



# The Artist's Voice

As the League of American Orchestras celebrates its 75th anniversary throughout the 2017-18 season, we'll share a sampling of moments in our history. Here's a look at correspondence from composers, conductors, and artists to Helen M. Thompson during her tenure as a League executive from 1950 to 1970. The letters capture the concerns of their time, and each reveals a distinctive voice and personal style. Clockwise from bottom left, letters from cartoonist Charles M. Schulz, composers Lou Harrison and Aaron Copland, and conductor Leopold Stokowski.

While the letters from Aaron Copland, Charles Schulz, and Leopold Stokowski were typed (most likely by an assistant), the letter from Lou Harrison was hand-lettered by the composer on heavy dark-orange paper. Harrison's gifts as a calligrapher lend an artistic flair to his note, which acknowledges receipt of a photo and praises the League's Conductors Workshop in Asilomar, California.

anote to thank you, Helen,  
 for your kind letter, & for  
 the photo, which the Nelms had  
 already been good enough to  
 send to the Institute at  
 Asilomar was a wonderful  
 thing & there are few things  
 at once instructive and  
 pleasurable, I think, but

among  
 native  
 again to you  
 in Lou

SEP 4 1956  
 AARON COPLAND  
 SHADY LANE FARM OSSINING, NEW YORK  
 August 29, 1956  
 Mrs. Helen M. Thompson  
 PO BOX 164  
 Charleston, West Virginia  
 Dear Mrs. Thompson:  
 Thank you for your three letters of  
 July 23 and August 6 and 13. I am enthusias-  
 tic about the plan for including composers in  
 your next year's California conference. Please  
 let me know if I can be of any further aid.  
 Perhaps you have heard that my Providence  
 talk is to be republished in a revised form  
 I just completed for the Musical Courier. The  
 secretarial transcript was so inadequate that  
 I marvel at your being able to extract a read-  
 able piece for your Newsletter. However, I  
 thought it best, in view of any possible further  
 use of the talk, to have it in some definitive  
 form. Richard French, of the League of Composers--  
 ISCM, also has a copy. *Providence*

With all best wishes to you.  
 Sincerely yours,  
 Aaron Copland  
 Aaron Copland

CHARLES M. SCHULZ  
 2182 COPPER LANE  
 SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA  
 October 5, 1964  
 Mrs. Helen M. Thompson  
 American Symphony Orchestra League  
 Post Office box 66  
 Vienna, Virginia  
 Dear Mrs. Thompson,  
 You certainly may have permission to re-  
 produce the September 10th "Peanuts" comic  
 strip in the forthcoming issue of the League  
 Newsletter. I am very flattered that you  
 should wish to do so.  
 Kindest regards.  
 Sincerely,  
 Charles M. Schulz

MAR 2 1968  
 LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI  
 29 Feb 68  
 Mrs. Helen M. Thompson  
 American Symphony Orchestra League  
 P.O. Box 66  
 Vienna, Va. 22180.  
 Dear Mrs. Thompson  
 Recently I have been conducting in Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago and have the impression  
 that some of the great orchestras of the United States may have difficulties during the  
 coming years. The fact that every concert given results in a deficit so that at the end of  
 the season all these deficits added together make a sum which is difficult to find persons  
 able to pay for, on account of high taxes.  
 Some time when you are in New York if you have the time and would care to do so I would like  
 to discuss these eventualities with you.  
 It was a pleasure to meet you recently although we both were pressed for time.  
 With friendly thoughts  
 Leopold Stokowski