

'You absolutely owe it to England to stay here':

Copland as mentor to Britten, 1939-1942

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Few details of the circumstances of Benjamin Britten's stay in America in the years 1939-42 were known before the publication in 1991 of Britten's letters and, in 1992, of a biography by Humphrey Carpenter. And with the exception of a short article on Aaron Copland and Britten in an *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book*,¹ little attention has been paid to the significance of Britten's exposure to Copland's music, which Britten regarded as the best America had to offer. More than 20 letters survive between 'Benjie' and 'my dearest Aaron', the majority of them belonging to the war years when Copland was resident in New York and Britten was, for the most part, nearby in Long Island.² Britten frequently referred to Copland as his 'very dear friend', and even 'Father' (Copland was the senior of the two by 13 years). During these three years, they attended the premières of each other's works, introduced one another to influential people, shared a publisher and together dreamed of success in Hollywood. Not surprisingly, trends in American composition and the influence of Copland in particular can be perceived in the works Britten undertook in this period.

Britten and Copland first met in London at the 1938 festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Among the works performed at the festival were Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* and Copland's *El Salon Mexico*. Despite terse dismissals by the British press, *El Salon Mexico* was favourably received by composers. Copland acknowledged that '[it] went over "with a bang" as a composer desires with a piece of that type'.³ Britten privately declared the work to be 'really beautiful & exhilarating' and thought it the brightest piece of the whole festival.⁴ Copland, in turn, wrote a review of Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* describing it as 'a brilliant achievement for a man of his age, or for a man of any age for that matter. . . . The piece is what we would call a knock-out'.⁵ Both Copland and his Canadian friend, Colin McPhee, applauded the absence in Britten's music of a stuffiness they associated with British contemporary music.⁶ As a result, a warm professional relationship developed between Britten and Copland. A month after the festival, Britten invited

Copland to visit him for the weekend at his home in a converted mill in Snape. On this occasion they familiarised one another with their music; Copland played his school opera, *The Second Hurricane*, singing all the parts himself, while Britten performed the first version of his Piano Concerto.⁷ Being July, and England, at the first sign of sunshine the locals escorted their visitor to one of Suffolk's pebbled beaches (which Copland described as a 'shingle'). Copland realised that perhaps he was more accustomed to the effects of the sun, when 'before long it became clear that the assembled group was in danger of "roasting"'. When I politely pointed out the obvious result to be expected from lying unprotected on the beach, I was told: "But we see the sun so rarely".⁸ When he returned to America, Copland wrote a grateful letter to Britten thanking him for his hospitality and remarking what a deep impression (sunburn not withstanding) Britten, the mill and Snape had made.⁹ Copland also expressed the wish to keep in touch with Britten's triumphs and 'problems', by which he meant both professional and personal events.

Early in 1939 Britten and his friend, Peter Pears, embarked for the United States, lured there in the first place by the blandishments of their friends: the poet, W.H. Auden and the novelist, Christopher Isherwood. There were other reasons for the journey. Britten had received an offer to compose music for a Hollywood version of the *Knights of the Round Table*. Britten believed working in Hollywood to be the next step in his career as a film composer, but he was also, naturally, conscious of the pecuniary incentive: 'and won't we have fun', he wrote to a friend.¹⁰ It seems that, in addition, Britten hoped to distance himself from difficulties in his relationship with Lennox Berkeley, a fellow composer, and it was to these difficulties that he alluded when he wrote to Copland and disclosed that it was mostly 'problems' which prompted the departure.

On arriving in Canada Britten wrote to Copland and concluded the letter with the admonishment 'don't you dare go away without letting me know when you'll be going & all that'.¹¹ By the end of June 1939 they met up in New York, and Copland played parts of

his *Outdoor Overture* to Britten.¹² More importantly, they then decided to spend the month of July in the country near Woodstock, New York. Copland arranged for Britten and Pears to rent a studio near the one he was to share with his companion and secretary, Victor Kraft. They arrived on 1 July and Britten wrote to his publisher, Ralph Hawkes, 'we are just up here & it is all that we expected & more'. The sun was even obligingly shining and, Britten informed Hawkes, 'We're getting very sunburned!'¹³ Britten and Copland occupied their days with composing, tennis and swimming in the Hudson, and their evenings were devoted to visits to the local cinema or to playing compositions to one another.¹⁴ Copland much later described their time at Woodstock:

Ben and I found we had a great deal in common. We had the distinct feeling of a relationship as composers of the same generation, as well as friends. We played tennis (he always won) and had time for talk and relaxation . . . He was not a hale fellow, but rather quiet, even shy, and quite British. And his music is very direct and British while at the same time personal. His was a natural and spontaneous gift—Ben was what is called a born musician. . . . During that summer in Woodstock we played many things through for each other; Ben was a fine pianist and a great accompanist . . . I thought of him as the voice of England in the contemporary musical scene, and he, in turn, considered me the American spokesman. We had many of the same sympathies, musical and other kinds, and we knew we faced similar problems.¹⁵

At Woodstock, Britten finished *Les Illuminations* and worked on a commission from CBC Toronto for a 'fanfare' for piano and orchestra, later named *Young Apollo*. Copland was working on a radio commission.

In October 1939 Copland flew to Hollywood to compose the score to the film of Steinbeck's novel, *Of Mice and Men*, his first involvement in a Hollywood feature film. Early in 1940 he was again engaged to compose the score to a film of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. In an article subsequently written for *Modern Music*, Copland described Hollywood as 'a composer's Eldorado'.¹⁶ Hollywood paid some of the highest salaries in the land. One composer, George Antheil, estimated that it was possible to earn between \$3000 and \$8000 a picture, yet he complained that a position as a staff composer was 'a dog's life'.¹⁷ Britten's hopes of composing the music for *The Knights of the Round Table* were dashed when the producer prematurely de-

camped. Aware that Britten had financial problems, Copland arranged for Britten to sign up with a Hollywood agent, the only recognisable way to make oneself known. The contract was valid for four months and in signing it, in June 1940, Britten told the agent that he would only go to Hollywood for 'a really good picture and a good fee'.¹⁸ In this he had been primed by the 'big boss', Hawkes, who insisted that 'we should talk about you for a feature picture only and not just as a writer of sequence music'.¹⁹ Four months later there was no sign of an engagement, and although Auden had been to California to make contacts on behalf of himself and Britten, Britten admitted that he would hate Hollywood. Britten may well have hoped to emulate Copland's success, both technical and financial, in writing for films. A year after signing the contract Britten was still hopeful, if only for the money involved. He wrote to his sister Beth, 'how rich we'll all be—I shall be able to send you lots of money'.²⁰

Despite the elusiveness of a lucrative Hollywood contract, America presented an array of opportunities to the composer who was an intimate friend of Copland, America's leading composer, and who was marketed by such a loyal and tireless publisher as Hawkes. In March 1940 Britten wrote an article which was published by the *New York Times*, in which he listed those opportunities available to a composer in America.²¹ He found the American scene far more promising than that of England, writing that, 'whatever struggle American music may have had in the past for its fair share of public recognition, to-day the composer here, compared with his English brother, even in normal times, has a very rosy prospect'. Composers received commissions from radio and phonograph companies such as CBS, in addition to private fellowships such as the Guggenheim, and Britten himself received a retainer from Boosey and Hawkes. Yet so many composers had arrived from Europe in recent years—among them Kurt Weill and Igor Stravinsky—that America was beginning to recognise the cost of its generosity. This was evident in New York where Pears discovered the city full of foreign artists fighting for jobs desperately needed by Americans. In one of his darker moods, Britten described the city as 'a struggling mass of scheming, shallow sophisticates & the lowest kind of every race under the Sun'.²² Struggling financially, he believed he bore the brunt of a backlash against foreign composers. He was bluntly critical of 'the present chauvanism [sic] in the arts',²³ and wrote

publicly in his *New York Times* article of the dangers of 'Excessive Nationalism'. He encountered among composers the attitude disclosed in the pages of *Modern Music*, which was typically that,

a large share of the dissipation of our energies is due to the rafts of ultra-conservative European musicians who have flocked to our shores in past decades, ensconced themselves in positions of power and trust, and betrayed a good deal of the musical future of America.²⁴

American newspapers and music periodicals were full of articles discussing what it meant to be an American composer, and ways in which their music was recognisably American, and Britten realised that he was viewed as an immigrant fortune hunter.

The American scene was redeemed only by a clutch of close friends, among them Copland. This Britten acknowledged in the conclusion to his *New York Times* article, a conclusion which the paper unaccountably omitted. America has, said Britten, 'good fortune in possessing in Aaron Copland, as important and vital a composer as any living'.²⁵ Britten believed that Copland was by far the best American composer, and ignored other composers in Copland's orbit such as Paul Bowles, with whom he shared a house, and Marc Blitzstein.²⁶ In summer 1940 Britten visited Copland at the Tanglewood music festival, where Copland and Paul Hindemith were the composition teachers. Britten in his letters made no mention of meeting Hindemith, but he met and spent time with Copland's pupils, including Harold Shapero, Lucas Foss and Leonard Bernstein. The crush of apprentice composers was 'too much for Ben', as Pears confided to a friend, and the fact that the visit was undertaken at all was a tribute to his allegiance to Copland.²⁷

The nature of the commissions which Copland undertook during this period—music for films, radio broadcasts and for schools—reflected his intention to write for a broader audience and, more than that, he declared, 'they give me an opportunity to try for a more homespun musical idiom'.²⁸ In targeting a broader audience Copland was concurring with Auden, who at this time exerted considerable influence on Britten's ideas. Britten had arranged for Auden to meet Copland when he arrived in America early in 1939 and Auden subsequently wrote to Britten to report the meeting and acknowledge 'Copeland [sic] is very nice, I think'.²⁹ Auden managed to convert both Copland and Britten

to his views on society and community, and the place of the artist in the community. In 1939 Copland wrote in an article that he had in recent years become dissatisfied with the nature of relations between the composer and his public, that 'it seemed to me that we composers were in danger of working in a vacuum' and that this was the reason for his shift towards simple compositions.³⁰ A year later he expanded the argument, and in this case invoked Auden. Copland described the composer as more and more estranged from his audience and compared the American serious composer to the likes of Kurt Weill and Ernst Krenek in Germany. He then quoted from Auden's introduction to the *Oxford Book of Light Verse*, published in 1938. Auden had written

The private world is fascinating, but it is exhaustible. Without a secure place in society, without an intimate relation between himself and his audience . . . the poet [or musician, as Copland amended it] finds it difficult to grow beyond a certain point.³¹

The thrust of Auden's argument was that the highbrow serious artist separates himself from his community when he retires to his ivory tower to contemplate the life of the emotions. Copland concurred that,

Isolation breeds an ingrown quality, an overcomplexity, an over-refinement, both of technique and of sentiment.³²

Copland's own imperative was partly a political one. His involvement in various leftist organisations subjected him to demands for popular, and therefore simple, music.

American composers naturally turned to their folksong heritage. In recent years, with the influence of the Federal Music Project—an employment scheme for artists in the Depression—and various leftwing organisations, Americans had become more familiar with the folk music of their country. The *Daily Worker* advocated workers' choruses of Negro songs of protest, work songs, railroad songs, cowboy and hill songs. Perhaps the most celebrated example of this trend was Roy Harris's *Folksong Symphony* no. 4 (1940), which included quotations of well known songs including 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' and 'Johnny Comes Marching Home'. In his score for *Of Mice and Men* Copland wrote music of a folksong character: 'simple tunes that might have been whistled by George and Lennie'³³ though without using direct quotations. During his

summer holiday in Woodstock with Britten, Copland was working on a piece entitled *John Henry*, named after a nineteenth-century black hero whose feats gave rise to hundreds of legends and songs.³⁴ *John Henry* was commissioned by CBS radio to form part of a series of short orchestral works based on American folk tunes. The works were to be broadcast in successive weeks from October 1939 to April 1940. CBS promised the composer 'not only money, an orchestra and an assured audience, but also certain new musical materials in the form of instrumental effects made possible through the microphone'.³⁵

Copland attempted to encourage composers to write for children. There were, he wrote in an article, 'literally thousand of school orchestras, bands, choruses, and ensembles of every variety spread all over the land'.³⁶ In 1938, Copland had written his *Outdoor Overture*, commissioned by the New York High School of Music and Art as part of their 'Music for American Youth' campaign. It was the *Outdoor Overture* which he played to Britten on his arrival in New York, echoes of which can be distinctly heard in Britten's *Canadian Carnival*. The latter, completed five months after the holiday at Woodstock, is based on various French-Canadian folksongs, culminating with the recognisable melody of 'Alouette'. Copland's operetta, *The Second Hurricane*, was written specifically for the Henry Street Settlement Music School in New York. The characters of the operetta were children, to be played by children, but expressly American children. They included Butch, the class president, Fat, who is center tackle, and Lowrie, known by the description 'wears glasses'. The action involves a group of children who volunteer to deliver relief supplies after a hurricane but their aeroplane is downed by a second hurricane and they are forced to spend the night on a mountain. As they wait to be rescued, and to keep their spirits up, they sing the folksong 'The Capture of Burgoyne'.

Influenced by Copland and with the encouragement of his publisher, Britten and Auden began work on an operetta for schools. Britten heeded Copland's opinion that,

Besides having the largest concert organisations in the world and the obvious advantages of Hollywood, this country has an educational system unparalleled in size and scope, and the demand for good simple music in this direction is enormous. There are school operas to be written, pieces for the numberless school-children learning to play instru-

ments, and above all there are the bands which are such a feature of this country and have been neglected by the serious composers.³⁷

Not only did Britten emulate Copland in composing for children, but he also tailored the work to American children by choosing an American subject. This was Paul Bunyan, the legendary American lumberjack, who occupies a similar status in the canon of American myth to Davy Crockett and John Henry. The operetta was begun in late 1939 and, as Britten wrote to Hawkes, the music was 'a little more serious than the Hedli tunes' (his Cabaret songs), 'but very direct and simple, which is the kind of style I propose to use throughout the work'.³⁸ It includes ballads, blues and songs for lumberjacks and farmers. In an interview in the *New York Sun* in April 1940 Britten admitted that *Paul Bunyan* was begun under the influence of Copland. Indeed the opening number, 'Once in a while the odd thing happens', echoes the rhythm and meter of the opening of Copland's work in which 'Once in a while something happens', and both choruses are harmonised over a tonic pedal (Example 1).

There are other, more general, features common to both works. As he was writing for children, Copland generally restricted melodic intervals to thirds or smaller, and made frequent use of repeated notes. These features are traceable in *Paul Bunyan*.

There are no direct quotations of folksongs in *Paul Bunyan*, but there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that Britten was acquainted with the collections of American folksongs available at the time. John and Alan Lomax had revised and enlarged their volume of *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* in 1938; this was the volume Copland consulted when writing *John Henry* at Woodstock. Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag* (1927) was another well-thumbed collection of folk tunes. Britten had obtained a copy of the *Songbag* before he left England and there is little doubt that he would have examined songs in similar collections. The tune to 'Fifty Thousand Lumberjacks' can be found in *The American Songbag*, with words derived from a 1917 strike in the lumber industry. Its repeated quaver patten is imitated in the Lumberjacks' Chorus from *Paul Bunyan*. The third and fourth phrases echo the fourth line of the song, with its distinctive octave interval and stepwise descent to the tonic (Example 2).

GROWN-UPS' CHO.
SOP. & ALTO

p

Once in a while some - thing hap-pens.

TEN. & BASS

p

PUPILS' CHO.
SOP. & ALTO

Once in a while

Once in a while some - thing hap-pens.

TEN. & BASS

p

Once in a while

Copland, Fig. 13.2, Choral Overture, *The Second Hurricane*

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ppp (♩ = ♩) Lento *pp*

But once in a while — the odd thing hap - pens, Once in a

But once in a while the odd thing hap - pens, Once in a

while — the dream comes true,

while — the dream comes true,

cl., hn., str. *dolciss.*

Britten Fig. 13, Introduction, *Paul Bunyan*

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Example 1: Introductory choruses to *Paul Bunyan* and *The Second Hurricane*

E B7
 Fif- ty thou- sand lum- ber jacks, fif- ty thou- sand packs,
 E
 Fif- ty thou- sand dir- ty rolls of blan- kets on their backs,
 A
 Fif- ty thou- sand minds made up to strike and strike like men; For
 B7 E
 fif- ty years they've "packed" a bed, but nev- er will a- gain.

'Fifty Thousand Lumberjacks', *The American Songbag*, ed. Carl Sandburg (1927), p. 214

This block contains the bass line for the song, consisting of four staves of music in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is primarily eighth-note based, with some quarter notes and rests. There are bracketed sections above the first two staves and dashed lines above the last two staves, indicating phrasing or structural divisions.

Britten, Melody from Lumberjacks' Chorus no. 4, *Paul Bunyan*

Example 2: Lumberjacks' songs

Lomax's *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* seems to have provided an example of a cowboy song, which Britten required for his Farmers' song, 'The shanty boy invades the wood'.³⁹ In this case the first line of Britten's song reveals melodic and rhythmic similarities to the folksong, and the whoop in the

chorus is adopted by Britten. He has avoided harmonising the song with tonic and dominant, opening with an A major triad followed by C major triad and ending the phrase on a chord of B major. The tonic is not heard until bar 11 (Example 3). One of the concluding numbers of *Paul Bunyan* borrows the opening phrase of

A cowboy's life is a dreary, dreary life. Some say it's free from care. Round-ing up the cat-tle from morn-ing till night in the mid-dle of the prai-rie so bare. Half-past four, the noi-sy cook will roar, "Whoop-a-whoop-a-hey!" Slow-ly you will rise with sleep-y feel-ing eyes, The sweet, dream-y night passed-a-way.

Chorus

Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads (1910), ed. John A. Lomax, p. 233

The shan-ty boy in-vades the wood up-on his cru-el mis-sion

Britten, Melody from Farmers' Song, no. 19, *Paul Bunyan*

Example 3: Cowboys' and Farmers' songs

Britten and Copland in America

'Pop Goes the Weasel', which itself is not dissimilar to the folksong quoted at the end of *The Second Hurricane*. *Paul Bunyan* is a more difficult work than *The Second Hurricane*, yet Britten seriously intended it for production in schools, announcing to the *Chicago Daily News* that it would 'one day win a place with the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas as a high-school vehicle'.⁴⁰ Unhappily his attempt to write music in the American manner and for the American public was not well received. *Time* magazine described it as an 'anemic operetta put up by two British expatriates', in one of a number of reviews which alluded to its authors' nationality.

Evidence such as this of the closing of the musical ranks against him horrified Britten and coloured his dreams of England. In an article he contributed to *Modern Music*, entitled 'England and the Folk-Art Problem', he attacked the use of folksong in art music. As he himself had made settings of folk material, and incorporated folksong into works in the manner of Copland, it may be that the article was designed to take a subtle swipe at the racial prejudice he perceived among Americans. He criticised the English school of folksong composition based around Hubert Parry, and implicitly placed himself in the tradition of Edward Elgar. He pointed out that folksong had failed to provide contemporary England with an adequate basis for organised music: the form and harmonic basis of folksongs impeded the composer. They are, he described, 'concise and finished little works of art. When used as raw material they tend to obstruct thinking in the extended musical forms. Works founded on them are usually little more than variations or pot pourris'.⁴¹ Aiming his argument at the widespread vogue for American rhythms and melodies in native compositions, Britten implied that the approval of such features sprang from racial prejudice. Here he was answering those who decreed that the use of folksong 'would carry on a long way toward rooting our work in the tradition of American music. It would give the lie to those who insist that our music is nothing but an importation from the outside'.⁴² 'No one', countered Britten, 'would deny that this country has been magnificently hospitable to European composers and artists. But what always has mattered and always will is that the works in question should be good. No accident of nationality has ever excused a composer of writing bad music'.⁴³ He went on to argue that,

the piece that brings tears most easily to the eyes of an expatriate Englishman is Delius's

'On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring' which is founded on a Norwegian tune and written by a man who spent most of his life out of England, who responded most to the influences of Grieg and Liszt, and whose publishers were Viennese.⁴⁴

Britten concluded the article by quoting from Auden's most recent poem and echoing Auden's views by declaring that,

The attempt to create a national music is only one symptom of a serious and universal malaise of our time—the refusal to accept the destruction of 'community' by the machine.⁴⁵

Although Britten had written several works in an American idiom, he perceived that anything produced by an English pen would be summarily rejected. Clearly he was convinced that it was impossible to be recognised simply as an accomplished composer and that unlike Auden, who became an American citizen, Britten could not or did not want to become an American composer.

After the performance of *Paul Bunyan* in May 1941 Britten saw less of Copland, partly because Copland was exceptionally busy and was often absent in Cuba and South America. Britten, however, continued to regard Copland as a mentor. Their mutual friend, McPhee, learned after writing an article which was critical of Britten, that only Copland's advice was acceptable to Britten on musical matters.⁴⁶ Britten frequently discussed with Copland whether to return to England. In a letter in September 1939 he had admitted to Copland that 'England, at the moment, is not too keen for us to go back . . . However we can talk about that kind of thing when we meet—it will be [good] to see my cheery "Father" again'.⁴⁷ Copland's response was,

Do you have to go back? I mean—does the conscription go into immediate effect because if not—I think you absolutely owe it to England to stay here. Whatever anyone may think now, I'm sure the future will justify your looking upon your own case as a special one. After all anyone can shoot a gun—but how many can write music like you?⁴⁸

Naturally Copland would have preferred to see Britten remain in America not only for reasons of safety but also in order to perpetuate their friendship. Perhaps Copland's private fears of the result of Britten returning to England were confirmed: there are few extant letters between them after 1942, and those that remain

discuss mostly business matters. Bernstein, who also regarded Copland as a father-figure, remembered Copland remarking about Britten that he felt that 'there was always something that placed a distance between them'.⁴⁹ That does not mean to say that the warmth of the friendship was diminished; in 1963 Britten wrote to 'My very dear Aaron', and remembered how, possibly on that sunny day in 1938, Copland rubbed his sunburnt back. In a tribute to Copland on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Britten wrote that 'no other music quite expresses the individual character and atmosphere of North America—young, fresh and gay, with considerable friendliness and warmth' and he commended Copland for his generosity toward other composers. Britten summed up by acknowledging Copland the musician as a 'fascinating, important composer' and personally honouring his friend, 'a lovable human being'.⁵⁰ His friendship with Copland remained one of the few fond memories of an otherwise unhappy sojourn. In returning to England in 1942 he was prepared to farewell a number of close and influential friends in order to rediscover his Englishness, and to compose *Peter Grimes*, an unmistakably English opera.

Notes

- 1 Philip Reed, 'Copland and Britten: A Composing Friendship', *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book* (1990), pp. 28-9.
- 2 The letters are held in the Library of Congress.
- 3 Quoted in Julia Frances Smith, *Aaron Copland* (New York: Dutton, 1955), p. 183.
- 4 Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten Biography* (London: Faber, 1992), p. 124.
- 5 Aaron Copland, 'Scores and Records', *Modern Music* 16.1 (November-December 1938), p. 51.
- 6 See Copland, 'Scores and Records', p. 51 and Colin McPhee, 'Scores and Records', *Modern Music* 17.1 (October-November 1939), p. 53.
- 7 Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942* (London: Faber, 1984), p. 293.
- 8 Quoted in Reed, 'Copland and Britten', p. 28.
- 9 Aaron Copland, letter to Britten, 3 August 1938, Library of Congress.
- 10 Quoted in Carpenter, *Britten*, p. 124.
- 11 Benjamin Britten, letter to Aaron Copland, 18 May 1939, Library of Congress.
- 12 Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed, eds, *Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten 1913-1976*, Vol. 1, 1923-1939 (London: Faber, 1991), p. 676.
- 13 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 675.

- 14 Copland and Perlis, *Copland*, p. 286.
- 15 Copland and Perlis, *Copland*, p. 293.
- 16 Aaron Copland, 'Second Thoughts on Hollywood', *Modern Music* 17 (March-April 1940), p. 141.
- 17 George Antheil, 'Breaking into the Movies', *Modern Music* 14 (January-February 1937), p. 85.
- 18 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 821.
- 19 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 821.
- 20 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 921.
- 21 Benjamin Britten, 'A Visiting Composer Looks at Us', *New York Times* 24 March 1940, section 9, p. 7.
- 22 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 944.
- 23 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 725.
- 24 George Antheil, 'Wanted—Opera By and For Americans', *Modern Music* 7.4 (1929-30), p. 13.
- 25 Typescript in Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh.
- 26 Britten was scathing about Ives, whom he declared to be 'almost without exception the worst composer I know of' (Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 772).
- 27 Peter Pears, letter to Elizabeth Mayer, 26 August 1940, Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh.
- 28 Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (New York: Mentor, 1952), p. 115.
- 29 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 546.
- 30 Aaron Copland, 'Composer from Brooklyn', *Magazine of Art* 32 (September 1939), p. 523.
- 31 W.H. Auden, *The Oxford Book of Light Verse* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. xvi.
- 32 Aaron Copland, 'The Musical Scene Changes', *Twice a Year* 5-7 (1940-41), p. 342.
- 33 Aaron Copland, 'The Aim of Music for Films', *New York Times* 10 March 1940, section 11, p. 7.
- 34 Copland and Perlis, *Copland*, p. 291.
- 35 Quoted in Smith, *Aaron Copland*, p. 177.
- 36 Aaron Copland, 'The Musical Scene', p. 342.
- 37 Britten, 'A Visiting Composer', p. 7.
- 38 Mitchell and Reed, *Letters*, p. 659.
- 39 Interestingly, this song appears in Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy*, as 'A Lumberman's Life', (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), p.43.
- 40 Benjamin Britten, [interview], *Chicago Daily News* 15 January 1940.
- 41 Benjamin Britten, 'England and the Folk-Art Problem', *Modern Music* 18 (1940-1), p. 73. In the *New York Times* article Britten declared that English audiences found the music of the folksong school to be 'monotonous melodically and harmonically, and clumsy in form and orchestration'.
- 42 Lahn Adohmyan, 'What Songs Should Workers' Chorus Sing?', *Daily Worker*, 7 February 1934, p. 5.
- 43 Britten, 'A Visiting Composer', p. 7.
- 44 Britten, 'England and the Folk-Art Problem', p. 74.
- 45 Britten, 'England and the Folk-Art Problem', p. 74.
- 46 'No one but Aaron has ever picked certain things in Ben to pieces' (Colin McPhee, letter to Elizabeth Mayer, 10 July 1941, Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh).
- 47 Benjamin Britten, letter to Aaron Copland, 10 September 1939, Library of Congress.
- 48 Aaron Copland, letter to Benjamin Britten, 6 September n.y., Library of Congress.
- 49 Quoted in Carpenter, *Britten*, p. 241.
- 50 Benjamin Britten, 'Aaron Copland: Seventieth Birthday Tribute', *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book* (1970), p.30.