

# Travels with Arie

## Interesting Facts about the Composers & Countries

### United States

#### **Aaron Copland:**

- Won an Academy Award in 1950 for his film score to *The Heiress*.
- Held 10 honorary doctorate degrees.
- In addition to composing, he also wrote several books about music.

#### **Leonard Bernstein:**

- In his free time, he did some work for music publishers under the name Lenny Amber during the summers of 1940-41 (Bernstein means “amber” in German).
- In 1958, he started a televised series of “Young People’s Concerts” with the New York Philharmonic and he was the host.

#### **Facts About Our Country:**

- The geographic coordinates are 38 00N, 97 00 W.
- World’s fourth-largest country (after Russia, Canada, and China).
- Capital city is Washington, DC.

### Argentina

#### **Alberto Ginastera:**

- Son of Catalonian and Italian immigrants who worked with agriculture, trade, and crafts.
- He had no musical background.

#### **Facts about Argentina:**

- Geographic coordinates are 34 00S, 64 00W.
- Ruled by a democracy since 1983.
- Official language is Spanish, but English, Italian, German, and French are also spoken.
- Capital city is Buenos Aires.

### England

#### **Sir Edward Elgar:**

- Had no formal academic training.
- Taught himself to play a wide variety of musical instruments.
- His *Pomp & Circumstance March No. 1* is a popular recession march for American high school graduations.

#### **Facts About England:**

- Geographic coordinates are 54 00N, 2 00W.
- Official name is the United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).
- One of five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and a founding member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).
- Capital city is London.

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### Nigeria

#### **Samuel Akpabot:**

- Major scholar of Western African native music.
- Formed his own band at the age of 17 – “The Akpabot Players.”

#### **Facts about Nigeria:**

- Geographic coordinates are 10 00N, 8 00E.
- April 2003 elections marked the first civilian transfer of power in Nigeria’s history.
- Capital city is Abuja (formerly Lagos).

### Hungary

#### **Bèla Bartók:**

- There is a street in Budapest called Bartók Street.
- He taught himself to compose by reading scores.
- He was fascinated by Hungarian folk music, and spent much of his life collecting folk tunes.

#### **Facts About Hungary:**

- Geographic coordinates are 47 00N, 20 00E.
- The Danube River flows through the middle of the country.
- It is land-locked, which means that it is completely surrounded by land.
- Capital city is Budapest.

### Germany

#### **Johannes Brahms:**

- Declined to receive an honorary degree of Mus.D. from Cambridge University in 1876 because he did not like to be the center of attention.
- Never traveled outside of Europe.
- His *Symphony No. 1* was named “Beethoven’s Tenth” by a famous conductor.

#### **Facts about Germany:**

- Geographic coordinates are 51 00N, 9 00E.
- Nearly every tenth book that is published worldwide is written in German.
- There are more than 100 festivals each year devoted to music.
- 141 professional orchestras.
- One in four jobs are dependent on foreign trade.

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### Finland

#### **Jean Sibelius:**

- It has been said that he was as important to Finland as Winston Churchill was to England.
- His birthday is a national event.
- He originally intended to study law, but gave it up in favor of music.

#### **Facts about Finland:**

- Geographic coordinates are 64 00N, 26 00E.
- Forests cover 3/4 of the country's surface area.
- Won independence from Russia in 1917.
- Capital city is Helsinki.

### China (also called the People's Republic of China)

#### **Bright Sheng:**

- He is a professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.
- Was a student of the great American composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein.
- Received a commission from the White House in 1999 to create a new work for a state dinner, hosted by President Clinton, honoring Chinese Premiere Zhou Rongji.

#### **Facts about China:**

- Geographic coordinates are 35 00N, 105 00E.
- World's third-largest country.
- Capital city is Beijing.