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Life with Fatha

by Jeff Taylor

While browsing through my record collection recently, I came across an old LP reissue of Earl Hines's 1928 solo piano recordings. A twenty-five-year-old Hines peers out from the grey and blue album cover, his lanky frame draped with an impressive lambswool overcoat. Taken at a time when he was enjoying his first widespread fame in Chicago, the photo shows him poised, charismatic—every bit the budding jazz star.

The first time I saw this album, at my local public library, I was a teenager caught up in the ragtime piano revival sparked partly by the 1973 movie *The Sting*. My interests had been slowly expanding to include the work of the great stride players, particularly Fats Waller and James P. Johnson. Earl Hines was a new name for me, but I was convinced any jazz piano record from the late 1920s would be worth investigating.

My first listening left me in shock. I recognized the stylistic bedrock of the music—the rich left-hand tenths and “oom-pah” rhythm of stride, the tricky figurations of novelty piano, the inflections of the blues. But this familiar language disintegrated periodically into a maze of twists and turns: melodic ideas would gather strength and dissipate, short phrases would be volleyed between the two hands, and thick chordal passages would give way to single-note runs. Momentum would suddenly grind to a halt, and in an extended tremolo or elaborate break the beat would evaporate—only to be recovered a measure or two later. I found Hines's ideas bizarre, his edgy virtuosity relentless, and his steadfast refusal to complete a chorus without messing up the time rather irritating. “Why can't he play anything straight?” I thought. I returned the record the next day.

Today I smile when recalling this episode, not just because I have spent a good part of my professional career studying, writing about, and playing Fatha Hines's music, but because those very traits of his artistry that so upset me are now what I treasure most. There is something deeply moving about a musician who attacks each performance, regardless of the context, as if the Bomb were about to drop. Even at a battered, out-of-tune upright, playing “Basin Street Blues” for the thousandth time, Hines found it impossible to loaf. And though he tested the ears of his audience, I suspect he always challenged himself even more. As I near the end of a years-long project related to Hines—a critical edition of twelve piano transcriptions, part of the *Music in the United States of America* (MUSA) series—I feel an undiminished awe at this musician's imagination, and a sense his unique genius is underappreciated.

Transcription is both a maddening and exhilarating task. Once one has dealt with the troubling ideological implications of a process that, among other things, must merge a distinctive African American art with Eurocentric conceptions of a musical score, the simple fact that jazz cannot be fully represented on the printed page is



Earl Hines, ca. 1928
Stanley Dance and Helen Oakley Dance Papers,
Yale Music Library

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always a gnawing presence. Hines's solos mocked my attempts to capture them in notation, and it was not unusual for me to spend an entire afternoon wrestling with a single eight-bar phrase. Yet, though the best transcription can be but a pale shadow of the original, I am now struck by the wonders these twelve scores have helped unlock. The *process* of transcription, as an analytical technique and a "meditation" on the music,¹ has at times proven as enlightening as the *product*. Yet both have shown me facets of Hines only partially perceived by the listening experience. And when I consider that Hines himself was strongly influenced by written music in his early years, from classical piano repertory to the many popular styles available in sheet music in the 1910s and 20s, returning his improvisations to one of their "sources"—the notated score—has a strange logic.

Above all, transcription has heightened exponentially my appreciation of Hines's rhythmic ingenuity. Even a casual listener will observe that the pianist often sounds rhythmically "off." A phrase will start too soon, an arpeggio will sound curiously askew, or, to borrow an evocative phrase from Gunther Schuller, a "careening rush of notes" will obscure the beat entirely. And in many of Hines's solos there is a vaguely disturbing tension between the improvised lines and the underlying pulse, especially when he moves in and out of double-time (that is, a rhythmic feel where the background beat temporarily moves twice as fast). These features can be heard on the recordings themselves, but although rhythmic subtleties cannot be precisely notated, laying a gesture out on the page in a measured "grid" of 4/4 time brings Hines's rhythmic gift clearly into focus. Few jazz musicians have boasted such an exquisite internal sense of time, and it was this aspect of his talent that most frequently arose in my conversations with musicians who worked with him. Often when tackling a particularly fanciful passage I felt certain I had finally discovered the place where Hines "lost it" rhythmically, only to determine that each measure had precisely the right number of beats. Hines might wander a bit in a chord progression and he might play himself into a melodic blind alley, but in these twelve pieces at least, he never, *ever*, lost the beat. One justly admires the dazzling melodic and harmonic inventiveness of a Teddy Wilson or Nat "King" Cole, but this is virtuosity of a different sort: less familiar, perhaps, but equally stunning.

The transcriptions also help show how Hines signified on the existing jazz piano idiom. In most jazz piano of the 1920s (with perhaps the exception of Jelly Roll Morton's work) there is a clear hierarchy between the hands. The left maintains a firm foundation, and the right provides figurations above it. In the greatest players, the bass rhythm is supple and infectious, but once in motion, it is not given a great deal of thought. Even though stride players were fond of throwing in rhythmic catches and cross accents in the bass, one of the joys of listening to a Fats Waller solo is the security provided by that rich, unwavering left hand. In his recordings of the late 1920s, Hines continually erodes that sense of security with a light and rather reckless left-hand technique. I encountered this feature particularly in his middle-range chords (that is, the "pah" of the "oom-pah" stride bass). On frantically fast tunes such as the 1928 "My Monday Date" he has a tendency to throw his left hand rather carelessly toward the center of the keyboard. This casual approach draws attention to the melodic line of the right hand, and forecasts the lighter touch that both Hines and swing players such as Wilson and Jess Stacy would cultivate in the 1930s. I had always noted this aspect of Hines's early recordings, but was never quite able to pinpoint the source until I tried to write the left hand down—a supremely frustrating task. In the end I elected to correct the left hand to conform to the overall harmony, after slavish attempts at accuracy were replaced by visions of jazz scholars praising Hines's innovative use of tone clusters. Yet, the very process illuminated a specific characteristic of Hines's style that had previously eluded me.

Hines's expansion of hand roles is particularly striking in densely contrapuntal passages. Just glancing over these scores I note many times when the left hand breaks free from its moorings and engages in a dialogue with the right. The result is an intertwining of the hands, often at the service of Hines's innovative rhythmic ideas. One of the most intriguing moments occurs in the 1928 "I Ain't Got Nobody," the slowest of all the solos included in my edition, and therefore the most difficult to notate. At one point in this improvisation, Hines's right hand makes a familiar move into double-time. Instead of maintaining a regular pulse, however, the left hand slowly begins to pick up the rhythmic feel itself, filling in gaps between phrases and commenting on the right hand's melodic ideas. Not only do the hands become interlaced, but the left actually *follows* the right (see example on p. 14). The concept would be familiar to a bebop musician, but I know of no other pianist in the 1920s who would have attempted such a gesture. It was only the obsessive listening demanded by transcription that made me fully grasp the audacity of these passages and consider their ramifications for later jazz piano styles.

In his improvisations Hines delights in conversations with specific musical voices, both of predecessors and contemporaries, and transcriptions bring this home in an intriguingly visual way. An intricate two-handed break in fourths, such as that which appears near the end of "Stowaway," resembles on the page a novelty solo by Zez Confrey. The pentatonic opening gesture of "Fifty-Seven Varieties," performed in the ringing octaves of Hines's famous "trum-

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Mark Tucker

Pianist, teacher, jazz scholar, and lecturer **Mark Tucker** succumbed to lung cancer on 6 December 2000. In the context of I.S.A.M. and this *Newsletter*, his work as a compelling writer on jazz and other popular music comes to mind.

In the fall of 1981, over the Institute's transom came a brief news note from one Mark Tucker about an enterprise he and a friend, both doctoral candidates in the University of Michigan School of Music, had organized—a Society for the Promotion of American Music. Mark's write-up of SPAM (!) gave us our first inkling of his gifts as a writer of witty, economical, incisive prose: he ended it by saying, "So, in a town where tofu and sprouts are easier to find than meat and potatoes, SPAM is losing some of its bad rep, as Ann Arborites discover that it can be a wholesome and nutritious addition to their cultural diet." Of course we printed his note in the *Newsletter*.

A year later, Mark's friend and future wife Carol Oja was the I.S.A.M. Research Assistant and acting *Newsletter* editor. In the Fall 1982 issue, over Mark's byline she printed a piece titled "Behind the Beat," introducing it as a regular "ongoing column on jazz, rock, blues, funk—any and all forms of American vernacular music." Regular, ongoing, and diverse it was, indeed: Mark missed hardly an issue for almost twenty years. His main emphasis was jazz, and thus, naturally, music of black performers. The column was a cornucopia of brief reviews of new publications; new recordings and reissues; new institutes and centers. But he often broadened out into blues, ragtime, and pop/rock (e.g., a 1984 column comparing new superstars Michael Jackson and Prince); and he didn't neglect white jazz (e.g., a 1991 piece on Vince Giordano). Sometimes Mark upstaged himself by replacing "Behind the Beat" with a lead article—such as a lengthy Fall 1988 piece "Evaluating Ellington." Other treasurable columns included "Mingusology" (Fall 1992), "No Commercial Potential" on Frank Zappa (Fall 1993), and "Invincible Man" on Louis Armstrong (Fall 1997).

Meanwhile, Mark was writing books. His first was an oral history, *Jazz from the Beginning* (1988), based on some thirty lengthy interviews of the elderly jazzman Garvin Bushell. Next came a revision of Mark's dissertation: *Ellington: The Early Years* (1991), documenting the Duke up to the Cotton Club era, "before he had become famous as a composer, bandleader, and recording artist." Then came *The Duke Ellington Reader* (1993), a compilation and brilliant annotation of published articles by and about Ellington—a seminal model for similar "readers" by others. Then Mark began work on the first full-length study of the music of Thelonious Monk, to be titled *Blue Sphere*; its organization, in about forty fairly brief chapters, was inspired by Robert Richardson's biography *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (1995)—reflecting Mark's voracious reading outside of music. By late 1999, Mark had drafted ten chapters . . . but did not live to complete the book.

Through all this prolific writing, Mark continued to play the piano—his own brand of elegant jazz and meticulous reproductions of performances by Morton, Hines, Ellington, Monk, and others (derived from recordings, thanks to Mark's extraordinary ear). It was this vital involvement with the living stuff of music that made his writing, teaching, and lecturing cogent—and intellectually and spiritually important. His is an incalculable loss to music and its scholarship.

—H. Wiley Hitchcock

ISAM Matters

With great sorrow, we note the death of **Mark Tucker**. Mark's first contribution to the *Newsletter* appeared nearly two decades ago, and his prose has graced these pages ever since. We are proud that his tribute to Sir Roland Hanna appears in this issue, and we will be publishing a selection of his columns and articles from the *Newsletter* as a special ISAM publication. In honor of Mark's memory, **Carol J. Oja** and the Tucker family request that contributions be made to The Mark Tucker Memorial Fund, The Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605-1996. Our thoughts and love are with Carol, Zoe, and Wynn.

* * *

With the generous support of the Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities, ISAM continues the second year of our colloquium series, **American Music at the Millennium: New Perspectives on Race/Ethnicity/Culture**. This fall, we have enjoyed lectures by our own **Ray Allen**, who delivered a paper on J'Ouvert in Brooklyn Carnival, and by **Sherrie Tucker** (Hobart and William Smith Colleges), who shared her research on the Prairie View Co-eds, a band of black college women in Texas. Our guests in spring 2001 will be **Robin D. G. Kelley** (New York University), who will treat us to an excerpt from his book-in-progress, *Misterioso: In Search of Thelonious Monk*, and **Juan Flores** (Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center), who will speak on Puerto Rican vernacular musics in New York City. Professor Flores's lecture will inaugurate the three-day conference **Local Music/Global Connections: New York City at the Millennium** to be held in March 2001 at Brooklyn College, the CUNY Graduate Center, and New York University. Please see the announcement on p. 9 for further details.

In conjunction with the festival **Views from the Bridge: A Celebration of the Arts in Brooklyn** (see p. 7), to be held at Brooklyn College in spring 2001, the Institute will sponsor a lecture by **Gail Levin** (Baruch College and the CUNY Graduate Center) on Aaron Copland and the visual arts on 8 May 2001, at 4:30 p.m. We are pleased to be publishing Professor Levin's article on Copland in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

Lastly, to celebrate the centennial of **Ruth Crawford Seeger's** birth, the Institute will be hosting a conference on the life and music of this remarkable woman on 26-27 October 2001 at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center. **Ruth Crawford Seeger: Modernity, Tradition, and the Making of American Music** will focus on this innovative American composer and key figure in the American folk music revival of the 1930s and 1940s. An interdisciplinary gathering of composers, performers, musicologists, theorists, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, cultural historians, and music educators will explore Crawford Seeger's extraordinary contributions to the seemingly disparate spheres of modernist composition and traditional folk music. Stay tuned for details in this column.

For additional information about these events, please visit our website <<http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/isam>> or contact us at (718) 951-5655. We look forward to seeing you at Brooklyn College.

—Ellie M. Hisama

Seven Steps to Piano Heaven: The Artistry of Sir Roland Hanna

My favorite living jazz pianist is Sir Roland Hanna. I don't understand why that's not so for everybody. He has all the requisite qualities: swing, technique, sound, taste, imagination, heart, soul. Somehow, though, Hanna has never run away with critical laurels, or developed into a high-profile player even though he is respected among musicians and knowledgeable fans. True, he is no progressive innovator like Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Cecil Taylor, or Keith Jarrett. But even among solid, mainstream pianists—including such veterans as Hank Jones, Tommy Flanagan, Dave McKenna, Marian McPartland, Kenny Barron—Hanna doesn't occupy a front-rank position. His recording history confirms this: lacking a major-label contract, or even affiliation with one of the leading jazz independents, Hanna has turned to one company after another over the past thirty years. Of the thirteen discs surveyed in this article, each was released by a different label. Without a publicity machine grinding away for him, Hanna has forged ahead on his own. He has formed his own company, Rahanna Music Inc., to publish his compositions and issue recordings. Meanwhile, he has sustained himself and kept growing over the years, an outstanding if underrated jazz artist.

My aim in this article is to sing the praises of Roland Hanna. I'm not going to play the role of judicious critic, weighing this and that, splitting hairs, making judgment calls. No, I just want to enthuse about an extraordinary musician. I already know he won't be to everyone's taste. He has two tendencies that some jazz piano fans don't relish: a preference for thick, full-bodied textures and a profound influence from Romantic and early twentieth-century concert-music composers (e.g., Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, Ravel). But as you will see, he also has other stylistic modes that make up his keyboard identity.

* * *

Born in 1932, son of a preacher in the black sanctified church, Hanna was part of the efflorescence of talented pianists whose careers began in Detroit in the later 1940s and 1950s. "I came up amongst so many fantastic piano players," he told Marian McPartland on a *Piano Jazz* radio appearance. "Detroit was just rife with brilliant people: Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Hank Jones, Terry Pollard, Ted Sheely, Abe Woodley, even 'Bags' [vibraphonist Milt Jackson] played piano back in those days." Hanna shared with some of these pianists—notably Flanagan, Harris, and Jones—certain traits that might define a post-war Detroit "school" of keyboard players: advanced harmonic knowledge, a strong relationship with bebop, a percussively accented touch, economy, elegance, and unflinching swing. But unlike these others, Hanna was also drawn to studying and playing the classical repertoire, and later attended both the Eastman School of Music and Juilliard.

After brief associations with Benny Goodman (1958), Charles Mingus (1959), Sarah Vaughan (1960), and Carmen McRae (1965), Hanna landed his first long-term job with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis orchestra, holding down the piano chair in that adventurous ensemble from 1966 to 1974. Hanna served an important apprenticeship there, finding ways to accommodate a fully formed solo style to the challenges of fellow Michigander Thad Jones's tricky charts. Hanna's later mastery of shifting textures must have developed

during this stint. Though he made his first recording as a leader in 1959, Hanna's independent career didn't begin to take off until 1971, when he formed the New York Jazz Quartet, a cooperative ensemble that gelled into the 1980s. After a benefit tour of Liberia in 1969, he was knighted by the country's president William Tubman and has worn the honorific "Sir" proudly ever since.

In recent decades Hanna has become involved with jazz repertory both through playing in the Broadway show *Black and Blue* and with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He has also settled into teaching in the jazz program at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, CUNY. Still active as a performer both at home and abroad, he has maintained a busy recording schedule, both with his own projects and on dates led by others.

Though I think it's fair to place Hanna in the post-war Detroit school mentioned above, he also has traits that set him apart from that group. One is a predilection for thick chordal textures that make the piano ring out like an orchestra, as it did in the 1920s and 1930s. Many modern pianists (since Bud Powell, really) tend to favor single-note lines in the right hand and spare, clipped chords in the left; Hanna uses this approach in combos but never for long stretches of time, preferring to introduce richer, more deep-reaching textures for variety. Hanna also loves to construct arrangements for everything he plays—there is consistently a composer's touch in his performances, whether those of his own originals or familiar tunes by Gershwin or Monk. A third signature of Hanna is a rhapsodic, classically influenced persona that flavors just about everything he does. His arrangement of "Fascinating Rhythm," for example (on the Maybeck Recital Hall disc), takes the main motive of the tune and relates it to Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, a clever bit of transcultural signifying. Finally there is Hanna's vast stylistic range. Critic Grover Sales has come up with a helpful list: "the sanctified church, rhythm 'n' blues, classic piano literature, the grand Romantic tradition of the nineteenth century, French Impressionism, ragtime, Harlem stride, Tatum, bebop, Garner, the blues, funk, avant-garde, and the explosion of songwriting genius that blessed America in the Twenties and Thirties."

* * *

As a window on the artistry of Roland Hanna, I've selected seven essential recordings that add up to a rich composite portrait of the pianist. My personal preference for hearing Hanna is in a solo context, so choices are weighted in that direction.

1. Sir Roland Hanna: *Maybeck Recital Hall Series*, vol. 32 (Concord CCD-4604, 1994). This solo recital shows Hanna at a peak, with heroic technique, imaginative arrangements devised for pop songs, and love of the lyrical line. It's a set devoted mostly to Gershwin, a composer for whom Hanna has a special affinity. Sonny Rollins's "Oleo"—based on Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm"—is a flagwaving *tour de force*, taken at a breakneck speed and featuring audacious runs, motoric patches of stride, and unflinching crisp execution. Another high point is Hanna's reading of Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life," an oasis of calm that shimmers with antique harmonies recalling Debussy and Satie. Recorded live, this set also reveals Hanna as bold risk-taker, willing to embrace technical challenges that push him into territory avoided by lesser pianists.

2. *Roland Hanna and George Mraz Play for Monk* (Musical Heritage Society MHS 512192H, [1978] 1988). A jazz repertory player long before the movement became widespread, Hanna has made a number of discs devoted to individual artists. This Monk tribute stands out as one of the finest, partly because of the chemistry between the pianist and bassist Mraz but also due to the way Hanna retains his own identity in the interpretations, avoiding the temptation to emulate Monk's sound and style. Highlights include the playful wit of "Rhythm-A-Ning," the steamrolling drive of "In Walked Bud," the tender and not-so-melancholy reading of "Ruby, My Dear," and the gently rocking version of Monk's ballad "Reflections." Throughout Hanna treats Monk's pieces as frameworks for new arrangements and as vehicles for soloing—he is not intimidated by the reputation of these works as compositions.

3. *Roland Hanna: Bird Tracks, Remembering Charlie Parker* (Progressive Records PCD-7031, [1978] 1989). Another tribute album recorded the same year as the Monk set. Despite the slightly inferior recording quality, Hanna's takes on tunes written by and associated with Parker are fresh and memorable. Once again Hanna makes no attempt to emulate Parker's signature traits—his brilliant single-note runs, for example, or formidable speed. Nor does he borrow from Parker's distinctive vocabulary of licks and arpeggiated figures, but features his own embellishing patterns derived from a European school of virtuosity. He turns the Latin-styled "Barbados" into a stately pavane. "Dear Old Stockholm" becomes a pensive study in blue, and he wraps "Pastel" in lush textures that conjure up wistful images of 1940s urban romance.

4. *Roland Hanna: Perugia Live at Montreux '74* (Arista-Freedom 1010, LP, 1975). Now you're ready for the more robust, expansive, concert-hall version of Hanna. From the opening "Take the 'A' Train" Hanna brings all his musical energies to the foreground, ignited by an aggressive spark in this live performance before a European jazz festival audience. The title tune, "Perugia," gives the sense of embarking on a journey at the outset, then a sinuous cantabile melody appears out of the anticipation, pedal points undergird patches of ambiguous tonality, and the piece takes on a processional quality. There is also an expansive version of Thad Jones's "A Child is Born," one of Hanna's feature pieces when he was with the Jones-Lewis orchestra. Hanna's virtuosic technique is evident throughout, as he suddenly flies into miniature Tatum-like cadenzas, unleashes strings of ornate Chopinesque runs, or moves into a melodious block-chord style.

5. *Sir Roland Hanna: Round Midnight* (Town Crier TCD 513, 1987). This is possibly the most classically oriented and least improvised-sounding of all Hanna's discs. Despite the album's title, all but three of the eleven compositions are his own, and most tend toward large-scale, ruminating statements cloaked in thick, chordal textures and featuring rhapsodic sections of passage work. Monk's "Round Midnight," for example, is awash in heavy pedal, closer in spirit to a Chopin nocturne than to the familiar jazz anthem. Hanna's "Century Rag" is a good-humored update of that old form, conjuring up all at once Scott Joplin, Kurt Weill, William Bolcom, and Brahms. For more straightlaced jazz listeners this album will prove a stretch, but it contains some gorgeous performances and the piano sound is warm and embracing.



Sir Roland Hanna
Photo courtesy of the Institute for Jazz Studies,
Dana Library, Rutgers University

6. *Roland Hanna Plays the Music of Alec Wilder* (Inner City IC 1072, LP, 1980). Now we arrive at the zenith of Hanna's musical art, and I'm only sorry that this disc and the next have yet to be reissued on compact disc. The Hanna-Wilder pairing is a natural, with both men straddling the popular-classical divide and drawn to emotional territory that touches on the world of gentle regrets, lost childhood, whispered intimacies, and tender affirmation. Beyond these links, Hanna apparently discovered that "Wilder used some of the same compositional devices I have employed in my own writing."

As a long-time Wilder admirer, I find Hanna's set of song interpretations perfection itself. For each, he crafts an individual setting or arrangement that sets it apart from the rest. He is particularly effective with the children's songs "The Starlighter" and "The Star Wish," which convey a sense of comfort and security even as they kindle a spirit of magic that points to the unknown. What comes across powerfully on this album is Hanna's deep love and profound understanding of Wilder's music. It's as though he has found a way to transfer these vocal pieces to the keyboard idiom and turn them into luminous works intended for that instrument alone.

7. *Sir Roland Hanna: A Gift from the Magi* (West 54 WLW 8003, LP, 1979). Hanna's masterpiece, a solo piano set of eight original compositions (plus one by Charlie Haden), which takes on the character of a suite. Steeped in French Impressionism and nineteenth-century Romanticism, Hanna finds a seamless way to integrate such keyboard styles with the vocabulary of mid-century jazz. He accomplishes a new fusion in which classical idioms and jazz morph into one another rather than standing apart to announce their differences. As he acknowledges his roots on the album's

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Visualizing Modernity and Tradition in Copland's America

Commenting at mid-century on Ives's *Central Park in the Dark*, Aaron Copland wrote, "The effect is almost that of musical cubism, since the music seems to exist independently on different planes."¹ Reflecting on his own music some fifteen years earlier, Copland described himself as using jazz "cubistically" to create greater intensity and excitement.² These two observations reveal the composer's appreciation for the power achieved by painters in their experiments with multiple perspectives and simultaneity, while they underscore the esthetic and intellectual parallels between Copland's music and the work of visual artists who were his contemporaries.

Copland's interests in visual arts were not confined to cubism, but included the folk expressions of the common man that he and many artists who were his contemporaries came to champion. Copland is most original, yet also most American, when he weaves into a distinctive modernist fabric the strains of folk and popular art, amalgamated and transformed into a renewed classical matrix.

Copland's attraction to the agendas of modernists would become for him in later years a point of pride. He recalled reading a little magazine called *The Seven Arts* as early as 1916, when it featured Paul Rosenfeld's "The American Composer." Rosenfeld issued a ringing challenge to create "enthusiasm for American music" and attributed the dearth of American music to "the American's lack of self-confidence that impels him to take his ideas and his art modestly and gratefully from Europe, and neglect his own."³ Copland credited both Rosenfeld and the critic Waldo Frank with introducing him to the ideas and personalities of American modernism.

Copland's interest in Stravinsky, whom he met through his teacher Nadia Boulanger during his first years in Paris, also reveals his own musical agenda: "This extraordinary rhythmic puissance Stravinsky owes to his Russian heritage—to the folk songs of his country...."⁴ Copland recalled that Stravinsky "borrowed freely from folk materials," and admitted, "I have no doubt that this strongly influenced me to try to find a way to a distinctively American music."⁵

Copland's fascination with folk music led him to forge cultural links with Mexico. In the fall of 1926, he met the Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, who was rooming with the painter Rufino Tamayo in a tenement on Fourteenth Street. While in New York, Chávez and Tamayo maintained their interest in indigenous Indian culture and their sympathy for the Mexican Revolution and for ensuing art initiatives by the new government.

The enthusiasm of Copland's Mexican friends for indigenous folk songs and folk art fueled his own investigations into folk music and ethnic identity. Writing about Chávez in 1928, Copland cited the composer's "use of folk material in its relation to nationalism" as a major trait of modern music.⁶ In May and June of 1928, Copland traveled to the artist colony of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where no visitor could ignore the presence of picturesque adobe houses and active Spanish folk traditions, which included Spanish-American folk songs, some of which were imported from Old Mexico.⁷



Aaron Copland, 1932
Photo by Carl Van Vechten. Copland Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. © Carl Van Vechten Trust

Copland spent much of his two months in Santa Fe working on *Vitebsk*, a "Study on a Jewish Theme for violin, 'cello, & piano," which drew on the ethnic roots of his own family. He later explained, "I grew up in the Eastern European tradition."⁸ Copland described the "fast section" of *Vitebsk* as "a Chagall-like grotesquerie that reaches a wild climax and interrupts itself in mid-course, causing a dramatic pause"⁹ but noted that "It was always a musical stimulus that got me started, as when I heard the folk theme that the Polish-Jewish author S. Ansky used in his play *The Dybbuk*. It appealed to me just as it had to him. *Vitebsk*, a small Russian village, was the playwright's home."¹⁰

There are many significant links of American folk art to modernism in New York. The most important was a show entitled *American Folk Art: The Art of the Common Man in America, 1750-1900*, organized in 1932 for the Museum of Modern Art by Holger Cahill. That year, Van

Vechten photographed Copland's distinctive profile in front of a patchwork quilt to evoke rustic Americana, pioneer virtues of thrift and ingenuity. Van Vechten had clearly heard Copland's call for an American music. Copland would recall: "The desire to be 'American' was symptomatic of the period."¹¹

Together with the writer Gerald Sykes, Copland enjoyed conversations with Alfred Stieglitz, who called his last gallery, which opened in December 1929, "An American Place." Of all the artists in the Stieglitz circle, Copland was closest to the photographer Paul Strand, who photographed their mutual friend Chávez. During the 1930s, both Copland and Strand worked in Mexico. Copland praised "the sense of human warmth" in Strand's work.¹²

It was through Chávez that Copland met the painter Diego Rivera, with whom Chávez collaborated on the ballet, *H.P. (Horse Power)*—Rivera designed the sets and costumes. Persuaded to travel to Mexico City by Chávez, Copland found the allure of the folk music there so intense that he went on to compose *El Salón*

México (1932-36). Folk music had the appeal of popular accessibility, which would become an important ideal for the political left. Tamayo, a part of the Mexican Delegation of the left-wing Artists' Congress in New York, had illustrated *Cancionero Mexicano*, a book of Mexican folk songs, some of which Copland drew upon for *El Salón México*. Published in 1931 by the American anthropologist Frances Toor, who gave Copland a copy in Mexico City in 1932, this collection meant so much to Copland that he presented his copy to the Library of Congress in 1957 along with his manuscript for *El Salón México*.

By the mid-1930s, Copland began to expand his musical style, turning from high modernism to what he called "imposed simplicity."¹³ From 1935-39, Copland taught at the Henry Street Settlement House on New York's Lower East Side, where the music director commissioned from him a work that could be produced by young people in the school. He collaborated with librettist Edwin Denby to create *The Second Hurricane* (1936), which used American references, including the Revolutionary War folk song "The Capture of General Burgoyne."

Another of Copland's works inspired by folk music was the ballet *Billy the Kid* (1938). Lincoln Kirstein sought from Copland an American ballet based on Walter Noble Burns's popular book, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, which chronicled the brief life of the cowboy William Bonney. Kirstein gave Copland some published arrangements of cowboy folk songs, six of which were to figure in the ballet in the form of quotations. These quotations contributed to the popular and critical success of Copland's music for *Billy the Kid*. The need to venture West for inspiration never possessed Copland, who liked to tell how he composed *Billy the Kid* in an apartment on the rue de Rennes in Paris.¹⁴

Copland also drew upon the folk culture of the Shakers, adopting a motif from their hymn "Simple Gifts" for his *Appalachian Spring* ballet score, which he composed in 1944 at the request of Martha Graham. During the course of their collaboration, Graham sent Copland several scripts. She outlined a scene inside and outside a house with a doorway, a front porch, and a swing. On the porch was to be "a Shaker rocking chair with a bone-like simplicity of line."¹⁵

In imagining the overture for the ballet, Graham evoked American folk painting when she compared the character of the Mother to "an American Primitive, small and perfectly drawn in costume and position."¹⁶ In Graham's script for the ballet, the Mother says, "Spring comes early this year, daughter. About time for spring planting, son."¹⁷ This suggests several of Grant Wood's paintings with which Graham must have been familiar; surely she had seen his *Spring in Town* reproduced on the cover of the 18 April 1942 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*. In one script, Graham remarked on "the spare beauty of fine Shaker furniture," noting that "Grant Wood has caught it in some of his things."¹⁸

The Shaker esthetic appealed to the modernist sensibility because it eliminated the superfluous and made simplicity the key, creating an almost abstract design. To create the sets for the ballet, Graham commissioned sculptor Isamu Noguchi, who commented,

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Country and Gospel Notes by Charles Wolfe

The recent television series *A Century of Country*, produced for cable's The Nashville Network by CBS News, was the most in-depth film documentary ever attempted on country music. Extending to thirteen episodes, it was well received by viewers and critics alike. Though each episode was assigned to a different veteran CBS producer, and though most of the producers knew little about country music, the series was unified by the general expertise and writing of Robert K. Oermann. A former librarian at the Country Music Foundation, Oermann has emerged as the dean of Nashville music journalists with a unique ability to bridge the gap between the historical and modern sides of country music. His ability to move effortlessly between intelligent commentary on a 1927 Carter Family recording and a 1998 video by Shania Twain made him the obvious choice to orchestrate the *Century of Country* series.

Now comes a book component of that series, *A Century of Country: An Illustrated History of Country Music* (TV Books, 1999; \$39.95), authored by Oermann. It's a big, sumptuous, lavishly illustrated volume that is based on the scripts for the series. There are a limited number of ways you can divide up the history of country music, and to some extent the organization here follows that of earlier histories by Malone, Shelton, Carr, et al. Some new wrinkles include more attention to the role of the commercial music industry—especially sheet music publishers—in the development of country. Oermann correctly stresses that country music has been, since its inception, more big business than quaint folk expression. There is a much-needed chapter on country songwriters, a subject too often consigned to footnotes, and chapters on how the music was impacted by Hollywood and television.

Another original feature is an "oral history" aspect in which new interviews, filmed especially for the series, are transcribed and included in the narrative. This technique works superbly when the subjects are talking about their own first-hand experiences, such as Buck Owens reminiscing about his early syndicated TV show. Problems occur, though, when young modern singers with "face appeal" are asked to reflect upon historical events about which they really have no special or even accurate knowledge. Marty Stuart, for instance, makes a great deal out of the Carter Family song "The Cyclone of Rye Cove" and implies that such event songs were typical Carter Family fare. This is simply wrong: the Carters hardly ever recorded event songs and the few times they did, they were not "spreading the news" about events but responding to a well-defined commercial tradition. The problem with doing "oral history" on these early years is that these days there are really very few performers still around who can share

first-hand memories of the 1920s and 1930s. In addition, the TV producers, pandering to an audience that wants to see a constant parade of recognizable modern stars, felt they had to pepper even the historical shows with current figures. A sensitive and honest historian like Oermann who is trying to adapt this technique to a printed narrative faces many challenges. In the end, however, he overcomes these problems and produces a fresh, relevant, and brilliantly written survey of the music.

One of the inevitable chapters in most standard country histories is the one on "California Country" or "West Coast Country" where we learn about the likes of Cliffie Stone, Tex Ritter, Skeets MacDonald, Buck Owens, Glen Campbell, and Merle Haggard. Such token chapters sometimes leave the impression that the California scene was some kind of well-defined little phase that, for a few years in the 1960s, challenged Nashville's claim as the center of country music. But the country music scene in California reaches well back into the 1920s, when classic string bands like The Crockett Family and The Beverly Hillbillies (from whence the name of the TV series came) established reputations over southern California radio and on Victrola records. Though sparked by waves of "invasions" like the one in the early 1940s when Bob

Wills moved his base of operations from Texas to California, the California scene was in continual development through the 1940s and 1950s. The problem is that except for books on individual stars like Merle Haggard and Rose Maddox, no one had explored this rich scene in any cohesive detail.

Gerald W. Haslam's *Workin' Man Blues: Country Music in California* (University of California Press, 1999; \$29.95) smartly fills this void. A native of Oildale, in the state's central valley, Haslam grew up in the music he writes about, and intersperses his formal history with a series of personal vignettes that highlight

and invigorate the text. His meticulous research yields richly detailed accounts of figures like the colorful pioneer "Haywire Mac"; the tragic fate of Spade Cooley, the man who popularized the phrase "western swing"; promoters and producers like Capitol Records' Lee Gillette and Ken Nelson and radio personalities like Foreman Phillips and Hank Penny; and modern singers like Owens, Haggard, and Dwight Yoakam. Interwoven are the stories of dozens of lesser figures who seldom get covered in any standard country histories, and throughout are a revealing series of vintage photos. Here is a wealth of new, fresh information, presented in a literate, readable narrative by someone who really cares about the music.



Buck Owens (right) and his Buckaroos
Photo by Burt Goldblatt

Local Music/Global Connections

Since the first Europeans settled in lower Manhattan in the early seventeenth century, New York has been a global city, a transnational crossroads of people and commerce, of culture and art. Three and a half centuries of immigration have maintained the city's essential international character as the early Irish, Jewish, Italian, Greek, African American, Puerto Rican, and Chinese communities have made room for the new immigrants from Mexico, South America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the former Soviet Union. Today four out of every ten New Yorkers are foreign born.

Whether arriving from South America or South Korea, newcomers carry with them traditional ways of life, ranging from language, food, clothing styles, and religious practices to music, dance, crafts, and family celebrations. As cultural baggage goes, music is among the most portable, cherished, and enduring expressions of identity. More than any other traditional art, music and dance have been the key symbolic forms through which immigrant groups have maintained their cultural distinctiveness and nurtured ties to their old country heritage. Greek New Yorkers celebrate their Greekness when they dance to traditional wedding music in Astoria, Queens; West Indians experience their Caribbean roots when they "pull pan" through the streets of Crown Heights during Brooklyn Carnival; African Americans express their southern and African ancestries through a rousing gospel shout in a Bedford Stuyvesant church; and Irish Americans recapture their Celtic past at a lively *ceili* session in a West Bronx, Riverdale pub.

While traditional music and dance foster in-group pride and community solidarity, they also open up the possibility for cross-cultural dialogue and fusion. During the past century, community music making in New York unfolded in clubs, dance halls, churches, outdoor festivals, and other public settings where musicians, dancers, and fans of diverse backgrounds could meet and mingle. This direct, face-to-face exchange of musical ideas and practices, reinforced by the proliferation of ethnic recordings and radio broadcasts, has encouraged the development of multicultural repertoires and innovative hybrid styles. At the same time, progressive community musicians have self-consciously absorbed the sounds of the modern city, from jazz to avant-garde composition, blending tradition and innovation to create provocative new styles.

Local Music/Global Connections will bring together scholars, students, arts programmers, and musicians for a three-day conference devoted to the interdisciplinary study of New York City's diverse music cultures. Moving away from models that view urban folk music as old-country survivals in isolated "ethnic" enclaves, we will embrace a dynamic perspective that places transcultural and transnational exchange at the center of the musical enterprise. We will explore how the urban environment serves as a crucible for the transformation of traditional styles and practices into new forms of cultural expression that shape the contours of group identity and the cultural politics of daily urban life. New York City, North America's most diverse metropolitan center and the hub of complex global networks, provides the ideal setting for the study of local music making in the modern world.

—Ray Allen

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Rediscovering *The Sylviad*

The first two opus numbers of Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781-1861), *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky* and *The Western Minstrel*, have been available for nearly three decades.¹ With the reprint of *The Sylviad: or, Minstrelsy of Nature in the Wilds of North America*, ed. J. Bunker Clark (Conners Publications, 1996; \$69.95), we now have access to the major portion of Heinrich's musical legacy, or at least to those works published during his lifetime.

Heinrich was an unusual figure in early nineteenth-century America. Born in Bohemia of German ancestry, he first traveled to America in 1805 for the purpose of furthering his business interests. Following the failure of those ventures, he turned to a musical career. With some early instruction in violin and piano as a background, he directed his considerable energy toward becoming a musical spokesman for the young United States in an itinerant career that led him to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Lexington, Boston, New York, and musical centers in Europe. During his lifetime he was often cited as America's first professional composer, and from some source he acquired the sobriquet "the Beethoven of America." If the title did not originate with Heinrich himself (it may have been initiated by John Sullivan Dwight), there is no record that he did anything to dispel the image thus invoked. Without question, he was an enthusiastic American, extolling the wonders of the new nation and attempting to give musical voice to his adopted home. His efforts bore fruit during his lifetime in his wide recognition in musical circles in the United States and abroad, but he ended his days in obscurity.

The Sylviad, opus 3, appeared in two parts, printed in Boston by Gottlieb Graupner. The first part (1823) promised on the title page 100 works (in fact there are seven) and was dedicated to the Royal Academy of Music in Great Britain. The second part (1825-26) promises the same number of compositions (but contains only twenty-seven) and carried the same dedication. "The Minstrel's Catch" (p. 203) is repeated from the first collection, leading to some conjecture about Heinrich's intentions for the second part. The editor, J. Bunker Clark, discusses these and related matters at length in his thoroughly documented Introduction. Clark has explored this work at even greater length in *The Dawning of American Keyboard Music* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), where *The Sylviad* accounts for thirty-eight pages of an entire chapter devoted to Heinrich.

Most of the numbers in both parts of *The Sylviad* are for piano, a few call for voice and piano, fewer still require multiple voices with piano accompaniment. The music ranges from some pieces that are naively simple to others that require a mature and facile

keyboard technique. Heinrich indulges in colorful chromaticism unusual for a self-taught composer, much of it intended to support his programmatic titles. One of the most charming of the smaller pieces is "The Four Pawed Kitten Dance," a duet in which the secondo plays a two-measure ostinato supporting progressively lively figuration in the primo, the effect best described as an early nineteenth-century precursor of "Kitten on the Keys." Other titles reflect Heinrich's determined combination of his European background with elements from his chosen home: "Canone Funerale, an American National Dirge," "Overture to the fair Sylph of America," "The Log House," and "The Western Minstrel's Recollection of the Wilderness of Kentucky, or a vocal Fantasia" [voice and piano, intended for orchestra]. More specific bits of nationalism come forth with quotations of "God Save the King" (pp. 23, 73) and the same tune coupled with "Yankee Doodle" (pp. 120-21). The most ambitious items in the collection are the "Toccatina capriciosa" and the "Gran Toccata cromatica," both awash in extended passagework and orchestral effects.



Excerpt from *The Sylviad*, No. 1, "The Minstrel's Catch"
Conners Publications, 1996

The fruits of any edition of earlier music mature when contemporary musicians bring the music to life in their own performance. Neely Bruce and The American Music Group incorporate two representative items from the *Sylviad* on their recent compact disc, *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky* (Vanguard Classics SVC 93, 1998). The "Epitaph on Joan Buff" (no. 11) opens with a contemplative setting of a text by William Staunton. In pseudo-serious mien it describes Joan Buff's death by sneezing after taking snuff. The musical reply is set for chorus SATB with progressively ambitious piano accompaniment, the whole concluding with a "Coda Morale." Martha

Osborne, a personal friend of Heinrich, wrote the texts for these last two sections, and the piece concludes with the composer's script of Osborne's obituary, "There is no Da Capo in Death." With unexpected subtlety the music moves from a comic exercise to a substantive commentary on death, provocative for all of its verbosity. In "A Sylvan Scene in Kentucky, or the Barbecue Divertimento, Comprising the Ploughman's Grand March and the Negro's Banjo Quickstep" (no. 18), we hear a bugle call to action, a march, a section titled "The Banjo" (antedating Louis Moreau Gottschalk's work of the same title by at least thirty years), and a concluding refrain from *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky*. In a prevailing two-part texture, Heinrich ranges from sentimental nostalgia to genuine virtuoso passages. To all of this Neely Bruce and his group bring a musical finesse that surely surpasses anything

Continued on page 14

Zygotones

Like her earlier recordings *Soundbridge* and *Tone Over Tone*, the latest CD released by the New York-based Australian pianist Loretta Goldberg, *Zygotones: Contemporary American works for piano, Yamaha disklavier, and sampler* (Centaur CRC 2470) includes both established classics and new works commissioned especially for the recording. *Zygotones* bears witness to Goldberg's fascination with compositional experimentation, including the use of new tunings and timbres, and reveals the extent to which she continues the tradition of what Kyle Gann has approvingly called her "fearless pianism [which] respects no boundaries."

One of the most exciting piano compositions of the last century, Barbara Kolb's serialist work *Appello* (1976) is an aural history lesson that establishes the composer's lineage back to Boulez, Takemitsu, and Debussy. The composer's ability to turn complex harmonic and melodic cells into dense, luxurious music is uncanny, and is effectively underscored by Goldberg's sensitive performance.

Composed for Goldberg, Warren Burt's *A Book of Symmetries for Yamaha Disklavier* (1995) employs samples of microtonal piano pitches that are heard through loudspeakers positioned on the disklavier's soundboard, resulting in a multitude of simultaneous clusters of pitches that give the composition a layered, rich depth, one that would be particularly explosive in a live performance. As the work progresses, these pitch densities gradually expand and lead fluidly to the CD's next track, Copland's *Piano Variations* (1930).

In appraising Goldberg's performance of the *Variations*, one naturally reflects on previous interpretations of this landmark work, including those by William Masselos, Gilbert Kalish, and Leo Smit. Her attentive performance does not get caught in hammerhead aspirations, but sustains the work's inherent tension in a manner that emphasizes fluidity rather than angularity. Goldberg's approach casts the work in a different light, one that plumbs the depths of this masterpiece. The results are quite satisfying.

Sorrel Hays's *M.O.M. 'N. P.O.P.* [Music Only Music, and Piano Only Piano] (1984) is a highly expressive and humorous work for three pianos consisting of seven short movements, and is beautifully performed by the composer, Goldberg, and Margaret Leng Tan. A fictitious letter by Hays to the performers' parents is used to script the execution of the work, which distills common technical lessons of young pianists.

Hays's *Windy Gestures*, on the other hand, is constructed entirely of quiet sonorous piano puffs. While the recording notes place this piece "in the tradition of terse musical moments such as *Grey Clouds* by Liszt," the work's mannerisms are also reminiscent of the piano music of Henry Cowell (of whom Hays is a preeminent interpreter).

Listeners will appreciate Loretta Goldberg's innovative interpretations of classic works on this artfully produced recording, while also gaining the opportunity to add fresh, original compositions to their palette of twentieth-century American music.

—George Boziwick
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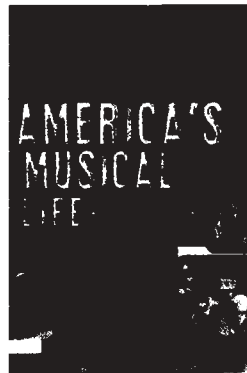
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In his book *The Elegant Universe*, physicist Brian Greene discusses the “Second Superstring Revolution,” which arose out of the application of a dualistic model to advanced physics. Greene writes that “Physicists use the term duality to describe theoretical models that appear to be different but nevertheless can be shown to describe exactly the same physics.”¹ Rather than attempting to reconcile five different theories previously assumed to be mutually exclusive, string theorists instead adopted the stance that the theories provided five different windows onto the same basic physical universe. Paradoxically, by adopting a dualistic view, physicists thus recognized an underlying unity among the physical processes of the universe at both its largest and smallest extremes, suggesting that superstring theory may prove to be that Holy Grail of modern physics, the “Theory of Everything.”

Charles Seeger would surely have been thrilled by such a discovery, but probably not too surprised; his fascination with dialectical methods of argument is a theme running throughout two important books on the late music historian, philosopher, pedagogue, activist, and theorist. Of course, outside of the field of music, the tradition of dualistic approaches to complex philosophical problems is a distinguished one, extending from the Socratic dialogue through Cartesian dualism to the dialectics of Hegel. Dualistic concerns also lie at the heart of much of the most important musical scholarship of the past fifteen or twenty years, in the so-called “New Musicology” of Susan McClary, Lawrence Kramer and others, as well as in the homologous innovations of theorists including Fred Maus and Marion Guck, and in the scholarship of ethnomusicologists ranging from Bruno Nettl to Kay Kaufman Shelemy. So it is that more than two decades after his death, American musical scholarship seems finally to be catching up with Charles Seeger.

In *A Question of Balance: Charles Seeger’s Philosophy of Music* (University of California Press, 1998; \$55), Taylor Aitken Greer displays an impressive understanding of Seeger’s aesthetic philosophy as well as his often complex music-theoretical innovations. Greer does an admirable job of allowing Seeger’s writings to speak for themselves, clarifying them when necessary, but without robbing the original ideas of their subtlety. Following a brief but useful biographical sketch of Seeger, Greer’s book proper begins with an insightful investigation of Seeger’s philosophical inheritance. Asserting that Seeger’s aesthetic ideas were shaped primarily by the works of three early twentieth-century philosophers—Bergson, Russell, and Perry—Greer devotes a chapter to each man’s

contributions to Seeger’s thought. The discussion is sometimes marred by unnecessarily strong claims about direct influence; for example, there seems to be no compelling reason for Greer to deny the influence of Hegel on Seeger’s dualistic bent (p. 60). For instance, we know that Seeger read from Hegel during his intellectually formative early years as a professor at Berkeley, and Greer himself points out the resemblances between Hegel’s dialectics and Seeger’s dualisms (p. 59). His primary grounds for rejecting Hegel’s influence are Russell and Perry’s renunciations of German idealism and the fact that Hegel’s system is more rigorous than Seeger’s, neither of which seems a particularly compelling argument. Similarly, although Greer concedes that “the resemblances between [William James’s and Seeger’s philosophies] are uncanny” (p. 66), he drops the matter after only a cursory discussion. The resemblances are indeed deep, and although Greer writes that “there is no indication that Seeger read any of James’s works” (p. 66), it seems highly unlikely, due to coincidences of geography and chronology as well as to James’s prominent place in American letters early in the twentieth century, that he would have been completely unfamiliar with James’s thought. All of which is to say that Greer is

more successful in explicating philosophical concepts—as in his fourth chapter, on “Seeger’s Theory of Music Criticism”—than in his unnecessary attempts to locate definite antecedents.

That aside, Greer’s book provides a valuable introduction to Seeger’s aesthetic philosophy, and is truly first-rate when, in its last three chapters, it turns to Seeger’s technical writings on music. As Greer notes—and as many of his readers will attest—Seeger’s writings and accompanying maps and diagrams are notoriously dense and at times

just plain obtuse. After examining how Seeger brought his ideas to bear on critical writings about Ives, Ruggles, and Ruth Crawford, Greer provides an eminently readable précis of Seeger’s key theoretical concepts, including dissonant counterpoint, the “musicological juncture,” and neumes. This discussion is a most welcome addition to the literature.

Greer contributes a similarly distinguished essay—which could serve almost as an abstract of his book—to Bell Yung and Helen Rees’s collection, *Understanding Charles Seeger, Pioneer in American Musicology* (University of Illinois Press, 1999; \$32.95). Where Greer’s volume examines those aspects of Seeger’s legacy most relevant to composers, aestheticians, and theorists, *Understanding Charles Seeger* is an excellent introduction to the incredible diversity of Seeger’s thought. Each of the book’s eight essays



Pete and Charles Seeger, Los Angeles, 1962
Photo courtesy of Pete Seeger

addresses a different aspect of Seeger's life and work. Most of the essays are quite impressive, and particularly noteworthy are the contributions of Greer, Judith Tick, Leonora Saavedra, and Nimrod Baranovitch. In addressing the delicate issue of Ruth Crawford's influence on Seeger's understanding of folk music, Tick's "Ruth Crawford, Charles Seeger, and 'The Music of American Folk Songs'" makes a convincing case for the originality of Crawford's views on folk music transcription and transmission, without discounting Seeger's own innovations.

In "The American Composer in the 1930s: The Social Thought of Seeger and Chavez," Saavedra investigates the linkages between the two composers' leftist politics and their compositional aesthetics. Saavedra is generally on target in her discussion of these connections, despite a couple of questionable assertions about Marxist theory, including her claim that "composers, poor as they may be, are by no means of the proletariat" (p. 53), which stems from her highly debatable belief that the work of composition does not create wealth in the same way as physical labor. The same is true of Baranovitch's discussion of the crucial role anthropology played in Seeger's vision for a total musicology. Of course, Seeger's fusion of musicology with anthropology led to the genesis of modern ethnomusicology. And as Helen Rees ably demonstrates in "'Temporary Bypaths'? Seeger and Folk Music Research," Seeger put his new theories into practice in several seminal essays on American folk music. Robert R. Grimes's essay on the importance of value in Seeger's early criticism overlaps a bit with the work of both Greer and Saavedra, but moves in a different direction, proceeding from Seeger's aesthetic philosophy and political views to his early music-critical apparatus. In so doing, he emphasizes the weight Seeger placed on the potential real consequences of criticism, demonstrating Seeger's ultimately pragmatic (in the Jamesian sense) cast of mind.

The only weak spot in this volume is Lawrence Zbikowski's essay addressing Seeger's thought from the standpoint of linguistic theory. It is antithetical to the animating impulse of Seeger's work, for Zbikowski is very distant from actual music. "A properly musical concept," he writes, "could be described as a concept-about-sound that stands apart from language" (p. 140), ignoring Seeger's concern with music-in-context, as well as his idea that music is not thinking-about-sound, but rather thinking-in-sound.

The volume closes with a fine essay by Bell Yung on Seeger and physics, demonstrating, as does the rest of the collection, that Seeger's seemingly disparate ideas were actually interdependent strands in a finely woven philosophical tissue. For Seeger sought nothing less than a musical "Theory of Everything." He did so by attempting the fusion of musical scholarship with all other fields of knowledge. Seeger was a model of interdisciplinary humanism long before it became popular, and these two books celebrate both the breadth and depth of his legacy.

—Marc E. Johnson
CUNY Graduate Center

Notes

¹ Brian R. Greene, *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory* (Vintage, 2000), 298.

liner notes, "Chopin is my favorite composer and there's Scriabin and Bartók but while growing up I was crazy about Satie and Debussy. I heard Ravel later. The music I can really express myself in most easily is the French. It's the third relation harmonic progression . . . more than perfect fourths and fifths or chromaticism."

The titles of individual numbers—"Treasures Lost," "My Secret Wish," "Silence," "Afterglow"—evoke the quiet, lyrical atmosphere that pervades the album. Unfortunately the disc's sound quality doesn't do Hanna justice—but his voice and spirit come through, nonetheless. This recording is a refreshing tonic. I am grateful to Bob O'Meally for first introducing it to me; he in turn learned of it from Rae Linda Brown.

These seven albums provide a view of Roland Hanna in the round. After sampling them, be sure to continue exploring the rest of his discography, a portion of which is annotated below.

If this is your first voyage with Hanna, welcome to a pleasant and sensuous listening journey. His music brims with life and soul, and you will find yourself expanded and enriched in getting to know it.

Other Roland Hanna Recordings

LP: *Roland Hanna: Sir Elf* (Choice CRS 1003, 1973). Despite a somewhat harsh piano sound, this first solo album is worth acquiring, mixing more straightforward jazz treatments ("You Took Advantage of Me," "Walkin'") with classically influenced excursions ("Morning") . . . **CDs:** *The Piano of Roland Hanna: Easy to Love* (Koch Jazz CD 8529, [1963] 1999). His second album finds Hanna in a trio setting with tight, proficient performances. Some of Hanna's influences—Tommy Flanagan, Wynton Kelly, Ahmad Jamal, George Shearing, Errol Garner, Art Tatum (i.e., the introduction to "Yesterdays")—emerge clearly here, but on "It Never Entered My Mind" you can also hear the crisp touch he developed early on and the signature trait of thick, keyboard-spanning chords. . . . *The Complete Solid State Recordings of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra* (Mosaic 151, [1966-1970] 1994). The best way to sample Hanna with the Jones-Lewis organization. Listen to his delicate, spare, two-handed unison solo on "Consummation" from 1970, also to the sweet lyricism he brings to Thad Jones's lovely ballad "A Child is Born." . . . *Sir Roland Hanna: Duke Ellington Piano Solos* (MusicMasters 5045-2-C, 1991). Strangely unsatisfying and oddly subdued, as though he felt weighted down by the material rather than liberated by it. There are a few welcome exceptions (the laconic "Portrait of Bert Williams" and poetic "Isfahan"), but overall this disc shows neither Hanna nor Ellington in their best lights. . . . *Sir Roland Hanna Quartet Plays Gershwin* (LaserLight, 1993). A straightforward program of Gershwin standards in which Hanna shares soloing honors with saxophonist Bill Easley. . . . *Sir Roland Hanna Presents Yoshio Aomori with Chris Roselli: I Love Bebop* (Rahanna Music Inc. RMI 901, 1998). Hanna teams up with two much younger players (bassist Aomori and drummer Roselli) for a high-spirited, at times downright exuberant set of tunes by some of the chief figures in Hanna's musical orbit: Thad Jones, Jimmy Heath, Billy Strayhorn, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell.

—Mark Tucker
College of William & Mary

Life with Fatha (continued)

pet style,” could be a rendering of an Armstrong solo. In some passages one can almost hear Hines deciding, “OK, now I’m going to play like Fats,” and cascading sixteenth notes or chains of sequential triplets will parade across the page. Even Chopin is visited from time to time, particularly in the complex, cadenza-like gestures that occasionally obscure the beat. (In notating these with smaller noteheads, as Chopin did for the some of the passagework in his Nocturnes, I’ve emphasized that connection, and Hines’s own comments about the composer’s influence justify the method.) For all the considerable inadequacies of transcription, it is a fascinating way to see how these musical voices emerge and fade, and how they are integrated into Hines’s evolving musical vision.

When I move beyond musical details and consider the overall shape of these solos, I appreciate transcription as a guide to the ways musicians interact with pre-existing musical forms. The edition includes the original sheet music, where available, for the pieces on which Hines improvises. A reader may therefore examine how Hines transforms the original work and, in two cases, compare different versions of the same tune. As Hines playfully negotiates formal structure, one witnesses the spontaneous unfolding of a great musical mind. Gone are the carefully planned introductions, interludes, and tags of ragtime and stride piano; Hines seems to lodge a chord progression in his mind and just *go*. The result can border on the disastrous (in the 1932 “Down Among the Sheltering Palms,” for example, he loses his way after eight measures of the verse, deftly recovering by returning to the beginning of the section) but Hines always emerges unscathed. He also slyly blurs the lines between sections, although it is never entirely clear if this is intentional. Part of the way through “Fifty-Seven Varieties,” an improvisation on the changes of “Tiger Rag” (more or less), Hines improvises a four-bar passage that sounds like a modulatory interlude but ends up being part of the next chorus. And “Love Me Tonight” features metric displacements and truncated chord changes that completely undermine a clear sense of the original tune’s structure. This type of improvisation became familiar during the 1930s but Hines was one of the first pianists to treat repertory this way.

Stepping back from this project, and considering the entire sweep of Hines’s recording career, I find myself even more certain of the pianist’s stature, and thus slightly puzzled by the way his legacy has been viewed. Hines’s work with Armstrong in the 1920s, captured in timeless performances such as “Weather Bird” and “West End Blues,” always figures prominently in jazz history books, as does his unrecorded big band of the early 1940s, which featured the still-evolving geniuses of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Most jazz pianists acknowledge his role in the history of their pro-

fession. Yet, too often his artistry is praised for its catalytic influence on younger players, rather than its innate richness. Perhaps

his talent was obscured by the near-canonization of Art Tatum, who rose to prominence in the 1930s just as Hines’s career was hitting a comfortable stride. Perhaps listeners find his idiosyncratic approach easy to admire but difficult to truly love. Whatever the case, Hines never seemed to inspire the intense devotion associated with Tatum, Wilson, Cole, and other pianists who followed his lead. Yet his recordings remain

one of jazz’s great treasure troves, and deserve to be revisited often. They delight, challenge and perplex, but above all capture a musician’s deep commitment to his art and intense passion for his instrument.

—Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Notes

¹ For a fuller exploration of these and other concepts, see Peter Winkler’s “Writing Ghost Notes: The Poetics and Politics of Transcription,” in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinary, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (University Press of Virginia, 1997), 169-203.

Editors’ note: Earl “Fatha” Hines: Collected Piano Solos, 1928-41, is forthcoming from the American Musicological Society and A-R Editions.

Sylvia (continued)

Heinrich, the good Reverend Staunton, or Martha Osborne could have imagined. These performances set a high standard for those who use the modern reprint to expand their own repertory.

It is regrettable that the binding of the present edition forestalls its use on a piano rack or any other music stand. The binding is so tight that it can be used only on a flat surface. The high contrast photographic reproduction of the text, both musical and literary, is quite sharp, but unfortunately, some details of typography have faded beyond legibility in the copy at hand.

Heinrich often has been regarded as an eccentric, but *The Sylvia* shows a level of imagination and, above all, an enthusiasm that suggest a creative spirit deserving attention. He was an energetic individualist and an ardent American original who should be saluted for his efforts.

—Douglas A. Lee
Vanderbilt University

Notes

¹ Anthony Philip Heinrich, *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky and The Western Minstrel* (Da Capo, 1972 [1820]).



Earl Hines, “I Ain’t Got Nobody” (1928), second chorus, mm. 6-10

Copland's America (continued)

"*Appalachian Spring* was in a sense influenced by Shaker furniture, but it is also the culmination of Martha's interest in American themes and in the puritan American tradition."¹⁹ Copland said of Graham, "she's unquestionably very American,"²⁰ and added, "*Appalachian Spring* would never have existed without her special personality. The music was definitely created for her, and it reflects, I hope, the unique quality of a human being, an American landscape, and a way of feeling."²¹

Copland's remarkable talent developed in synergy with powerful artistic concerns that shaped the times. His wide-ranging musical interests parallel developments in the visual arts, particularly his fascination with folk culture and with the search for an American national art.

—Gail Levin

Baruch College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

Notes

¹ Aaron Copland, "The Composer in Industrial America," in *Music and Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 1952), 106.

² Aaron Copland, WPA Composers' Forum-Laboratory, New York City, 24 February 1937, *WPA Composers [sic] Forum Transcripts*, National Archives, as quoted in Barbara A. Zuck, *A History of Musical Americanism* (UMI Research Press, 1980), 251.

³ Paul Rosenfeld, "The American Composer," *The Seven Arts* 1 (November 1916): 89.

⁴ Aaron Copland, *The New Music: 1900-1960* (W.W. Norton, 1968), 46.

⁵ Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland 1900 Through 1942* (St. Martin's Press, 1984), 73.

⁶ Aaron Copland, "Composer from Mexico: Carlos Chávez," in *The New Music*, 145-146.

⁷ Edna Robertson and Sarah Nestor, *Artists of the Canyons and Caminos Santa Fe: The Early Years* (Peregrine Smith, 1976), 95.

⁸ Copland and Perlis, *Copland 1900 Through 1942*, 160.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See Aaron Copland, "The Composer and His Critic," *Modern Music* 9, no. 4 (May-June 1932): 143.

¹² Copland to Paul Strand, letter of 6 August 1974, Copland Collection, Library of Congress (CCLC), cited in Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (Henry Holt, 1999), 102.

¹³ Copland, "Composer from Brooklyn," 161.

¹⁴ Copland, "Notes on a Cowboy Ballet," CCLC.

¹⁵ Martha Graham, "House of Victory," script sent to Copland, 16 May 1943, CCLC.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸ From the script version entitled "Name?" sent by Graham to Copland in summer 1943, CCLC.

¹⁹ Quoted in Copland and Perlis, *Copland Since 1943* (St. Martin's Press, 1989), 53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

²¹ Copland to Philip Ramey, interview published on cover of *Copland Conducts Copland: First Recording of the Original Version, Appalachian Spring (Complete Ballet)*, Columbia Chamber Orchestra, CBS Modern American Music Series, 1974.

Editors' note: This article is a revised excerpt from Gail Levin and Judith Tick's book Aaron Copland's America: A Cultural Perspective (Watson-Guption Publications, 2000). "Aaron Copland's America," an exhibition at the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, NY, was guest curated by Gail Levin and is open through 21 January 2001.



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