

# Institute for Studies In American Music

Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume XXXVI, No. 1

Fall 2006

## George Handy's

### *Bloos*

by  
Benjamin Bierman

The composer George Handy (1920-1997) was an enigmatic iconoclast. His individualistic approach to jazz composition inspired many other artists, yet the self-destructive behavior that cut short an important career frustrated his friends and admirers. While his life was often filled with high drama, much of Handy's biography is typical of the freelance musician: a peripatetic career of artistic and financial highs and lows. Handy did indeed enjoy remarkable success, though admittedly for only a short period.

Handy burst onto the music scene in the 1940s, taking the big band world by surprise with a stunning brand of experimentalism. From 1945 to 1947, Handy was considered one of the top arrangers and composers in the jazz field, and was an important member of a small group of composers and arrangers that included Eddie Sauter, Pete Rugolo, Ralph Burns, Bob Graettinger, Gil Evans, and Gerry Mulligan. This cadre of innovators worked in what is generally referred to as a "modernist" or "progressive" style that emphasized advanced compositional resources and generally downplayed the role of improvisation. A number of Handy's compositions, such as *Dalvatore Sally* (1945) and *The Bloos* (1946), are still considered seminal works in the progressive genre.



George Handy

Photo from *Metronome* magazine (May 1946)

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George Handy was born in Brownsville, Brooklyn. His neighborhood friends included such high-profile musicians as vibraphonist Terry Gibbs, tenor sax players Al Cohn and Frank Socolow, and drummer Tiny Kahn. His academic career included short and unsatisfying studies at The Juilliard School and New York University, as well as private composition lessons with Aaron Copland. Handy's feelings about his studies with Copland are summed up in his liner notes for the record set, *The Jazz Scene*: "Studied privately with Aaron Copland for a while, which did neither of us any good." Handy was, however, influenced by classical composers including Stravinsky and Bartók, and drew from an unusually wide palette of sources and techniques for a jazz composer of the time. He continued to mine these sources throughout his career, and several consistent elements in his music created a recognizable style. Handy had an unusual approach to chords, with chromatic voice leading dominating many of his harmonic progressions, and minor seconds, major sevenths, and minor ninths serving as essential components. Though the overall quality of Handy's music is tonal, it is frequently difficult to identify a key or centric area.

Some of Handy's important early work was with bandleader Raymond Scott, trombonist Jack Teagarden, vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, and cornetist Muggsy Spanier. But his professional association with the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra was the most significant of his career, and produced the majority of his important compositions. Handy was with the band as pianist, primary composer and arranger, and musical director, for two one-year stints (1944-46), separated by a six-month hiatus while concentrating on songwriting in Hollywood for Capitol Records and the Paramount music division.

Handy's final period with Raeburn, from June 1945 through July or August 1946, was the apex of his career, briefly thrusting him and the Raeburn band into the forefront of the jazz scene and the progressive compositional movement. Amazingly, important works such as *Dalvatore Sally*, *Hey Look*, *I'm Dancing*, *Key*

## George Handy (continued)

*F (Keef)*, and *Yerxa*, as well as some experimental vocal arrangements, including *Forgetful*, *I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me*, and *Temptation*, were written in a matter of weeks.

By 1946, Handy had accumulated top awards and critical acclaim, and was in demand as a composer-arranger. This reputation was further solidified by his inclusion in one of the most artistically ambitious recording projects ever undertaken in jazz, *The Jazz Scene*, produced by Norman Granz (1918-2001). Handy took this commission seriously enough to write *The Bloos*, an entirely new composition for an extended big band. This work displays Handy at the peak of his creativity, but turns out to be his last major work for a large ensemble. Coming at the end of Handy's Raeburn period, and in the midst of his greatest commercial and artistic success, it could be seen as his crowning achievement.<sup>1</sup>

Granz was an artistically, commercially, and socio-politically ambitious music promoter. He is best known for his successful and innovative concert promoting and record producing, including the popular Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP) format that brought leading jazz players to prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall. But while JATP sought wide appeal and viability, *The Jazz Scene* was Granz's self-financed gift to the jazz world, and was intended for a more limited audience.<sup>2</sup> The players and composers were to put their best foot forward without commercial considerations or artistic limitations of any kind. The objective was to create a snapshot of the most important jazz being played and written in the late 1940s. The project included works and performances by the most distinguished names in jazz, including composers Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Ralph Burns, and Neal Hefti, and instrumentalists Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Nat Cole, and Willie "The Lion" Smith.

The recording sessions for *The Jazz Scene*, held in several studios in Los Angeles and New York, took place sporadically beginning in 1946. The final product, released in 1949 on Clef Records, is a high-quality, limited edition folio (5,000, all numbered and signed) of six twelve-inch 78 rpm discs, encased in a cloth-bound hard cover with a ring binding.<sup>3</sup> Each record is accompanied by a profile written by Granz and a photograph of the featured artist by the well-known French photographer, Gjon Mili, who worked for *Life* magazine. The folio includes sixteen additional album-sized photos of other prominent jazz musicians, and artwork

by David Stone Martin. *The Jazz Scene* sold for the premium price of twenty-five dollars (approximately \$250 today).

*The Bloos* is replete with themes, and though these are disparate and seemingly unrelated, the five-minute work has the feel of a cohesive composition. There are song-like sections contrasted with periods of episodic writing, and various instrumental sections (and combinations of sections) are highlighted; improvised and non-improvised solos are featured, and two composed cadenzas occur.

Unusual for jazz recording, Handy had complete control over the instrumentation of *The Bloos*. As a big band composer-arranger he relied on the standard instrumentation of trumpets, trombones, reeds, and rhythm section, but created a twenty-seven piece orchestra by augmenting the big band with strings (a bottom-heavy string quartet consisting of one violin and three cellos), an expanded woodwind quintet (flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, contrabassoon, and two horns), and three percussionists. In essence, Handy created a classical chamber ensemble within the confines of a big band.

The inherent problems of such a diverse ensemble demand a careful deployment of resources. Handy handles the extremely varied timbral qualities subtly and intelligently, with a careful, gentle orchestrational sensibility. He often presents them in contrast to each other, creating something similar to a concerto grosso effect. An example of this can be seen in the opening section of *The Bloos*.

The work begins with an oboe theme (see example 1, page 12) that quotes an oboe solo from Milhaud's 1923 *La Création du Monde*. The coloristic celeste chords call to mind Gershwin's use of the instrument in the orchestrated version of *American in Paris* (1928). The next eight-measure section brings in the entire ensemble, the brass shouting in their upper registers, burying the strings and woodwinds. Handy comes out of the fortissimo of this section with a sharp cutoff of all instruments, allowing the violin and flute to pop out of the texture as they hold through a fermata. These held notes lead directly to a repeat of the oboe melody with a slightly varied orchestration.

The piece continues with a series of alternating melodic flurries, and a lovely violin cadenza then emerges. This also recalls *American in Paris*, which employs a similar texture and melodic character. A lyrical trombone solo with a cadenza follows. After a brief, rhythmically charged ensemble, a tenor sax plays two blues choruses—the only improvisation in this piece. The work concludes with a final repetition of the oboe theme.

The title of the composition suggests that the work be examined for its relationship to the blues, but the piece actually incorporates an idiosyncratic, abstract, and deconstructed version of that form. Much of the blues "feeling" in the blues (in major keys) comes from the juxtaposition of the major quality of the tonic chord and the key's flatted third and fifth scale degrees, the "blue notes." Handy's approach to this quality, as well as to the blues in general, is expressed in this piece through his penchant for harmonic ambiguity, as well as his fascination with intervals frequently thought of as dissonant. This can be seen in the opening oboe theme, where an F and C pedal point is present throughout the first eight measures. Though the strings begin with what seems to be a clear-cut F-major7 (m. 1), the E-flat in the oboe melody confuses

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ISAM Newsletter Vol. XXXVI, No. 1/ ISSN: 0145-8396

Editors ..... Ray Allen and Jeff Taylor

Managing Editor ..... Carl Clements

Contributing Editors .....Ellie Hisama  
H. Wiley Hitchcock  
Carol J. Oja

Production Assistant .....Kathleen Mason Krotman

The ISAM Newsletter is published in the Fall and Spring. Copyright 2006 by the Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, 2900 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11210.

Tel: 718-951-5655 Fax: 718-951-4858

Email: isam@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Website: www.bcisam.org

## ISAM Matters

This fall ISAM co-sponsored two conferences focusing on American music and culture of the 1960s. In October, in conjunction with Brooklyn College's Department of Africana Studies, we hosted a two-day symposium on poet, playwright, and critical essayist **Larry Neal** (1937-1981), one of the leading voices of the Black Arts Movement and a keen observer of modern jazz and its place in African American culture and politics. Though the conference was not entirely devoted to music, ISAM's **Salim Washington**, along with culture/literary critics **Amy Abugo Ongiri** (University of Florida), **Margo Natalie Crawford** (Indiana University), and **Carter A. Mathes** (Rutgers University), delivered papers exploring Neal's provocative critiques of modern jazz and its relationship to an emerging 1960s Black Nationalist identity.

In November we turned our attention to the early 1960s urban folk music revival. **Folk Music in the City** celebrated the accomplishments of New York City's Friends of Old Time Music, an organization responsible for bringing traditional southern hillbilly, bluegrass, blues, and spiritual singers to Greenwich Village for a series of concerts between 1961 and 1965. Reflections on New York's folk music scene and the influence of southern folk musicians on the northern revival were offered by ISAM's **Ray Allen**, historians **Ronald Cohen** and **Bill Malone**, and Smithsonian Institution cultural specialist **Richard Kurin**. Also participating in the conference were a number of leading figures from the folk music revival itself, including **Doc Watson**, **Jean Ritchie**, **Mike Seeger**, and **John Cohen**. Thanks to the New York Council for the Humanities and the Baisley Powell Elebash Endowment for their generous support of the conference.

We are proud to announce the release of **Salim Washington's** new CD, *Harlem Homecoming* (UJam Records 126). The recording showcases Salim's moving work as tenor saxophonist and flutist and imaginative gift for jazz composition. Congratulations also to Brooklyn College Conservatory brass specialist **Doug Hedwig** and pianist Jorge Parodi for their release of the CD *From Countryside to Concert Hall: The Art of the Posthorn* (MSR Classics, MS 1184). Kudos also to **Ben Bierman**, former Managing Editor for the *ISAM Newsletter*, for completing his doctorate from the CUNY Graduate Center. A portion of his dissertation on jazz composer George Handy is the lead article in this issue.

And finally, our best wishes to outgoing ISAM Director **Ellie Hisama** in her new position at Columbia University. During her seven year directorship she moved ISAM into vital and often neglected areas of American music, from the gendered dimensions of modern composition and jazz to the cultural politics of hip hop and post modern sound production. Her intellectual rigor and administrative talents, as well as her wisdom, wit, and cheer, will be dearly missed by colleagues and students at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center.

We are pleased to announce that **Jeff Taylor**, a Research Associate at ISAM since 1994 and long-time contributor and occasional editor of the *ISAM Newsletter*, will assume the ISAM directorship in the fall of 2007. Acting Director **Ray Allen** will be on sabbatical this coming spring working on his book, tentatively titled *Gone to the Country: The New Lost City Ramblers and the Urban Folk Music Revival*. He will return to his former post as ISAM Research Associate and *Newsletter* co-editor next fall.

—RA

## From Ellie Hisama

The Director's morning mail serves as a bellwether of ISAM's diverse public. I've received letters from a remarkable array of people, ranging from college students asking how one becomes a musicologist to senior scholars inquiring about upcoming conferences; from schoolchildren eager to learn more about band music to people in prison who want to know more about avant-garde pop.

It has been a tremendous privilege to serve many different communities as Director of the Institute. As of Fall 2006, I have accepted a position as Professor of Music at Columbia University, and leave the Institute in the able hands of Ray Allen, Acting Director, and Jeff Taylor, who will become the Director as of Fall 2007.

Since its founding in 1971, the Institute has led the way in American music studies. Guided by the visionary leadership of founding Director H. Wiley Hitchcock and past Director Carol J. Oja, the Institute has made a significant and lasting impact on the field of American music, through its conferences, symposia, and colloquia, fellowships and residencies, monographs, special publications, and this Newsletter. During my seven-year tenure as Director, the Institute has sponsored major conferences including the biannual Feminist Theory and Music conference (co-sponsored with New York University in 2005) and a centennial festival in honor of composer and folk music advocate Ruth Crawford Seeger (2001). In 2007, the University of Rochester Press will publish *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds: Innovation and Tradition in Twentieth-Century American Music*, a volume of twelve essays developed from the festival, co-edited by Ray Allen and myself. Through Ray's energetic focus on urban and ethnic music traditions, the Institute has presented a conference on local music traditions in New York City (2001), a tribute conference in honor of Alan Lomax (2003), a conference on calypso in New York and the Atlantic world (2004), and most recently a conference on New York's Friends of Old Time Music (2006).

Through ISAM's annual colloquium series, Brooklyn College audiences have been treated to talks by the noted scholars Frances Aparicio, Daphne Brooks, Juan Flores, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Robin D.G. Kelley, George E. Lewis, Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., Judith Tick, and Sherrie Tucker among others, and presentations and performances by the renowned composers and musicians Monique Buzzarté, Sarah Cahill, Lukas Foss, Vijay Iyer, Leroy Jenkins, DJ Kuttin Kandi, Miya Masaoka, Ursula Mamlok, Marilyn Nonken, Kristin Norderval, Pauline Oliveros, Ned Rorem, Ursel Schlicht, Christian Wolff, and Mike, Peggy, and Pete Seeger. The Institute's diverse programming reflects the many different strands that make up American music in the twenty-first century. An indicator of the excellent health of American music studies is the lively interest by scholars, students, and the public in ISAM's events.

In closing, I would like to thank Wiley and Carol for their sage advice and generous mentorship, Ray, Jeff, and ISAM Senior Associate Salim Washington for their warm collegiality and unforgettable Sugarbowl lunches, and Nancy Hager and Bruce MacIntyre (past Director and current Director of the Conservatory of Music, respectively) for their longstanding and keen support of the Institute. May it continue to thrive.

—EH

# American Music, Multiculturalism, and Bukharian Jews in Queens

In her contribution to the 2002 symposium “Disciplining American Music,” Anne Rasmussen encouraged a more multicultural approach to American music pedagogy, asking, “How long until a music, a religion, a food, gets its green card? Fifty years? Seventy-five years? One hundred fifty years? What will our American music curriculum look like a century from now?”<sup>1</sup> Bringing the musical life of new Americans to the center of our studies, rather than waiting for mainstream acceptance, is crucial, illuminating the process of music in the United States becoming music of the United States. For the Bukharian Jews in New York, life in the U.S. has led to significant changes in practices, repertoires, performance contexts, and audiences. The choices that Bukharian musicians are making both reflect and shape shifting notions about the very concept of “American” and ideas of multiculturalism itself. At the same time, the experiences of Bukharian Americans are at the center of contemporary world politics and issues. Bukharian culture, connected to hundreds of years of Jewish–Muslim interaction, is changing in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, and the vast and multilayered Bukharian diaspora sheds new light on globalization and contemporary migration.

The Bukharian Jews—Jews from the present-day nations of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and their descendants—lived for centuries in the cities of Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, with perestroika and the subsequent establishment of independent post-Soviet states, Bukharians joined many other Jews in leaving the areas once strictly controlled by the USSR. In the newly independent Central Asian countries, anti-Semitism increased and tensions between Jews and Muslims ran high. Jews were sometimes the victims of hate crimes, as they were associated with Israel, the United States, and oddly enough, even former Soviet regimes. During the past two decades, Bukharians have established vibrant and thriving communities in Israel, Europe, and the U.S. The Bukharian community in New York, and especially in Queens, has grown substantially. Population estimates for today’s New York community hover around 50,000.

Interest in Central Asia, exotic Jewish groups, and multiculturalism have created new kinds of opportunities for Bukharian musicians in the U.S. to perform for general and mostly non-Bukharian audiences. In such situations, Bukharians favor selections from the classical repertoires called *maqom* (or simply described as *vaznin*, “heavy”) associated with the Central Asian courts; the *shashmaqom* of the Bukharan court is the repertoire

associated most strongly with Bukharian Jews.<sup>3</sup> *Maqom* compositions are formally arranged into large-scale suites, although they are rarely performed this way today. The conventional instrumentation is a chamber ensemble consisting of a frame drum (*doira*), a long-necked lute (*tanbur*), and one or more singers. The *tanburist* often sings, making the *tanbur/voice* with *doira* duo the smallest group that covers all of the necessary bases. Larger groups are often augmented by another frame drum and other lutes (both plucked and bowed), and today, one can also hear synthesizer, clarinet, and accordion. *Maqom* performers typically dress in the beautiful embroidered coats used for ceremonial or otherwise special occasions.

The choice to represent Bukharian culture with *maqom* is interesting because the repertoire has also had the burden of representing Uzbek and Tajik culture. Official Soviet cultural policies demanded “national” or “folk” musics to represent the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and other newly constructed nationalities, resulting in separate Uzbek and Tajik versions of the *shashmaqom* produced as cultural monuments.<sup>4</sup> Jews were considered a separate nationality altogether. *Maqom* in Central Asia—like jazz in the United States—was at the center of a twentieth-century public conversation about identity, but the



Bukharian Jewish *Maqom* ensemble  
Photo courtesy of Evan Rapport

significant Jewish contribution to the music was excluded from this discussion. In fact, Bukharians were famous for performing *maqom* in feudal Central Asia and in the national orchestras of the Soviet Union, and they have played a significant role in the repertoire’s development. Bukharians have seized the opportunity in the U.S. to proclaim their role in the history and perpetuation of *maqom*. Bukharian groups with names such as “*Maqom*” and “*Shashmaqom*” have performed at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The Bukharian decision to publicly treat *maqom* as a sort of national Bukharian music shows just how well Soviet conceptions of nationality dovetail with U.S. multiculturalism, which implies (or requires) that demarcated groups have a representative and distinct music or culture.

Perhaps because *maqom* has such a deep history of interchange between Muslims and Jews, and Uzbeks and Tajiks, it remains a lively site of public discourse about heritage and ethnicity. Recently, the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia has sponsored international concerts and recordings of *maqom* by Tajik Muslim musicians, highlighting the repertoire’s strong Sufi connections.<sup>5</sup> In the United States, *maqom* and Bukharian culture have meaning as a product of Jewish–Muslim interactions and a (retrospectively)

## Bukharian Jews in Queens (continued)

multicultural Central Asia, presenting an alternative to fearmongering, ignorance, and notions that Jews and Muslims are eternal enemies or that the world is caught in a doomed clash of civilizations. Literature for the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival (*The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust*), which featured a Bukharian ensemble, stated: "Following the events of September 11, it seems clear to us that it is ever so important for people and societies the world over to take account of their neighbors, to come to know them and learn of and from them, to engage them in positive ways."<sup>6</sup>

However, such laudable rhetoric may obscure the often-conflicting views that Bukharians hold about Muslims, Central Asia, and the meanings of maqom. This is an irony of multicultural initiatives and related scholarship (including my own work): repertoires and musicians are asked to serve ideologies that may run counter to the ideologies of the musicians themselves. Power dynamics are always at play in social interactions, and one voice—even one informed by multiculturalism—can silence or undermine another, as when the Ilyas Malayev Ensemble's entirely standard choice to show respect and pride with formal Bukharian clothes at Carnegie Hall was dismissed by John Rockwell of *The New York Times* as looking "more touristic than authentic." The dress "pigeonholed all the Central Asian performers as exotics . . . All one needed was desert dust and a whiff of camel dung."<sup>7</sup>

Other significant performance contexts for New York Bukharians are the multicultural projects of established U.S. Jewish communities, where maqom is also the repertoire of choice. Multiculturalism has found a receptive home in synagogues and Jewish institutions, which now regularly feature educational programs designed to expose their congregations to the tapestry of world Jewish culture such as Bukharian, Yemenite, and Ugandan Jewry. Some Bukharians wholeheartedly embrace Jewish pluralism: Yuhan Benjamin, a prominent Bukharian performer, compared the Jewish people to *aplov*, a Bukharian rice and meat dish in which all of the ingredients—meat, spices, rice, and fruit—come together to make one dish but retain their unique and individual tastes. But as there is in other multicultural initiatives, there is a risk of marginalization and exoticization, and the complex dynamics between Bukharians and the more powerful U.S. Ashkenazic communities are often masked.

In Bukharian synagogues themselves, the music has much in common with the music of other Orthodox Jewish congregations. Bukharians today sing many Ashkenazic and Sephardic melodies, and they follow the Sephardic rite, which they probably adopted in the late 18th or early 19th century. Men lead and participate in the prayers, and the music is entirely vocal except for on a few special holidays. However, Bukharians also have distinct traditions. They have their own way of performing prayer, and they sing some sacred Hebrew texts, or Persian paraphrases of them, to maqom melodies. The use of maqom in a religious context underscores the spiritual, *vaznin* associations of Central Asian classical music for the Bukharian community.

In the U.S., with its ideological atmosphere of multiculturalism, Bukharians are encouraged to recognize and cultivate their religious music as a unique heritage. Perhaps one of the most remarkable recent developments has been the *Eternal Music of Bukharian*

*Jewish Hymns* project, spearheaded by Ezra Malakov and Ari Babakhanov. Malakov is a cantor at Beth Gavriel Congregation in Queens and a prominent singer of maqom, and Babakhanov is a master maqom instrumentalist living in Germany. Malakov has recorded seven CDs of religious music presented in many different styles, including solo cantorial singing, small voice/tanbur/doira ensembles, and new arrangements featuring synthesizers. Transcriptions of the recordings have been notated by Babakhanov and set and compiled by an international team, including a number of people in Uzbekistan. *Eternal Music of Bukharian Jewish Hymns* serves as a monument to Bukharian Jewish culture. Perhaps conceptually similar to the Uzbek and Tajik cultural monuments of the Soviet era, in reality it is significantly different. Jewish practice and culture was heavily suppressed in the Soviet Union, not celebrated with publications. In the U.S., Europe, and Israel, Bukharian religious life is undergoing a renaissance, and Malakov's project presents the possibility that Bukharian hymns will be sung on an international scale.

Yet a notion of Bukharian distinctiveness exists as one option among many in the U.S., where ideas of choice and opportunity are just as important as multiculturalism. For example, some Bukharians resist the notion that everyone in the community should follow any one version of prayer, and some prefer attending Reform and Conservative congregations, which were unknown in Soviet Central Asia. Such choices are seen by some Bukharians as threats to community values or unity, but by showing remarkable vigor in engaging change and addressing the various needs of its individuals, the Bukharian community has remained a viable entity.

In private celebrations such as weddings and bar mitzvah parties the dominant music—usually described as *sabuk* (light)—is marked by omnipresent 6/8 rhythms and heavily amplified ensembles made up of *doira* plus instruments introduced relatively recently to Bukharian music, such as the clarinet, guitar, synthesizer, and *darabukka* (goblet drum). In line with a considerable pride regarding the Bukharian ability to perform and appreciate musics of many different ethnic groups, parties can include Hebrew, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish, Indian, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, and American songs. Maqom retains a presence as a symbol of Bukharian heritage, but these classical selections are usually relegated to three or four numbers at the end of an event, played on the electronic instruments with lots of reverb and the guitar standing in for the tanbur. Celebrants sometimes wear ceremonial coats, but bands usually wear suits and dresses.

A small Bukharian CD industry has emerged, with party music most strongly represented. These CDs continue the theme of variety and diversity, highlighting proficiency in many styles and languages, and images often show musicians in notable combinations of locations and clothing. Ilya Khavasov's *My Samarkand* (2002), for instance, shows the singer in a stylish suit backed by the New York skyline—the Twin Towers are intact and prominent—juxtaposed with an image of the Registan

*Continued on page 14*

# Surfing the Bay Psalm Book

With over 17,000 indexed tunes, the online *Hymn Tune Index* offers a unique site for researching English-language hymns printed between 1535 and 1820. Created and administered by Nicholas Temperley, the index grew out of Temperley's research for his book, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), and received its initial funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1982.

Only printed English-language hymns, either in bound collections or sheet music form and dating from 1820 or earlier, have been indexed. Manuscript sources, printed hymn texts without musical notation, and hymns with non-English texts have been excluded.<sup>1</sup> Researchers can access both printed and online versions of the index. The 4-volume *Hymn Tune Index* (Oxford University Press, 1998) correlates the contents of 1,744 main collections plus 800 subordinate collections, while the online database<sup>2</sup> includes thirty-nine additional main collections (for a total of 1,773) plus ten subordinate collections discovered since the published version appeared. In addition to this expanded coverage, the site includes a tutorial on how to code and read the abbreviated incipits.

With several search options and sorting methods, the online database generates new opportunities for research on sacred hymn performance, publications, and composition up to 1820. The online database is particularly useful for American music scholarship when used in conjunction with the printed index and related bibliographic and reference publications, such as *The Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody*, edited by Richard Crawford (A-R Editions, 1984) and *American Sacred Music Imprints, 1698-1910: A Bibliography* by Allen P. Britton, Irving Lowens, and Richard Crawford (American Antiquarian Society, 1990).

Given these parameters, the online index provides detailed insight into the early life of the published American hymn up to 1820. By manipulating the data—using multiple windows simultaneously and sorting by source, date, region, tune number, attribution, etc.—it is possible to correlate and compare at a glance the contents of the three main psalters used in the early settlements. These include the *Pilgrim's Ainsworth Psalter* of 1612 (AinsHBP 1), published in Amsterdam; Thomas Ravenscroft's 1621 collection

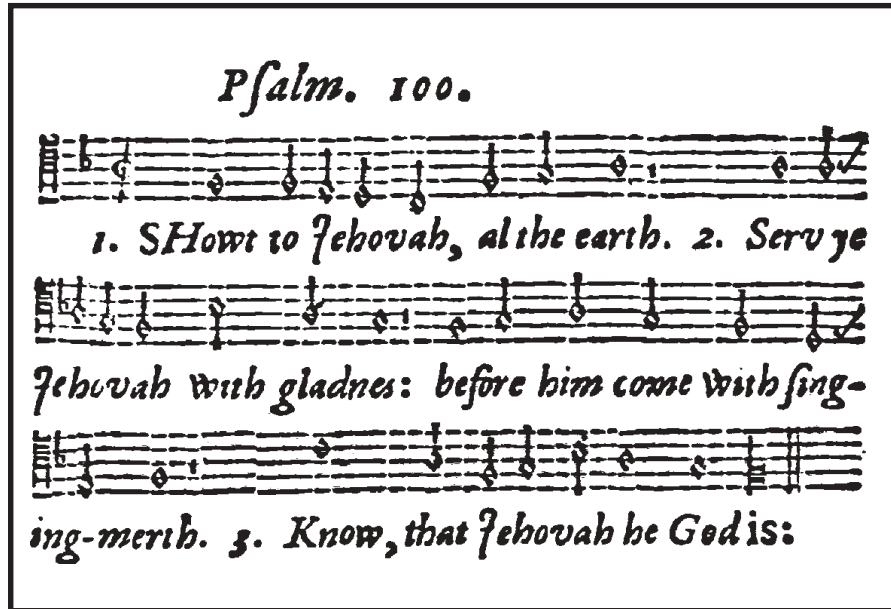
(RaveTWBP a), favored for private use by the Puritans and published in London; and the London-based *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter* (P E4), first published in complete form in 1562 and used in public worship by Anglicans.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the online site provides a detailed publication history for each tune contained therein, from the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries, in the United Kingdom, continental

Europe, the colonies and later the United States, and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

Extending this process to include the earliest music published in New England reveals intriguing connections between the earliest written-tradition source in this region and both its transatlantic progenitors and colonial descendants. The earliest editions of the Bay Psalm Book, beginning in 1640, printed new text versions that reflected the stricter religious attitudes of their compilers (including

John Cotton and Richard Mather), but referred the user to pre-existing psalm tunes drawn from Ravenscroft and Sternhold and Hopkins, some of which were included in the Ainsworth psalter as well. The ninth edition of 1698 (TS BayA a) reproduced musical notation for thirteen tunes drawn from John Playford's *Introduction to Music*, including a core group of three tunes contained in all three earlier psalters; two tunes shared by Ainsworth and Ravenscroft; three tunes drawn from Ravenscroft alone; plus five versions of tunes published by John Playford from the 1650s-1670s.<sup>5</sup> As such, the 1698 Bay Psalm Book represents a versatile and, within its own context, contemporary amalgamated repertory for the new colonial society.

Moreover, a search of these thirteen tunes in the online index, sorted by date and region of publication, reveals a correlation between the 1698 collection and growing immigrant communities of New England.<sup>6</sup> For example, the tune "Windsor" (271a) had been standard in Scottish psalters since 1615, and appeared for the first time in an Irish psalter in or around 1698, the same year as the ninth edition of the Bay Psalm Book. Thus, Scottish, Scots-Irish, and Protestant Irish immigrants to New England around the turn of the century could have encountered an already familiar hymn in the psalm book of their new world. Similarly, the continual reprinting of this tune in Scottish, Irish, English, and



Psalm 100 from the Ainsworth Psalter, 1612

## Surfing the Bay Psalm Book (continued)

American publications through to 1820 may reflect, at least partially, a shared musical repertory working in tandem on either side of the Atlantic.

In this way, the online index illustrates not only the ancestry but the lineage to 1820 of the tunes of the 1698 Bay Psalm Book, which enjoyed variable success. In addition to “Windsor,” the ubiquitous “Psalm 100 (Old)” or “Old Hundred” (143a) and “Low Dutch” (or “Canterbury,” 250h) became staples in the early American repertory, turning up in hundreds of printings through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. “Old Hundred” and “Windsor” appeared both in Ainsworth and Ravenscroft, while “Low Dutch” is found only in Ravenscroft. Two contrasting cases involve the tunes “Lichfield” (536a) and “Oxford” (201e). Both variants of these tunes appeared in Playford’s 1658 psalter (PlayJ1 c), and after 1698 each tune was reprinted virtually continuously over a sixty-eight year span before disappearing from American sources in 1766, on the eve of the emergence of the first homegrown compositional school.<sup>7</sup>

The ability to trace a single English-language hymn over centuries and continents is a unique feature of the existing online *Hymn Tune Index*. The database’s design allows for numerous opportunities to place colonial, early federal, and antebellum works within an international context. A more in-depth analysis of the migration of these tunes, starting with the *Hymn Tune Index*’s database, could offer an opportunity for reimagining the music of these communities in the rituals and living memories of the first settlers.

Yet, the latest entries in the database predate the explosion of hymnody in the nineteenth century. To cite just a few: the foundational hymns of Lowell Mason, Fanny Crosby, Ira David Sankey, William Bradbury, and Thomas Hastings formed the sonic landscape of nineteenth-century America, and many of their works remain in print today. This vast and significant repertory remains understudied at least in part due to the absence of bibliographic resources, as is the case in the earlier period.<sup>8</sup>

To address this lacuna, the chronological range of the *Hymn Tune Index* will be expanded during the coming years in an attempt to locate, identify, and index all known English-language hymn tunes published between 1821 and 1900. As in the original database, the new phase will document each hymn tune according to its melodic profile (including variants), text version, text and musical authorship and attributions, and publication history (including place of publication, edition, compiler, publisher, etc.), and will contain additional information concerning the hymn and its published collection. Because of the potentially overwhelming scope of the project, the indexing will be tackled in at least four stages, with each stage focusing on publications from a limited period: 1821-1840, 1841-1860, 1861-1880, and 1881-1900. A team of international scholars is working towards this goal, led by Professor Nicholas Temperley and myself at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

The project will take many years to complete. It is hoped that, eventually, the expanded *Hymn Tune Index* will prove as valuable a research tool for studies in nineteenth-century music, history, religion, and cultural studies as the original has for hymn tunes up to 1820.

—Gayle Sherwood Magee  
*University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For specific criterion regarding limitations concerning the length, instrumentation, texture, and form of hymn tunes in the collection, see *HTI: Scope* (<http://hymntune.music.uiuc.edu/about/scope.asp>). Accessed 2 April 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hymn Tune Index* (<http://hymntune.music.uiuc.edu/default.asp>). Accessed 2 April 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The index refers to this collection as “Starnhold” and Hopkins, reproducing the spelling of the first edition.

<sup>4</sup> For this publication, I have focused almost exclusively on identical appearances of the hymn tunes in question. The online database allows for comparison of variants at various levels, which expands the search criteria exponentially.

<sup>5</sup> Irving Lowens, “The Bay Psalm Book in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century New England,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 8/1 (Spring 1955), 26-29, suggests connections not to Playford’s psalm collection but to his 1667 text (and later editions), *Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick*. Lowens also suggests that an earlier, no longer extant edition of the Bay Psalm Book may have included written notation. See also D.W. Krummel, “The Bay Psalm Book Tercentenary, 1698-1998,” *Notes* 55/2 (December 1998), 281-87.

<sup>6</sup> For estimates of immigrants by ethnic group up to 1700, see Aaron S. Fogleman, “From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution,” *The Journal of American History* 85/1 (June 1998), 45-46 and 60; for immigration estimates by ethnic group ca. 1700, just after the 1698 Bay Psalm Book, see *ibid.*, 71; and Fogleman, “Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22/4 (Spring 1992), 698.

<sup>7</sup> Since “Lichfield” had been renamed as “London” in 1721, these English-named tunes may have fared poorly with pre-war colonists. More significant perhaps is that both tunes disappeared—at least temporarily—from British collections by the end of the eighteenth century as well.

<sup>8</sup> A sampling of book-length studies in nineteenth-century American hymnody includes: James R. Goff, Jr., *Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002); June Hadden Hobbs, “*I Sing for I Cannot Be Silent*”: *The Feminization of American Hymnody—1870-1920* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997); and Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (UMI Research Press, 1985).

# Locating Queerness in American Composition

In *The Queer Composition of America's Sound: Gay Modernists, American Music, and National Identity* (University of California Press, 2004, \$19.95), Nadine Hubbs takes as her springboard the fact that some composers of the mid-twentieth century associated with *echt* Americana, notably Thomson and Copland, were homosexual. Although this phenomenon has, as Hubbs suggests, ironic implications in the context of today's political climate, it operates here as a framework for scholarly inquiry rather than polemical critique.

The book opens with an exploration of the relation between the Thomson-Stein opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* and the homosexuality of its creators — connections discerned as early as Olin Downes's disdainful review of the premiere, but sympathetically elaborated here. Hubbs notes, for instance, that Maurice Grosser, the opera's scenarist and Thomson's lover, "presents the saints in sex-segregated groupings" (p. 28); that "Saints Teresa and Settlement notably bear the initials of [Alice] Toklas and Stein" (p. 30); and that Commère and Compère embody "the culturally ubiquitous and domineering topos of heterosexuality" (p. 47). The author contextualizes such observations with some consideration of the attraction saints and monastic life held for homosexual men and women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Locating queerness in the music is of course more difficult. After some tentative observations along these lines, including reference to the "muted" eroticism in the music for Saint Teresa, Hubbs turns to the question of Thomson's influence on Copland's work of the late 1930s, so that the argument for the creation of a communal gay style becomes somewhat tautological. At the same time, the author brings helpful attention to an unpublished essay of Virgil Thomson written in 1924-1925, "My Jesus, I Love Thee." This work, by "implicating Baptist hymnals and Christic [queer] erotics in a condemnation of . . . bourgeois materialism in American religion," has the potential for assisting gay-oriented readings of Thomson's music, in particular, his use of traditional hymn tunes.

Hubbs's analysis of *Four Saints* sets the stage for the book's more encompassing goal, namely, the charting of the "creation of an emblematic 'American sound' in concert music" by a "circle of gay composers" that includes not only Copland and Thomson, but Marc Blitzstein, David Diamond, Leonard Bernstein, Paul Bowles, and Ned Rorem (p. 4). Chapter 2, "Being Musical: Gender, Sexuality, and Musical Identity in Twentieth-Century America," summarizes issues of sexuality and gender as they relate to

American concert music—as art and as profession—from Ives through Copland. It's a helpful summary, too, though the author's claims (by way of the book's dedicatee, Philip Brett) for music as a special refuge seems exaggerated given the prominence of gays and other scorned minority groups in the other arts.

A brief "intermezzo" inquiring into Paul Bowles's elusive gay identity—which Hubbs intriguingly compares to the character of Michel in Andre Gide's *The Immoralist*—follows as a means of exemplifying the differences among the author's circle of gay composers. The as-yet unpublished memoirs of composer Philip Ramey—a close friend to both Copland and Bowles—should help clarify this aspect of Bowles's life.



Marc Blitzstein

In chapter 3, "A French Connection," Hubbs sets forth her central thesis: that the creation of a national "sound" by the members of her prescribed circle took shape about "an influential definitional axis" involving four principal "themes" defined as follows: "foreign apprenticeship, especially in Paris; studies with Nadia Boulanger; self-conscious affiliation with things French, often in express opposition to things German; and cultivation of a tonal, perhaps neoclassical compositional idiom, usually pursuing clarity and economy" (p.

132). Hubbs seems to spend more time qualifying this argument than making it; but the topic is a thorny one, and Hubbs's caveats and asides are interesting in their own right, whether or not one accepts her central thesis hook, line, and sinker.

In the fourth and final chapter, "Queerness, Eruption, Bursting," Hubbs considers how the academy's repudiation of this "axis" in the 1950s intersected with that era's homophobia. In short, the book purports that a group of queer-identified Boulanger students brought American music to a kind of peak in the 1930s and early 1940s, only to have their accomplishments undermined after the Second World War by the ascendancy of aggressively dissonant—and, for Hubbs, heterosexual—musical trends, and the concomitant decline of relevancy of, and prestige for, classical music at home.

This thesis raises a number of questions and contradictions. Most obviously, as Hubbs well realizes, some heterosexual composers conform to the book's "definitional axis" more so than do some gay composers, making homosexual orientation neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for the kind of aesthetic orientation outlined here. Similarly, although Hubbs regards such composers as Cowell and Barber as, so to speak, homosexual "others" operating outside the realm of the "tonal Americana,"

*Continued on page 13*



# Nine Priceless Hours with an American Master

In the Spring 2002 issue of the *ISAM Newsletter* I noted a renewed fascination with the life and music of jazz pianist, composer and bandleader Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton. Now this revival seems to have reached an apex with Rounder Records’s issue of *Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings* (CDROUN1888/011661-188822, \$129.98), which contains all of Alan Lomax’s 1938 interviews with Morton, as well as a CD of interviews with musicians who knew and worked with the artist. The striking red piano-shaped box includes the 2001 edition of Alan Lomax’s 1950 book *Mister Jelly Roll*, as well as a superb and now Grammy Award-winning booklet featuring biographical notes and comments by John Szwed, along with photos and excerpts from Morton’s extraneous writings. For those unwilling to spring for the whole package, Rounder has issued a version with the CDs and booklet alone (CDROUN1898/011611-189829, \$79.99), and plans a compilation of highlights sometime later this year.

Excerpts from Lomax’s recordings first saw limited release in 1947, on a series of 78 rpm recordings issued by Circle. Later LP versions were essentially reissues of the 78s, which, along with the poor sound quality of Lomax’s original discs, maintained an inconsistency of pitch due to the variable speeds of the original recordings. In 1994, Rounder issued four CDs of the music from the Library of Congress recordings (Rounder CD 1091-1094) with the sound quality vastly improved and the pitch painstakingly corrected by Morton scholar James Dapogny. But only with the current reissue are the complete, unexpurgated conversations and music—complete with a “Parental Advisory” label!—commercially available for the first time.

The story of these recordings is well-known to Morton scholars. Alan Lomax, who along with his father had become interested in making field recordings of vanishing folk music repertoires (particularly throughout the South), met Morton during a time when the 47-year-old pianist was performing solo, virtually forgotten, in a seedy Washington club. Though not a jazz fan, Lomax quickly recognized Morton had a fascinating story to tell, and was eager to document his experiences for the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress. Therefore, over a few weeks in May and June of 1938, Lomax sat on the stage of Coolidge Auditorium—usually a bastion of European chamber music—and guided Morton through a series of reminiscences about his career. For a total of nine hours Lomax’s often unreliable portable recording equipment captured Morton’s indelible descriptions of the long-forgotten musicians, society ladies, pool sharks and pimps who had colored his life. In the resulting recordings Morton’s evocative and highly articulate speaking style at times approaches blank verse, punctuated by pauses to enjoy a bottle of whiskey Lomax had thought to snatch from his office. In his booklet, Szwed includes the young archivist’s own redolent description of Morton’s performance:

I realized that this man spoke the English language in a more beautiful way than anybody I’d ever heard. ... A gravel voice melting at the edges, not talking, each sentence bowling along like a line from the blues, like an eddy of a big sleepy Southern river, weaving a legend... (p. 11)

A recorded interview with Morton would be priceless to any scholar of early jazz. But Lomax showed his true genius by recording Morton *at his instrument*. This allowed him, first of all, to offer up timeless renditions of his own compositions. His performances of “King Porter Stomp,” “Kansas City Stomp,” and “Original Jelly Roll Blues”—all tunes he recorded several times, as both solos and ensemble numbers—are classics, capturing his rich, orchestral and often intricately contrapuntal approach to blues and ragtime. And unlike the earlier Rounder issues, the selections are heard in the context of the larger arc of his storytelling.

Morton also illustrates and comments on the other music and styles he heard around him, both in his birthplace of New Orleans and in the towns and cities to which he traveled during his many years as an itinerant piano player. His description of an encounter with Memphis piano player Benny Frenchy (“that damned fool can’t hit a piano with a brick”) reveals his sardonic wit, especially when he proceeds to ridicule Frenchy’s style with a few lead-footed bars of empty clichés (Morton, of course, claimed he himself later “brought the house down” with his own performance). And his vocal rendition of the “Dirty Dozens,” with each verse, more filthy than the last, ending with the line “...and your mammy don’t wear no drawers,” vividly captures the lurid

nightlife he encountered on one of his early trips to Chicago. In some cases Morton was recalling music he had heard decades earlier, and his memories were no doubt colored by both the intervening years and his own imagination. Still, the fact that Morton was able to both describe and *demonstrate* his experiences makes these interviews invaluable.

The last CD of the set includes a complete transcription of the interviews as a PDF file—a vast improvement over the error-ridden original typescript transcription, copies of which have circulated for years. It is therefore possible to sit down and both read and listen to all the interviews, in their complete form and in the order in which they were recorded. To do so (though perhaps not at one sitting!) is to enter a spellbinding world. The ear quickly adjusts to the poor sound quality, and speaking, singing, and playing all become part of a single unforgettable experience, where the fortunes of one of America’s greatest musicians, as well as those of Jack the Bear, Bad Sam (“the toughest Negro in Memphis”), Skinny Head Pete, Sheep Bite and a host of other characters rise from the haze of Morton’s memory. At the center is Morton’s remarkable musicianship, with a pianistic touch that can move seamlessly from low-down blues to gut-bucket stomp to elegant “high society” dance music and classic repertory, and a singing voice that can be at turns raucous and deeply moving.

*Continued on page 14*



Jelly Roll Morton  
Photo courtesy of Rounder Records

## Oscillating with Lucier

It both is and is not so unlikely that two new releases representing the American composer Alvin Lucier have appeared almost simultaneously. Anthony Burr and Charles Curtis's *Alvin Lucier* (Antipic/Sigma Editions ANSI002, 2 CDs) and The Barton Workshop's *Wind Shadows* (New World 80628-2, 2 CDs) prominently feature Lucier's drone-based works, a number of which pair a solo instrumentalist with a performer operating a pure wave oscillator. The result is that listeners now have at their fingertips not one but two recordings of "In Memoriam Jon Higgins" (1984) and "In Memoriam Stuart Marshall" (1993/rev. 2003), two of the most impressive and satisfying of Lucier's works in this very specific idiom.

One reason that we are seeing nearly simultaneous releases of overlapping material is that younger musicians and composers are currently creating work that invokes and invites comparison to Lucier. The selection of works on these CDs amounts to an argument for Lucier's more minimal, process-oriented work as a crucial precedent for contemporary artists such as Toshimaru Nakamura, known for manipulating feedback looped through an audio mixing board, and Sachiko M with her Philip K. Dickian instrument, the sampler without memory. The gentle deployment of sonic interference patterns that create beating effects has become widespread among a group of composers, improvisers, and sound artists often designated by the term "lowercase." Across these two collections, Lucier consistently reworks this and similar techniques, multiplying them, and eventually winding up with a series of works of crystalline, controlled beauty.

Alvin Lucier is best known for minimalist process pieces such as "I Am Sitting in a Room" (1970). In that simple yet astonishing piece, a recording of Lucier reading a paragraph that begins with the work's title is played back and transformed by successive re-recordings such that Lucier's stuttering speech is transformed into the ghostly, abstracted, rubbed-out sounds of the room's resonant frequencies. As Lucier explained, "Every room has its own melody, hiding there until it is made audible." This task of making art out of heretofore obscure acoustical phenomena—often dealing with sound transformed by a physical space—is a thread that connects much of Lucier's work. He is a composer for whom recordings have only intermittently done justice, as his music often demands to be experienced in the space in which it is performed. Recordings of earlier works such as "Vespers" (1969) and "Chambers" (1968) arguably create more questions than they answer regarding the experience of the work in the space of its sounding.

With these two new releases, Lucier has found nearly ideal interpreters who have selected works with an ear towards their representation in recording. Clarinetist Anthony Burr and cellist Charles Curtis have assembled a fascinating collection of Lucier's works, all for solo instrument plus oscillator, with the exception of the album's concluding piece, "Music for Cello with One or More Amplified Vases" (1993). Many of these pieces are based on slowly changing relationships between an oscillator's drone and a solo instrument played with exquisite attention to microtonal detail. "In Memoriam Jon Higgins" features the slow upward glissando

of an electronically-generated sine wave; the clarinet part consists of a sequence of held tones, and the two instruments create beating patterns as their pitches move into and out of unison. Both Burr and Curtis are first-rate performers of this ascetic, demanding music. In Curtis's case, this should be little surprise, given that he has performed La Monte Young's music for almost two decades.

This particular recording runs the risk that by grouping together a host of too-similar works, the impact of any individual piece may be diluted. I didn't find this to be the case. Listeners approaching this music for the first time might find the differences between these works slight—sweeping oscillator versus fixed-pitch oscillator—but there are many subtle pleasures to be had when encountering these pieces as a family.

As with much work that has a strong conceptual component, Lucier's music has suffered from the preconceptions of listeners who think that by reading a description they already "get" the music. Burr and Curtis have done an interesting thing in the accompanying booklet, which neglects descriptions of the individual works—there's no "getting" these works without listening—in favor of excerpts from writings by Kepler on the glissando, Helmholtz on beating patterns, Edgard Varèse on sirens, and Adorno and Horkheimer on the Sirens. When Lucier is quoted, it tends to be something along the lines of "One of my fantasies is having been a French Canadian fur trapper in the 19th century in the American West." Burr and Curtis's *Alvin Lucier* is a rewarding listen, a compelling read, and unmistakable in its editorial-aesthetic slant.

*Wind Shadows*, which features performances of Lucier's music by the Amsterdam-based ensemble The Barton Workshop, gives a broader overview of Lucier's music from the last two decades. These are also excellent, wondrously precise performances—what the compositions unambiguously demand—but the album avoids the sharper, more extreme curatorial focus of Burr and Curtis's release. It presents the listener with less of a minimal, monolithic exercise in sublimity. Does that render the experience of the individual piece less immersive? That's for the listener to decide. Do you want twenty minutes of fine gradations? Or more like two hours?

*Wind Shadows* contains a number of pieces that have grown outwards from the trunk of the single-instrument-plus-oscillator tree. "Q" (1996), for quintet plus two oscillators, is a work of great textural complexity in which up to ten beating patterns are superimposed. The quintet operates within the compass of a major third (G to B) that contains the fixed pitches of two oscillators tuned to form a major second (A-flat and B-flat). Microtonal variations reveal a bristling world within this relatively narrow band of sound. "Fideliotrio" (1987), for viola, cello, and piano, features microtonal adjustments in the string parts that make it sound as if the piano's tuning is changing before your very ears. I can describe the process, and you can understand it, but that's a sorry second to *hearing* a performance such as this one.

—David Grubbs  
Brooklyn College, CUNY

# New Folk Music Resources

ISAM Newsletter readers interested in American folk and world musics will be pleased to learn about two new resources in Washington, DC: the Alan Lomax Collection at the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Global Sound. We invited the directors of the American Folklife Center and Smithsonian Recordings to comment on the projects.

The American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress, home to the magnificent field recordings collected by John and Alan Lomax during their tenure at the Library (1932-1942), acquired the remainder of Alan Lomax's collection (1942-1996) in March of 2004. The complete **Alan Lomax Collection** is unique in that it comprises more than six decades of traditional music documentation by one person who was blessed with an infallible ear for excellence.

Alan Lomax began his career at the Library of Congress at the age of eighteen, assisting his father, John Lomax, at what was then known as the Archive of American Folk Song. The father and son team made their first fieldtrip for the Library in the summer of 1933, driving their Ford station wagon that had been modified to carry a 300 pound "portable" disc recorder that could run off the car battery in rural areas. The Lomaxes would immortalize the songs and music of Texans that summer—spirituals, hymns, work songs, ballads, field hollers and blues laments. This was an auspicious start for the legendary work of Alan Lomax who, while working for the Library, would go on to record such musical legends as Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, and McKinley "Muddy Waters" Morganfield. In 1942 Alan left the Library of Congress and continued to collect and record the music of America and beyond, including extensive documentation of regional British, Scottish, Irish, Spanish, and Italian folk styles during the 1950s, and an array of Caribbean traditions during the 1960s.

The Lomax collection contains a vast sampling of music, dance and narrative. Included are over 5,000 hours of sound recordings, 400,000 feet of movie film, 3,000 videotapes, 2,000 scholarly books and journals, 5,000 photographs, and uncounted letters, manuscripts and ephemera. Archivist and collection curator Todd Harvey is working to make the collection accessible to researchers this year. In addition, Lomax's non-profit organization, the Association for Cultural Equity in New York City, is continuing to digitize Lomax's worldwide collection of recordings and films used for his cantometrics (folk song style) and choreometrics (folk dance

style) projects. These materials, gathered by ethnomusicologists from across the globe, will be added to the AFC's archive in the coming months. Scholars who visit the Center to work with the collection also benefit from research assistance from Harvey and the AFC reference staff. To find out more about the Lomax and other AFC collections, visit [www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/)

—Peggy A. Bulger  
American Folklife Center

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**Smithsonian Global Sound**, a digital download service that the *New York Times* has dubbed "the ethnographic alternative to iTunes," was launched in June 2005. In addition to 35,000 tracks of world music, the project offers prodigious liner notes, feature articles, multimedia shorts, and powerful search tools. The nonprofit, self-sustaining endeavor had been in the making for five years, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Paul Allen Foundation, and several university and archival partners.

The aims of the Smithsonian Global Sound website are several: to provide a powerful educational tool about and through music from around the world; to partner with ethnographic archives in

making their music more widely accessible; and to encourage local musicians around the planet through international recognition and the payment of royalties. Its features include over six simultaneous "radio streams," spotlights on artists with short videos, brief articles on special topics such as African Music in the United States, and cultural heritage resources marking Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Native Heritage Month, and Women's History Month.

Smithsonian Global Sound audio may be downloaded as open files in MP3 or FLAC, a high-quality, lossless audio format. Its search capabilities include browsing by geography or instrument and searching by culture group, genre, instrument, and language.

Currently, Smithsonian Global Sound draws from the holdings of its three archival partners: the Archives and Research Centre in Ethnomusicology (ARCE) in India, the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in South Africa, and the nine record labels of the Smithsonian's Folkways Collections. As ARCE and ILAM mine their collections for additional content and as Smithsonian Folkways Recordings produces twenty new releases each year, the holdings continue to grow.

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*Unknown Fiddler from Southern US Field Trip, 1959  
Photo by Alan Lomax, courtesy of the Alan Lomax Collection*

## Handy's Bloos (continued)

this, as does the colorful celeste chord. E (in the strings) and E-flat (in the oboe) both resolve to D (m. 2), which perhaps functions as the ninth of an equally confusing C9 (with no third) over an F pedal. This repeated alternation of dissonance (E and E-flat) and consonance (their resolution to D) serves as a manufactured tonal functionality. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, Handy, while not employing the blues form, uses this dissonance to create bluesy intimations with the E-flat sounding as a blue note to E.

Although Handy wrote many significant jazz works, as well as intriguing pieces in a more classically oriented genre, the success of *The Bloos*, with its combination of elements from jazz and classical composition, makes it perhaps the finest example of Handy's unique compositional style. The jazz/classical fusion is so unique and personal that its impact on other composers is peripheral. It lingers not as a direct influence, but rather as a tantalizing and inspirational notion that allows for the articulation of a personal musical vision and the creation of composition free from genre restrictions. Perhaps this is why Gunther Schuller cites *The Bloos* as one of six important examples of a style "in which attempts were made to fuse basic elements of jazz and Western art music."<sup>4</sup>

When discussing Handy's life, his close friends all speak of him as a fun-loving, generous, gregarious person who exuded a strong, healthy, athletic physicality. Handy, however, also had a bitter, angry, and frustrated side that was quite problematic. This may be what led him to experiment with heroin around the time that he left the Raeburn band and composed *The Bloos*. Consequently, his life and career went into a downward spiral.

After a lengthy stay in a substance abuse rehabilitation facility in the early 1950s, Handy managed to continue working, but most of the music he composed from the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s was written for a very small (though impressive) group of friends and musicians. Handy wrote for his own band, recording two albums under his own name (*Handyland, U.S.A.* [1954], and *By George!* (*Handy Of Course*) [1955]), produced three albums for saxophonist Zoot Sims, and created works for the players involved with the New York Saxophone Quartet whom he had known for many years.

In 1968, Handy was offered work that allowed him to extricate himself from the high-pressure world of the New York music business. He accepted a job as pianist in the house band at one of the "Borscht Belt" hotels in the Catskill Mountains. Handy and his wife felt comfortable in the area, and eventually settled there.

He went on to become a bandleader in the hotels, and it was in this environment that Handy ended his musical career.

The jazz world took note of Handy's eclectic and adventurous style, and found it inspirational. Ironically, at the same time, Handy, because of personal and professional difficulties largely expressed through self-destructive behavior, limited his own possibilities. Perhaps the final notes of *The Bloos*, an unaccompanied and unresolved triad in the trombones, can be seen as a metaphor for Handy's unresolved and not fully realized career.

—Brooklyn College, CUNY



Example 1: The Bloos, mm. 1-10  
Oboe melody with string and celeste accompaniment

Editor's note. On 17 October 2006, the Manhattan School of Music sponsored a concert devoted entirely to Handy's works, featuring their Concert Jazz Band under the direction of Justin DiCioccio. Ben Bierman, who played a pivotal role in the organization of the event, served as narrator for the concert, which featured the first live performance of *The*

*Bloos* since its original recording in 1946, as well as Dalvatore Sally and selections from 1955's *By George!* (Handy of Course). The deft execution of Handy's difficult scores by this talented young group breathed new life into the eccentric work of a largely-forgotten composer.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In his article on jazz composition from this period, Doug Ramsey states: "The Bloos for Norman Granz's *The Jazz Scene* (Verve) album of 1949 was his last masterpiece." See Doug Ramsey, "Big Bands and Jazz Composing and Arranging After World War II," in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner (Oxford University Press, 2000), 403-17.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Levin, in his review of *The Jazz Scene*, underscores Granz's personal commitment to the project by noting that the expenses for the record set exceeded \$12,000, and that the project could, at best, break even. See Michael Levin, "Calls 'Jazz Scene' Most Remarkable Album Ever," *Down Beat* (January 1950), 14.

<sup>3</sup> As the twelve-inch format was generally reserved for classical music, the intent of using this type of disc was to present jazz with an equal level of artistic integrity. See Brian Priestley, liner notes to *The Jazz Scene*, Verve Records (reissue), 314 521 661-2, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Gunther Schuller, "Third stream," *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (Macmillan, 2001). Schuller's interest in the *Bloos* is also displayed by the fact that he published a facsimile of the score through his company, Margun Music, BMI, 1996. The other third stream works that Schuller cites as important examples of the genre are: Red Norvo's *Dance of the Octopus* (1933); Ralph Burns's *Summer Sequence* (1946); Graettinger's *City of Glass* (1951); Alec Wilder's *Jazz Suite* (1951); and Rolf Lieberman's *Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra* (1956).

## Locating Queerness (continued)

the ties among these varied gay composers were deeper than suggested here. At the least, Hubbs's labeling of Cowell as "nontonal" and "experimental" needs some qualification in light of, say, his numerous *Hymns and Fuguing Tunes*, which, like Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, seem to fit the problematic term, "tonal Americana," as well as certain works by Thomson and Copland. And why privilege Thomson and Copland as avatars of an "emblematic 'American sound'" in the first place? Why not Ives? Gershwin? Ellington? Roy Harris?

The answer to some of these conundrums lies partially in the looming presence of Ned Rorem, whom Hubbs mentions and cites more often than anyone else aside from Copland and Thomson. Indeed, Hubbs's very "definitional axis" admittedly stems from Rorem. Some of the book's claims made on behalf of Thomson and Bowles also derive from Rorem, whose dialectic also includes a Jewish-gentile one beyond the scope of Hubbs's immediate concerns, complete with a dig at Blitzstein (p. 69), some resentment towards Copland ("For a gay goy like me he never lifted a finger," p. 123), and an identification with "the queer goyische flavor" as represented not only by Bowles, but Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote (pp. 110, 235n7).

The fact that all of Hubbs's composers essentially operated outside academia also warrants consideration. How did their independence from the academy influence their artistic decisions? And did they steer clear of academia — or academia steer clear of them — because of their homosexuality? Some future studies, accordingly, might attempt to integrate Hubbs's perspective with these more socio-economic ones. In the meantime, we have this lively and thought-provoking monograph to build on.

Marc Blitzstein (1905-1964) figures only peripherally in *The Queer Composition*, as he does in most accounts of American music. In his monumental *Marc Blitzstein: A Bio-Bibliography* (Praeger, 2005, \$119.95), Leonard Lehrman notes that Hubbs "does not mention even one of MB's musical works." Born into a well-to-do Jewish family in Philadelphia, Blitzstein, a prodigy, studied piano with Alexander Siloti and, like Barber and Menotti, composition with Rosario Scalero, followed by advanced studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and Arnold Schoenberg in Berlin. In his early years, he wrote mostly songs and instrumental music, but in the 1930s, he turned primarily to the Broadway stage, taking as his model the work of Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill, and Hanns Eisler. For his stage works, which more consistently than Weill explored social issues from a Marxist perspective, he typically wrote not only the music but the texts, which showed a flair for lyrics at once sardonic and moving.

Blitzstein enjoyed only two big successes in his lifetime: his agitprop opera, *The Cradle Will Rock* (1936), and his English adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* (1954). Lehrman notes, in fact, that Blitzstein made more money from his lyrics to "Mack the Knife" "than on everything else he ever did put together" (p. 1). But *Regina* (1949), his operatic adaptation of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, has endured, and the time seems ripe for the rehabilitation of some of his other stage works as well.

For decades now, Leonard Lehrman — himself a composer of ten operas and six musicals — has indefatigably championed Blitzstein, including editing his work, completing unfinished compositions (notably the opera, *Sacco and Vanzetti*), and playing and singing the music. This bio-bibliography represents the fulfillment of such lifelong devotion.

Lehrman's book opens with an interesting miscellany, including an exhaustive genealogy and an ample bibliography on Blitzstein's writer-wife, Eva Goldbeck. What follows is a chronological list of Blitzstein's works by genre; a chronological list of the composer's texts to music by others; a list of articles written by Blitzstein; a list of general articles about Blitzstein written both during his lifetime and after his death; a large annotated section devoted to articles and documentation organized by work; a discography and a videography including archival artifacts; and an index of names and organizations. Researchers will want to know that the microfilm reel numbers refer to archival material that resides at the Blitzstein Collection at the Wisconsin State Historical Society in Madison.

The section devoted to annotations by work (pp. 158-583) constitutes about two-thirds of the volume. The amount and variety of material gathered for each composition is imposing, including books, dissertations, articles, reviews, letters, reports, marginalia, promotional materials, interviews, and performances. The annotations themselves are similarly rich, ranging from translations of excerpts from foreign-language journals to analytical comments about the music. If a document discusses more than one work, separate annotations might be found under each respective work. This naturally leads to considerable backtracking and contributes to the book's heft, but eliminates the need for the author to index works. This unusual organization, although somewhat unwieldy, immeasurably assists studies based on individual pieces.

To help facilitate this ambitious undertaking, Lehrman resorts to elaborate abbreviations and codes; otherwise, the volume could well have been double the size. The extensive use of abbreviations poses difficulties, but given the amount of material such coding permits, the serious scholar will be glad to make the effort. So many abbreviations must have made proofreading a nightmare, and the volume includes a lengthy list of errata, which itself contains a few typos (Lehrman maintains up-to-date revisions at <http://llehrman.artists-in-residence.com/MBbio-bibCorrections.html>). The book has other limitations, including incomplete citations for scores of entries. But such flaws pale beside the sheer magnitude of this accomplishment, a "life in documents" for which the term, "bio-bibliography" hardly suffices.

—Howard Pollack  
University of Houston

## Two Journals and a New Award

The 35 years since the founding of ISAM by H. Wiley Hitchcock have seen an explosion in American musical scholarship. Back in 1971, the study of American music was viewed with considerable suspicion by academia, and the formation of the Sonneck Society (now the Society for American Music, or SAM) was still four years away. But now musicology conferences regularly feature several sessions on music in the United States, and, if one chooses a larger definition of “American music” as including music of “the Americas,” a wide variety of presentations on music of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada. A trip to any bookstore or a few minutes browsing on Amazon.com will prove how robust and prestigious the field has become.

It makes sense, given these developments, that there are now two scholarly journals devoted exclusively to American music. However, some confusion has arisen in the past few months about these publications. For a variety of reasons, most now well-known to members of SAM, the Society has elected to move to Cambridge University Press as publisher of its journal. The official publication of SAM is now titled *The Journal of the Society for American Music*, and it maintains Ellie Hisama as editor, along with the editorial board who worked previously with *American Music*. Authors who wish to have their work considered for publication by this journal should check the submission guidelines on the Society’s website at [www.american-music.org](http://www.american-music.org), and send their materials to Prof. Hisama at the address included at that site. *American Music* continues to be published by the University of Illinois Press, with Michael Hicks as editor. However, this journal is no longer officially affiliated with SAM, and requires a separate subscription (visit [www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/am](http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/am)).

Speaking of our founder, The American Musicological Society recently created the H. Wiley Hitchcock/MUSA Fund to support publication in American music. As the award’s description reads, “the fund was established by the Board of Directors. . . both to honor Professor Hitchcock for a lifetime of achievement in American music and to assure the Society’s continued partnership in a central project of American musicologists, MUSA (*Music of the United States of America*).” Potential donors can find additional information at [www.ams-net.org/opus/Hitchcock](http://www.ams-net.org/opus/Hitchcock)

—JT

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## Jelly Roll Morton (continued)

John Szwed’s notes vividly capture a remarkable historical moment when an energetic 23-year-old crossed paths with a brilliant musician that society had virtually swept aside. And though there is little new information in the biographical sections—Morton has perhaps one of the most meticulously documented biographies of any early jazz musician—Szwed’s rich and accessible comments provide intriguing insights into both Morton’s playing and singing, the later talent too often overlooked by historians. There has been some negative press about the sound processing (the defects are hardly noticeable to me, as I had relied for years on cassettes of ancient LPs checked out of a public library), but these criticisms seem negligible given the enormous significance of this project, which makes available, at long last, one of American music’s most important recorded documents.

—Jeff Taylor

## Bukharian Jews in Queens (continued)

in Samarkand, one of the most famous locations of the Muslim world. Yuhan Benjamin’s website, [www.yuhanny.com](http://www.yuhanny.com), opens with a flash animation showing a star of David followed by a cross, a crescent moon, and a statue of Buddha.

One implication of these CDs is that Bukharians are urban and cosmopolitan, able to thrive in the many cities in which they are scattered while remaining connected to their past. The Bukharian diaspora has many levels and includes the Babylonian exile of the Jews, a sojourn in Persia and continued eastward movement, and over a century of regular migration to Palestine/Israel. Connections between Bukharians in New York and elsewhere are quite strong, and there is substantial travel and continued movement between New York, other cities in the United States, Israel, Europe, and Central Asia. Bukharians have a strong sense of their migratory history. Their songs, replete with images of far-flung locations and rendered in a variety of styles and languages, demonstrate that diaspora is an essential component of Bukharian identity. A new standard for maqom performances and parties is the song “Yalalum” by Ilyas Malayev, who is widely considered to be the community’s greatest poet. The song exists in two versions: one a celebration of immigration to New York (“In the hands of friends, young beautiful flowers/They greet us with smiles/We flew from Asia to America”), and one in praise of Jerusalem (“I am happy in our bountiful homeland/God’s name is brought day and night to my tongue/Again I request for my homeland eternal life”).<sup>8</sup>

A cosmopolitan, multifaceted self-image carries over into conceptions of “America” and “American.” Self-representations of Bukharian musicians flanked by the World Trade Center do not replace images of Bukharians in other locations, but coexist with them. Bukharians are just as interested in being Americans as previous generations of Jewish Americans, but they seem more comfortable with retaining elements of difference—a plov rather than a melting pot. This is no doubt connected to multiculturalism and a prevailing ideology moving from “tolerance” to celebration of diversity. But while multiculturalism encourages the study of groups like the Bukharian Jews as Americans, the matter remains as to how best discuss and represent the internal complexities that are a reality for any community, and especially diasporic ones, in today’s world.

It is important to examine what is considered “American music,” since the answer determines the nature of our scholarship and pedagogy. But while questioning an exclusionary definition of “American music” and arguing for the inclusion of the music of communities such as the Bukharian Jews, it is equally important to avoid reducing a group to a representative music and marginalizing or tokenizing the group in the process. Bukharian music in New York is itself diverse, made up of numerous repertoires and constantly changing. Furthermore, there are Bukharians who feel little connection to any particularly Bukharian styles or idioms, which is one by-product of living in a society that holds the right to choose one’s identity, personality, and interests to be fundamental. The varied practices and actions of Bukharian musicians in this moment of transition and adaptation present a rare opportunity

## Bukharian Jews in Queens (continued)

for us to learn about the roles that Jewish immigrants play in the musical life of the United States, and at the same time, the effect that the United States has on the lives of its newest residents.

—Evan Rapport  
College of Staten Island, CUNY

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Anne K. Rasmussen, "Mainstreaming American Musical Multiculturalism," *American Music* 22/2 (Summer 2004), 297.

<sup>2</sup> In English, the spelling "Bukharan" is also common. "Bukharian" is the preferred term among New York Bukharians themselves, and can refer to any Jew with a Central Asian heritage, not just Jews from the city of Bukhara.

<sup>3</sup> An excellent rendition of an abridged suite from the shashmaqom can be heard on the Ilyas Malayev Ensemble's *At the Bazaar of Love*, Shanachie 64081, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> More on the shashmaqom and nationalism can be found in several sources, including Theodore Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)* (Indiana University Press, 1996), 46-47, 92, and Alexander Djumaev, "Musical Heritage and National Identity in Uzbekistan," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 14/2 (November 2005), 165-84.

<sup>5</sup> See and hear *Invisible Face of the Beloved: Classical Music of the Tajiks and Uzbeks* (Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40521, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Kurin and Diana Parker, "The Festival and the Transnational Production of Culture," in *The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust*, Program Book, 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Also available online at <http://www.silkroadproject.org/smithsonian> (in "Program Book").

<sup>7</sup> John Rockwell, "For Silk Road Audiences, A Better Map Would Help," *The New York Times*, May 19, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Translations are by the author from the original Persian.

## New Folk Music Resources (continued)

In addition to downloads, most priced at ninety-nine cents each, a library subscription service, Smithsonian Global Sound for Libraries, was launched by another partner, Alexander Street Press (ASP), based in Alexandria, Virginia. ASP specializes in making a range of academic content available to college and public libraries in the United States and thirty-eight other countries via internet streaming. All of the features and content of Smithsonian Global Sound are available to the student and library populations of participating institutions.

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—Daniel Sheehy  
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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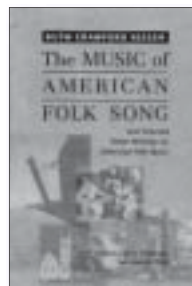


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