

# Howard Hanson

## Piston Cowell Loeffler

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**Howard Harold Hanson** (October 28, 1896 – February 26, 1981) was an American composer, conductor, educator, music theorist, and champion of American classical music. As director for 40 years of the Eastman School of Music, he built a high quality school and provided opportunities for commissioning and performing American music. He won a Pulitzer Prize for one of his works and received numerous other awards.

In 1921 Hanson was the first winner of the Prix de Rome in Music (the American Academy's Rome Prize), awarded for both *The California Forest Play* and his symphonic poem *Before the Dawn*. Thanks to the award, Hanson lived in Italy for three years. Upon returning from Rome, Hanson's conducting career expanded. He made his premiere conducting the New York Symphony Orchestra in his tone poem *North and West*. In Rochester, New York in 1924, he conducted his Symphony No. 1. This performance brought him to the attention of George Eastman.

Eastman chose Hanson to be director of the Eastman School of Music. Business master George Eastman, inventor of the Kodak camera, and roll film, was also a major philanthropist; he used some of his great wealth to endow the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. Hanson held the position of director for forty years, during which he created one of the most prestigious music schools in America. He accomplished this by improving the curriculum, bringing in better teachers, and refining the school's orchestras. Also, he balanced the schools' faculty between American and European teachers, even when this meant passing up composer Béla Bartók. Hanson offered a position to Bartók teaching composition at Eastman, but Bartók declined as he did not believe that one could teach composition. Instead, Bartók wanted to teach piano at the Eastman School, but Hanson already had a full staff of piano instructors.

In 1925, Hanson established the American Composers Orchestral Concerts. Later, he founded the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, which consisted of first chair players from the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and selected students from the Eastman School. He followed that by establishing the Festivals of American Music. Hanson made many recordings (mostly for Mercury Records) with the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, not only of his own works, but also those of other American composers such as John Alden Carpenter, Charles Tomlinson Griffes, John Knowles Paine, Walter Piston, and William Grant Still. Hanson estimated that more than 2000 works by over 500 American composers were premiered during his tenure at the Eastman School.

*Notes from Wikipedia*

### Recording and restoration notes

Each of these recordings, made in the first half of the 1950s by Mercury and never previously issued on CD, was however reissued in the 1970s on Mercury's 'Golden Imports' label, a collaboration with Philips in Holland. The latter's contribution was to repack the recordings, apply some particularly unpleasant electronic stereo effects, then ship them back to the States having re-pressed them in Holland in their own factory. The transfers here all come from mint copies of these Dutch pressings, first processed to remove the noxious effects of electronic stereo, then passed through Pristine's 32-bit XA remastering process. There were some unusual artefacts present in the recordings - something unidentified but very nasty happening in the Piston at around 14kHz, for example - which have been removed or reduced. I've also used Celemony's revolutionary anti-wow-and-flutter software, Capstan, in a very gentle setting, to ensure evenness and accuracy of pitch throughout - for the record, the Cowell came in slightly sharp, whilst the others were just a little flat, though all were well recorded. All of this music is rare, and all of it well worth hearing. **AR**

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# Hanson

conducts

American

Music Vol. 2

Piston

Symphony No. 3

Cowell

Symphony No. 4

Loeffler

Poem for Orchestra

Eastman-Rochester Orchestra

Mercury studio recordings

1953 & 1954



## Hanson American Music Volume 2

### PISTON Symphony No. 3 (1947)

- 1 1st mvt. - **Andantino** (10:11)
- 2 2nd mvt. - **Allegro** (5:36)
- 3 3rd mvt. - **Adagio** (13:12)
- 4 4th mvt. - **Allegro** (5:47)

**COWELL Symphony No. 4 (1946)**

- 5 1st mvmt. - Hymn: Allegro (5:42)
- 6 2nd mvmt. - Ballad: Andante (4:42)
- 7 3rd mvmt. - Dance: Vivace (3:34)
- 8 4th mvmt. - Fuguing Tune: Moderato con moto (6:44)

- 9 LOEFFLER Poem for Orchestra ('La Bonne Chanson') (1901) (15:05)

**Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra   Howard Hanson**

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disc  
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PASC 295

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

**Transfers from Mercury SRI 75107,  
SRI 75111 & SRI 75090**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of  
**Howard Hanson**

### Piston Symphony No. 3

Recorded 11 May 1954  
First issued on Mercury MG 40012

**Cowell Symphony No. 4**

Recorded 11 May 1953  
First issued on Mercury MG 40005

## Loeffler Poem for Orchestra

Recorded 29 October 1954  
First issued as Mercury MG 40012

**Total duration: 70:33**

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