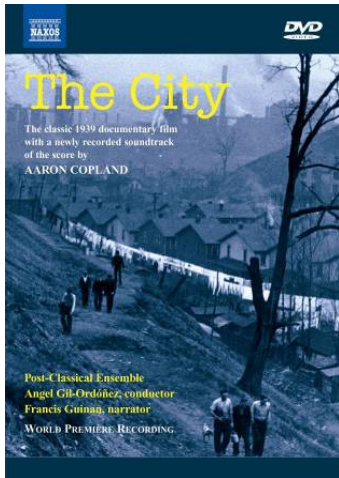


ON JANUARY 27, NAXOS RELEASES *THE CITY* ON DVD

**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING:
THIS CLASSIC DOCUMENTARY FILM, CREATED FOR THE 1939 NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR,
FEATURES A NEWLY-RECORDED SOUNDTRACK OF AARON COPLAND'S SCORE
BY THE POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE AND CONDUCTOR ANGEL GIL-ORDÓÑEZ**



THE CITY

The original 1939 classic documentary film
with a newly recorded soundtrack of the score by AARON COPLAND
Post-Classical Ensemble, Angel Gil-Ordóñez
Francis Guinan, narrator

Special Features include:

- *The City* with the original soundtrack (1939) featuring Morris Carnovsky (narrator) and an orchestra conducted by Max Goberman
- *Which Playground for your Child: Greenbelt or Gutter* (a documentary film featuring interviews with three Greenbelt “pioneers”)
- *George Stoney in Conversation with Joseph Horowitz* (2007) a legendary documentary filmmaker revisits *The City*

Recorded at Dekelboun Concert Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, College Park, 15 October 2007

Total Running Time:131.44

Naxos 2110231

In the *Los Angeles Times*, Mark Swed called Aaron Copland's score to *The City* “an astonishing missing link not only in the genesis of Copland's Americana style, but in American music and cinema.” On January 27, Naxos releases *The City* (Naxos 2110231) with a newly-recorded soundtrack of the complete Copland score, featuring the Washington, D.C.-based **Post-Classical Ensemble** and conductor **Angel Gil Ordóñez**. **Francis Guinan**, a founding member of the renowned, Chicago-based Steppenwolf Theater Ensemble, narrates. This DVD is a sequel to *The River* and *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (Naxos 2110521), two classic Pare Lorentz documentaries that strongly influenced *The City*. The new DVD marks the first time Copland's score has been recorded in its entirety.

The DVD is produced by the Post-Classical Ensemble's Artistic Director, **Joseph Horowitz**, author of *Classical Music in America: A History* and the recently-released *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*. Horowitz considers Copland's little-known score (which was never condensed as a concert suite) his “highest achievement” as a film composer. Horowitz also notes: “At a time when the recession and a crisis in housing have focused attention on the New Deal, *The City* is suddenly remarkably timely. The greenbelt towns it espouses were a quintessential New Deal experiment, federally planned and subsidized by Rexford Tugwell's Resettlement Administration.”

About the film

Made for the 1939 World's Fair (“The World of Tomorrow”), *The City* is a classic documentary film distinguished for its organic integration of narration (scripted by Lewis Mumford), cinematography (by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke), and music (by Copland). The resulting tapestry is astonishing for its vibrance and originality. Because filming outdoors with sound was so difficult and expensive, the story is told without dialogue, relying solely on its imagery, narration, and music. It is the absence of dialogue that makes it possible to create a new soundtrack – and for the first time do justice to the symphonic detail and depth of Copland's score.

Depicting in sequence a New England village, a milltown, a “city,” and a “new town,” *The City* illustrates how the frantic pace of city and milltown living destroyed the quality of life formerly found in rural America—but which *could* be recaptured in “planned communities of modest size.” In the opening sequence, Mumford (an early critic of “urban sprawl,” whose seminal 1961 book, *The City in History*, explored the development of urban civilization) has the narrator rhapsodize: “The town was us, and we were part of it.” The culminating “new town” sequence was filmed in Greenbelt, Maryland, site of the first federal experiment using Mumford's model of a small, planned community that provided Americans with jobs they could walk to, along with social services, schools, and shops—in short, a self-sustaining community. This historic city exists today and appears in the bonus film *Which*

Playground for Your Child: Greenbelt or Gutter?, which features its original inhabitants (including those in *The City*), as well its next generation of residents.

Aaron Copland as Film Composer

Aaron Copland's desire to broaden his audience in the 1930s and '40s attracted him to film; ***The City*** was his first soundtrack. His works were the antitheses of the lush, Romantic scores by his Hollywood contemporaries Erich Korngold and Max Steiner, leading famed composer, conductor, and pianist André Previn to comment that "what Copland represented in Hollywood was 'fewer notes.'" Copland followed the example of Virgil Thomson, who, in *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937), created a new style of film music Copland considered "fresher, more simple, and more personal" than most Hollywood movie music—"a lesson in how to treat Americana."

The City's structure permitted Copland to explore a gamut of iconic American locales. Sounds such as sirens, a taped emergency call, and typewriters become part of the musical score, evoking Varèse's *Amérique* and *Ionisation*.

The City was Copland's ticket to Hollywood, where he later composed the soundtracks to *Of Mice and Men* (1939), *Our Town* (1940), *The North Star* (1943), *The Red Pony* (1948), and *The Heiress* (1949), among others. He won an Academy Award for *The Heiress*, but director William Wyler's insistence on bringing in another composer to soften his score soured him on working in Hollywood.

DVD Extras:

***The City* with the original soundtrack (43:40)**

Featuring Morris Carnovsky (narrator) and an orchestra conducted by Max Goberman.

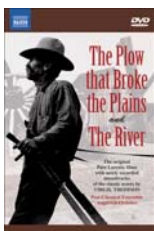
Which Playground for Your Child: Greenbelt or Gutter? (15:09)

A film produced in 2000 by Video Art Productions for the Greenbelt Museum. These interviews with three "pioneers" who lived in Greenbelt, Maryland, beginning in 1937 and 1938, include the reminiscences of Bob Sommers, who recalls the filming of *The City* and is the boy with the flat tire in the film.

George Stoney in Conversation with Joseph Horowitz (29:15)

This conversation with the legendary documentary filmmaker, who is also a historian of the genre (and, at age 91, an eyewitness to the New Deal and the 1939 World's Fair), begins with a discussion of why 1930s documentaries such as *The City* eschewed dialogue—and the artistic consequences.

The DVD is produced with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund, and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at Maryland and is distributed in the United States by Naxos of America.



THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS (1936) / THE RIVER (1938)

Directed by Pare Lorentz; Soundtracks by Virgil Thomson and re-created by Post Classical-Ensemble, Angel Gil-Ordóñez, music director, Joseph Horowitz, artistic director;

Floyd King, narrator

Total running time: 112.20

Naxos DVD 2110521 (747313552153)

The River and *The Plow that Broke the Plains* brilliantly illuminate the ideology of the New Deal. They are also masterpieces of the documentary film genre and a treasured part of America's cultural patrimony. I salute Naxos for reissuing these two great films. The Post-Classical Ensemble's new recording of Virgil Thomson's soundtrack and the fascinating supplementary materials all enhance the historic value of this wonderful DVD.

-Paul S. Boyer, Editor-in Chief, The Oxford Companion to United States History