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## Classic composer's centennial celebrated

Aaron Copland would have been 100 this year

All over the continent this year, people are blowing out candles on Aaron Copland's birthday cake. Had the Brooklyn-born composer lived to add his breath to the exercise, he would have been 100 years old.

As a nice piece of symmetry, an impressive 12 of the 1,200 papers presented at Musical Intersections, the unprecedented gathering of 14 learned musical societies in Toronto last week, were devoted to what Howard Pollack would call *The Life And Work Of An Uncommon Man*.

That is the title of Pollock's monumental 690-page biography, published last year by Henry Holt & Company in anticipation of this year's centennial celebrations.

Not that many of those celebrations will take place in Toronto. With a sense of timing sadly typical of the enterprise these days, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra lists not one piece by Copland in the program for its 2000-2001 season.

Compact discs are pouring out, fortunately, including an interesting one titled *Aaron Copland And Virgil Thomson, Sacred And Secular Choral Music*, recorded on its own label by *Gloriae Dei Cantores*, the Massachusetts Choir who will be singing with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra December 6 at Air Canada Centre.

And Canadian universities, once rather snooty in their response to such a suspiciously popular composer, have begun to come around to his way of thinking as well. Later this month a presentation entitled *Copland 100: Music And Imagination* will take place at the University of Calgary, featuring artists from the Esther Honens International Piano Competition.

As Pollock's biography makes clear, the long-held reputation Copland enjoyed as America's leading composer took a hit on university campuses