, Michael and Alan Kendall, eds. *Heritage of Music: Music in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990.

This source will be useful as an overview of the century and includes information about technology as a tool in composition. Trends are highlighted and specific references to Copland, Gershwin, and Barber are made.

Rogers, Patsy. *Sonja: For Soprano and Piano*. 1992. Library of Congress: U.S. Copyright Office. 14 Feb. 2004. <<http://www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/formprocessor/copyright/locis.pl>>

Provides a recent example of a work by a woman composer, setting poetry to music.

Seashore, Carl E. *Psychology of Music*. New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1938.

Based on information gleaned from the Library of Congress, Seashore wrote that women were inferior in musical ambition. This original source presents research to support his view.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Psychology of Musical Talent*. Boston and New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1919.

Seashore explains his contention that women are inferior in musical ambition. It would be interesting to compare and contrast his developmental thinking from this early work to the work completed in 1938.

Seeger, Ruth Crawford. *American Folk Songs for Children, in Home, School and Nursery School: A Book for Children, Parents and Teachers*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co., 1948.

Supplemental source for folk songs arranged by Ruth Crawford Seeger. This collection comes with directions for activities in improvisation, rhythmic or dramatic play.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Animal Folk Songs for Children; Traditional American Songs*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1950.

Illustrated by Barbara Cooney, this contains arrangements of songs for voice and piano. Topical for specific songs about specific animals.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Kaleidoscopic Changes on an Original Theme Ending with a Fugue: For Piano Solo*. Ed. Rosemary Platt. Washington, D.C.: Arsis Press, 1998.

I have played through this early piano composition to find out about Seeger's style, level of difficulty, and possible accessibility for young people.

Tick, Judith. "Ruth Crawford's 'Spiritual Concept': The Sound Ideals of an Early American Modernist, 1924-1930." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44 (Summer 1991): 220-261.

I would like to gain further insight about the intellectual and spiritual state of the composer. This article promises to explore conditions of the times that led to the creation of musical works. Discusses theosophy, mysticism, and transcendentalism in Crawford's life.

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. "Ruth Crawford's Proletarian Ricercari." *Sonus: A Journal of Music Theory*, 1995.

Presumably, this article will discuss the socio-political bent of the composer.

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. "Dissonant Counterpoint Revisited: The First Movement of Ruth Crawford Seeger's *String Quartet 1931*." In *A Celebration of American Music. Words and Music in Honor of H. Wiley Hitchcock*. Eds. Richard Crawford, Alan Lott, and Carol J. Oja. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, n.d.

This publication shows that the composer's music is valued and accepted as an example of early American music. Further investigation is needed. Unavailable until May 5, 2004.

Tick, Judith and Wayne Schneider, eds. *Ruth Crawford, Music for Small Orchestra: Suite for Four Strings and Piano*. Madison WI: A-R Editions, 1993.

This source was one of several listed on Judith Tick's website. Orders are available by calling 800-736-0070.

Upton, George P. *Woman in Music*. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1880.

This famous music critic played a part in perpetuating the myth that women could never be capable of composing music on a grand scale. He believed that a woman was meant to be the "recipient and interpreter."

Walker-Hill, Helen. *Music by Black Women Composers*. Chicago: Center for Black Music Research, 1995.

Provides information and perspective on what has been created published by African American Women.

## **Discography**

Barber, Samuel. *Capricorn Concerto: Op. 21; Essay for Orchestra, I*. Albany: Albany Records, 1992.

This recording will help provide information about how one composer used the form of a literary essay to shape the structure of his musical composition. A comparison will be made using the score and an essay written together in class.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Complete Solo Piano Music*. John Browning, piano. Musical Heritage Society. G. Schirmer, Inc., 1994.  
Of particular interest will be *Excursions, Op. 20 (1944)*, second movement titled “In Slow Blues Tempo.” This piece will be used as a listening example and demonstrate the influence of the blues on the music of Samuel Barber.
- Briscoe, James R., compiler. *Historical Anthology of Music by Women*. Cassette Two, Side Two [sound recording]. Indiana UP, 1991.  
Songs and various instrumental compositions by various performers. Seeger’s “Rat Riddles” from *Three Songs* is a good example of her early work.
- Copland, Aaron. *Four Piano Blues*. Monmouth, UK: Nimbus Communications International, 1999.  
I plan to use this piece as an example of how a major art music composer used the blues in his work. I will compare this with other selections.
- Field, Lucille. *Lucille Field Sings Songs by American Women Composers*. Lomita, CA: Cambria, 1990.  
This recording includes “Songs for Four Parts of the Night” by Ruth Crawford Seeger (1929) and “Three Songs” by Florence Price.
- Gershwin, George. *Porgy and Bess (Highlights)*. New York: RCA Victor Gold Seal/BMG Music, 1963.  
This recording features Leontyne Price and William Warfield in their rendition of songs depicting African American life in the 1920s. The influence of jazz and blues is keenly felt.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rhapsody in Blue, Cuban Overture*. James Levine and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Deutsche Grammophon, DGG 431 625 2, 1993.  
This is one of the best recordings of the original Whiteman Band version of *Rhapsody in Blue* arranged for full orchestra.
- Goodman, Benny. *Benny Goodman Collector’s Edition: Compositions and Collaborations*. New York: CBS Masterworks, MK 42227, 1986.  
This collection contains Aaron Copland’s Concerto for Clarinet, which uses elements of the blues. This will be a listening example for students as we explore ways that the blues had their influence on composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- New World Records. *Voices from Elysium*. Recorded Anthology of American Music, 80543, 1998.  
This recording includes composers Aaron Copland, Miriam Gideon, Louise Talma, Henry Cowell, and Ruth Crawford Seeger. A study of Cowell’s music will yield information about his influence on Seeger. The Seeger *Three Songs* includes



“Rat Riddles” penned by Carl Sandburg. Liner notes provide a wealth of information.

Perconti, Bill, et al. *Duo 1 Point 5*. Camas, WA: Crystal Records, CD 653, 1994.

This recording of various composers contains an arrangement by Bill Perconti of Gershwin’s *Three Quarter Blues*. This piece could be used to demonstrate the use of blues motifs in Gershwin’s piano music.

Price, Florence. Westbury, NY: Koch International Classics, 3-7518-2, 2001.

This recording offers a look into the style of composer. Some of the selections are based on “the blues,” and will be used as musical examples for listening lessons.

Rubinstein, Artur. *Beethoven, Franck, Szymanowski, Liszt, Milhaud, Villa-Lobos, Gershwin*. New York: RCA Red Seal 09026 63011-2, 1999.

This recording includes Gershwin’s Piano Prelude No. 2. It is an excellent example of how the composer used blues characteristics in his music.

Ruth Crawford. New York, NY: CRI, CD 658, 1993.

This compact disc recording contains the Carl Sandburg poem settings as well as a variety of compositions. The compilation of the composer’s works offers an excellent overview of her style.

Ruth Crawford Seeger. *Portrait*. Oliver Knussen. Deutsche Grammophon, DG 449-925-2, 1997.

Liner notes for this CD are written by Judith Tick. Provides another example of the style and techniques of the composer. Includes *Rissolty, Rossolty*, a piece based on three American folk song elements.

Waites, Althea. *Black Diamonds: Althea Waites plays music by Afro-American Composers*. Lomita, CA: Cambria, CD-1097, 1993.

This recording contains works by Florence Price, William Grant Still, and Margaret Bonds. “The Old Boatman” and Sonata in E minor by Price will be of particular interest for listening lessons.

Warren, Elinor Remick. *Good Morning, America!* Lomita, CA: 1989.

This compact disc provides another example of a female composer, representing a fairly conservative style, influenced mainly by European traditions.