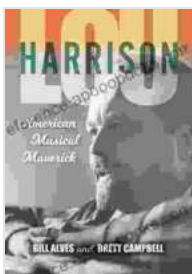


Lou Harrison: American Musical Maverick

Lou Harrison was an American composer who was known for his innovative use of non-Western instruments and his commitment to social justice. He was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1917, and he began studying music at a young age. He attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied with Roger Sessions and Darius Milhaud. After graduating from Berkeley, Harrison traveled to Europe, where he met and studied with Arnold Schoenberg. He also studied Javanese gamelan music, which would have a profound influence on his later work.

Harrison's music is often characterized by its use of non-Western instruments, such as the gamelan, the Chinese pipa, and the Japanese koto. He was also interested in using found objects and everyday materials in his music. Harrison's music is often described as being "exotic" or "experimental," but it is also deeply rooted in American folk music and traditions. Harrison was a committed pacifist and social activist, and his music often reflected his political beliefs. He wrote several works for social justice causes, such as his "Mass for the Vietnam Dead" (1968) and his "Songs for a New World" (1973).



Lou Harrison: American Musical Maverick

by Susan Shapiro Barash

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 14929 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 593 pages



Harrison was a prolific composer, and his works include operas, symphonies, concertos, and chamber music. He also wrote extensively about music, and his writings have been collected in several books. Harrison was a major figure in American music, and his work has had a profound influence on generations of composers. He died in New York City in 2003.

Early life and education

Lou Harrison was born on May 14, 1917, in Portland, Oregon. His father, Henry Harrison, was a lawyer, and his mother, Mabel Lou (née Gatch) Harrison, was a musician. Harrison began studying piano at the age of five, and he soon began composing his own music. He attended Stanford University for two years before transferring to the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied with Roger Sessions and Darius Milhaud. After graduating from Berkeley, Harrison traveled to Europe, where he met and studied with Arnold Schoenberg.

In 1942, Harrison returned to the United States and joined the American Red Cross. He served in the Pacific Theater during World War II, and he was awarded the Bronze Star for his service. After the war, Harrison settled in New York City, where he began his career as a composer.

Career

Harrison's early works were influenced by the music of Arnold Schoenberg and Darius Milhaud. However, he soon began to develop his own unique style, which was characterized by its use of non-Western instruments and its commitment to social justice. Harrison's first major work was his "Symphony No. 1" (1948), which was premiered by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. The symphony was a critical success, and it helped to establish Harrison as a major figure in American music.

In the 1950s, Harrison began to incorporate non-Western instruments into his music. He was particularly interested in the gamelan, a Javanese percussion orchestra. Harrison's use of the gamelan was groundbreaking, and it helped to introduce a new sound to Western music. Harrison also wrote several works for social justice causes, such as his "Mass for the Vietnam Dead" (1968) and his "Songs for a New World" (1973).

Harrison was a prolific composer, and his works include operas, symphonies, concertos, and chamber music. He also wrote extensively about music, and his writings have been collected in several books. Harrison was a major figure in American music, and his work has had a profound influence on generations of composers. He died in New York City in 2003.

Legacy

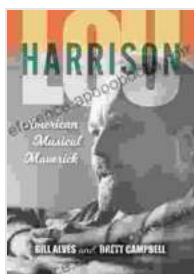
Lou Harrison was a major figure in American music, and his work has had a profound influence on generations of composers. His innovative use of non-Western instruments and his commitment to social justice made him a unique and important voice in American music. Harrison's work continues to be performed and studied today, and his legacy as a composer and activist will continue to inspire future generations.

Selected works

* "Symphony No. 1" (1948) * "Concerto for Violin and Orchestra" (1951) * "Strict Songs for Solo Voices" (1952) * "Suite for Symphonic Strings" (1954) * "Mass for the Vietnam Dead" (1968) * "Songs for a New World" (1973) * "Heart of Water" (1980) * "La Koro Sutro" (1983) * "Symphony No. 4" (1985) * "Fives" (1990)

Further reading

* Harrison, Lou. *Lou Harrison: Composing a World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. * Kozinn, Allan. *The Lou Harrison Reader*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. * Reynolds, Nancy. *Lou Harrison: American Musical Maverick*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.



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