

NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN AMERICAN MUSIC

Department of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York - H. Wiley Hitchcock, Director

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HOMAGE TO VIRGIL THOMSON AT EIGHTY-FIVE

This month, the renowned American composer and critic Virgil Thomson reached a milestone—his 85th birthday. To help him celebrate it in style, Brooklyn College presented a two-day Thomson gala, 8-9 November 1981, in which an all-Thomson concert was played by The Brooklyn College Orchestra, directed by Dorothy Klotzman, and Thomson was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at a special convocation. The keynote address at the degree ceremonies was delivered by H. Wiley Hitchcock and is printed here in full.

He is small and round, and bald save for a fringe of curly white hair that dawdles in monkish disarray over the back of his collar, and his eyes are large and merry, with formidably hooded lids, and his voice is as high and urgent and droll as that of some improbable extinct bird—a three-way cross between an owl for wisdom, a rooster for bawdry, and a thrush for song.

That's from an unsigned article in *The New Yorker* which appeared almost exactly ten years ago in homage to Virgil Thomson on his seventy-fifth birthday. Here we are, a decade later, with the eighty-fifth birthday just around the corner, and wanting more than ever to do homage to Virgil. (Almost everyone calls him Virgil; maybe it's his babyfaced lack of pretension or his slightly conspiratorial, puckish impudence that invites the informality.)

Those of us who are close observers, or chroniclers, of the American musical scene in the twentieth century have some very precise reasons to do homage to Virgil Thomson.

He was one of that group of young composers of the 1920s—later he would refer to them as a "commando unit"—who really put American music on the map. He didn't get much credit for it (others were closer to the power centers of American musical politics), and later some people tended to forget that he was a squad-leader of the composer commandos. But there he was, in Paris from 1925 to 1940, writing music that was indelibly stamped "Made in the U.S.A."

Virgil's homespun style was of a special sort. At a time when everyone else was writing a dismayingly dissonant, complex, furrowed-brow music, he was re-testing triads, working with waltzes, harmonizing hymn tunes. Most of all, he was dropping the old grandiose romantic rhetoric; it amused him to amuse; he was eager to entertain; his music smiled a lot. He led the gang towards a new simplicity in American music of the 1930s. One of his French poet friends called Virgil's music a kind of "heliotherapy"—"like a sunbath because it avoided the fog of 100% dissonant saturation that had been going on for so many years." Some found his music banal, to which his friend Gertrude Stein retorted wisely, "It's not at all banal. He frosts his music with a thin layer of banal sounds to put people off, but what's underneath is very pure and special."

Gertrude Stein was of course more than a friend; she was co-worker with Virgil on one of the most extraordinary works of American theater, the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, finished in 1928 but first produced, in Hartford, only



Sculptor Marisol has turned the tables on portrait-composer Virgil Thomson with her own Portrait of Virgil Thomson, made earlier this year, exhibited at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York City, and reproduced here with their permission. The piece is of charcoal on wood, and enamel; it measures 69" x 92" x 65½".

HOMAGE TO VIRGIL THOMSON AT EIGHTY-FIVE (continued from page 1)

in 1934. As Miss Stein wrote in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "it is a completely interesting opera both as to words and music." For the premiere of *Four Saints*, Thomson broke important new ground: impressed by the diction and the proud presence of Harlem entertainer Jimmy Daniels, he insisted on an all-black cast; for costumes and sets he turned to a woman, Florine Stettheimer; his orchestra was of chamber size, nineteen players, and their sound was dominated by, of all things, an accordion (which gives a pungent reediness, a parlor-organ aura, to these scenes of saints).

We could cite other Thomson "firsts." For instance, his ballet *Filling Station* of 1937, which was not only a precursor of pop art but, composed for Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan, helped to kick off that wonderfully healthy collaboration we've enjoyed ever since, between modern dance and modern music. Or his film scores: that for Pare Lorentz's 1936 documentary *The Plow that Broke the Plains* was the first (and still one of only a few) by an American to hold up on its own, in the concert hall; and Thomson's score for Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* of 1948 remains to this day the only movie music to have won a Pulitzer Prize. And, for many, an arena in which Virgil Thomson is matchless is that of music composed to English or American texts: nobody—but nobody, from Dowland to Dylan—has set our rich and rhythmic language as meticulously, impeccably, truly, as has Virgil—not even our greatest Broadway songwriters.

. . . Which brings us to words, and to Virgil Thomson's writing of *them*. He cut his critical teeth, as it were, contributing

saucily serious pieces to the journal *Modern Music* during the Thirties. Then, for fourteen years, from 1940 to 1954, he was full-time music critic on the *New York Herald Tribune*. (I doubt that he is to blame for its demise.) Thereafter, he freelanced. Again I must be unconditional: we Americans have never seen Virgil's like, as a critic; nor do I think we shall, easily. Just the *titles* of his newspaper reviews are in a class by themselves: *Velvet Paws* (on the sheen of the string section of the Philadelphia Orchestra), *Star Dust and Spun Steel* (on the Symphony, Op. 21, of Anton Webern), *Silk-Underwear Music* (on the violin playing of Jascha Heifetz), *Religious Corn* (on Olivier Messiaen's *Three Liturgies of the Divine Presence*), *Hokum and Schmalz* (on a Metropolitan Opera performance of Verdi's *Forza del destino*), and so on.

You may be realizing, finally, that among the things that I think we must admire most of all in Virgil Thomson is his absolutely fresh, original turn of mind. He is of course a man of great cultivation, sophistication, and savoir faire. How could he not be, having learned and taught at Harvard, having divided his adult life between Paris and New York, having numbered among his friends the literary and artistic and musical giants of the century? But for all his cultivation, sophistication, and savoir faire, Virgil Thomson's thought and expression are those of the bright, unspoiled, uninhibited, and boundlessly inquisitive child. In a recent interview, Virgil was asked, "Why hasn't American opera caught on?" He replied, "I can't answer any question beginning with 'why.'" The more I thought about that reply, the less it seemed an evasion, the more it seemed the essence of this very special, fresh, forward-looking octogenarian.



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I.S.A.M. MATTERS

Happy Birthday to Us! It's our Tenth! I.S.A.M. was established just a decade ago, and Volume I, Number 1 of this Newsletter, with no fewer than four—count them, four!—pages, made its appearance in November 1971. We like to think that we have succeeded, in some measure, in achieving the aims of the Newsletter as outlined in the lead article of that first issue:

. . . The I.S.A.M. Newsletter aims at communication . . . in the interest of inter-communication.

Communication: of all imaginable items of information about studies and other activities in American music that are going on, have gone on, or ought to go on in this country and elsewhere.

Inter-communication: among students, teachers, scholars, and performers interested in American music, whose work can be stimulated, broadened, focused, aided and abetted by a publication reporting on the aims and accomplishments, the work completed and the work-in-progress, of all who share those interests. . . .

An American Grove in the Making

Stanley Sadie, Editor of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, writes:

Following the success of *The New Grove*, Macmillan Publishers of London are embarking on several new reference works derived from it in varying degrees. The most ambitious of these is *The New Grove Dictionary of Music in the United States*, which is planned for publication at the end of 1984. Our principal adviser on American music for *The New Grove* was of course Professor H. Wiley Hitchcock, and we are delighted to have secured his services as co-editor, with me, of the new dictionary; he will have primary charge of its content.

About half or two-thirds of the new dictionary will be based on *The New Grove*; all authors will be invited to reconsider, update, and (if necessary) expand and correct the articles they contributed. To these will be added a large number of new entries, designed to penetrate deeper into the fabric of American musical life than was possible in a fully international work. Many more people—composers, performers, jazz, pop, and rock musicians—as well as cities, institutions, and so on, will receive entries. In the early stages of the project, we have been much encouraged by the eagerness of response among scholars of American music, both senior and junior. The dictionary is to be prepared with the collaboration of I. S. A. M. and will be administered from our New York office by our Editorial Coordinator, Susan Feder, 15 E. 26th St., Suite 1503, New York, NY 10010.

I.S.A.M. Senior Research Fellow **Martin Williams** is wearing a new hat: though still at the Smithsonian Institution, he has a new title—Cultural Historian—and is to be found in the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. . . . Not surprisingly, jazz is the subject of Williams's fellowship lectures—to wit, Kansas City jazz. On 8 December, at Brooklyn College, he delivered a lecture, "Jazz: What Happened in Kansas City"; on 15 December, at the C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center in Manhattan, he will speak on "Horses in Midstream: The Later Basie." I.S.A.M. will, of course, publish these lectures in its monograph series.

I.S.A.M. will publish for the Koussevitzky Music Foundation the massive *Index to Recordings of 20th-Century American Music (Excluding Popular and Folk Musics and Jazz)* which the Foundation commissioned last year. "20th-Century" here means roughly from the generation of Charles Ives and Carl Ruggles (born about 1875) up to 30 June 1980; the computerized discography totals nearly 1,300 print-out pages, and it documents approximately 15,000 record releases of some 8,000 pieces by more than 1,500 composers. Production of the discography will involve typesetting by computer; a volume of about 350 pages, with introduction and indexes, is planned for publication in mid-1982.

Five forthcoming **I.S.A.M. monographs** are at various stages of preparation. In estimated order of publication, these are: (1) a gigantic comprehensive, annotated, and classified bibliography of writings about Henry Cowell, compiled by West Coast librarian/bibliographer Martha L. Manion; (2) the fellowship lectures by one of last year's Senior Research Fellows, Stephen Spackman (St. Andrews University, Scotland), edited by Dr. Spackman under the title *Wallingford Riegger: Two Essays in Musical Biography*; (3) the first-time-ever organization of the huge and tangled musical output of Henry Cowell into some reasonable order and chronology, in the form of a catalogue raisonné by William Lichtenwanger (Music Division, Library of Congress, retired); (4) *Confederate Sheet Music Imprints*, by Frank Hoogerwerf of Emory University in Atlanta, a thorough revision, updating, and expansion of the sheet music section of Marjorie L. Crandall's classic bibliographic study of 1955; and (5) Minna Lederman's collage of behind-the-scenes tales about *Modern Music*, interwoven with selected reprints of articles and graphics and correspondence between authors and editor.

Stravinsky in the Journal "Modern Music" (1924-1946), a volume of reprint essays chronicling the growth of Stravinsky's reputation in the United States, has been compiled by I.S.A.M. Research Assistant **Carol J. Oja** and will be released by Da Capo Press in February. The book views Stravinsky's work in the second quarter of our century as it was reviewed and analyzed by Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, Virgil Thomson, and their contemporaries.

SCOOPS, SUPER SCOOPS, AND SUPER DUPER SCOOPS

The first issue of the new quarterly journal *American Music* is scheduled to appear by 1 April 1982. Besides book and record reviews, these articles are promised: "*The Disappointment Revisited*" (Carolyn Rabson); "Art Tatum: Not the Left Hand Alone" (Martin Williams); "Frank Smith, Andrew Jenkins, and Early Commercial Gospel Music" (Charles Wolfe), and "The Few Known Autographs of Scott Joplin" (James Fuld). As an appropriate bonus in this Sonneck-Society-sponsored periodical, there will be a formerly unpublished letter by Oscar Sonneck to Carl Engel, with notes by William Lichtenwanger.

. . . Another new quarterly, *The Journal of Musicology*, will break into print in January. It will include Gilbert Chase's views on "American Music and American Musicology"—guaranteed, unless we totally miss our bet, to raise some hackles, furrow some brows, and set some tongues to wagging.

. . . And yet *another* new periodical (where are all the good articles going to come from?), *Popular Music*, has just made its appearance. This one, edited by Richard Middleton (articles) and David Horn (reviews), is a British hardbound annual, published by Cambridge University Press. Volume I (1982) includes articles by British contributors on American blues and gospel, and (among other items) a piece by Charles Hamm called "The fourth audience." Hamm's own book on American popular song, *Yesterdays*, gets a review from William Brooks.

. . . Mention of Charles Hamm reminds us that his American-music history (non-chronological and heavily sociological), *Music in the New World*, is coming out (from W. W. Norton) next spring.

. . . Robert Offergeld reports good progress on his big book on the life and times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk. His indefatigable researches have, most recently, turned up some unique iconographic items: a portrait of Gottschalk aged 13, just after his arrival in Paris; another portrait at 18, when he was the toast of Paris, with quill pen in hand and music manuscript under it (Gottschalk as *composer*, not just fabulous pianist); and a wild caricature of 1850, by the famous draughtsman Nadar, showing five virtuosi at a single long keyboard: from right to left, Jacques and Henri Herz, Liszt (yes!), Emile Prudent, and—you guessed it—Gottschalk.

. . . In the planning stage at the Smithsonian Institution, with most of the music notated already, is a complete set of transcriptions of the contents of Martin Williams's now-classic set of recordings, *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*.

. . . Austin Clarkson, of York University in Ontario, is a passionate partisan of the late composer Stefan Wolpe. He has recently published *Stefan Wolpe: A Brief Catalogue of Published Works* (including an introductory essay, a classified catalogue, names and addresses of publishers and distributors, discography, and selected bibliography). Soon to appear is a larger study by Clarkson: *Stefan Wolpe: A Guide to His Life and Works*. The *Catalogue* is published by Sound Way Press, 29 Lorraine Gardens, Islington, Ontario, Canada M9B 4Z5; \$3, plus \$0.50 for postage and handling. Orders for the *Guide*, now in preparation, may be sent to the same publisher.

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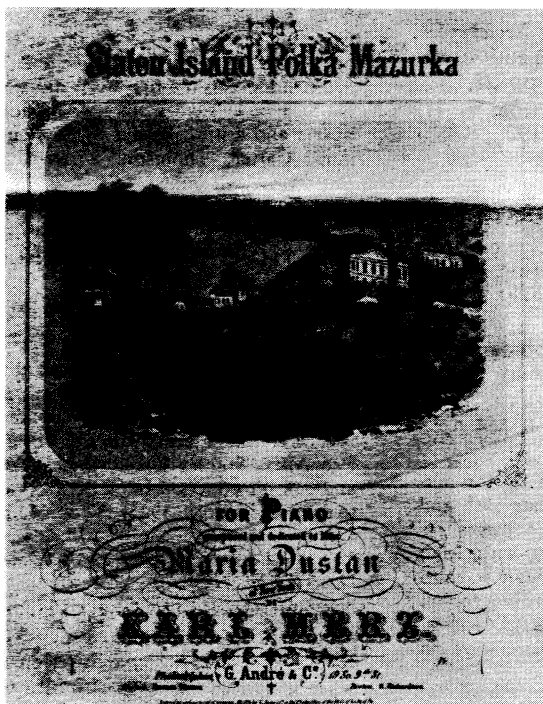
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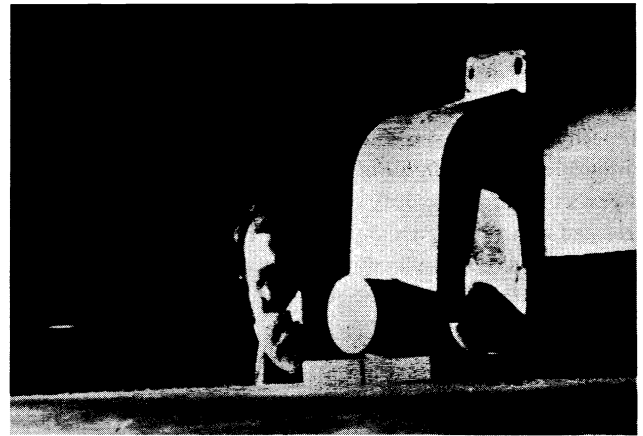
This fall, two outstanding exhibits of American music have been on view in the New York City area. *Anacreon Revisited*, at The New-York Historical Society, featured a small but choice sampling from the Society's collection of early American imprints, and *Soundings*, at the Neuberger Museum (State University of New York at Purchase) until 25 December, explores the complex relationship of sounds and visual images in the 20th century.

Anacreon Revisited—named for its centerpiece, John Stafford Smith's *The Anacreontic Song* (London, 1777-81), the first appearance in sheet music of the tune for *The Star-Spangled Banner*—favored sheet-music covers commemorating American political events, such as that for Konrad Treuer's *The Nation in Tears* (in tears over Lincoln's assassination, that is; published in New York, no date given). But its strongest suit by far—and we assume the strongest in the Society's collection—was in documentation of local music history. Among the tidbits shown were *Clinton's Triumph*, a piano march written by William Taylor in tribute to De Witt Clinton after his re-election as New York governor in 1824; *The Meeting of the Waters of Hudson and Erie*, "Sung by Mr. Keene at the Grand Canal Celebration" in 1825; and *Constitution and By-Laws of the New York Philharmonic* (1843).

The exhibit was prepared by Jean Bowen (New York Public Library at Lincoln Center), who supervised the cataloguing of the Society's collection of early American music imprints under a grant from the H. W. Wilson Foundation. A pleasure from start to finish, the exhibit's only major shortcoming was its lack of a catalogue, or even a typescript list, of its contents.



From *Anacreon Revisited*: Karl Merz (1836-1890), *Staten Island Polka-Mazurka* (Philadelphia: G. André and Co., 1854). Reproduced courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City.



From *Soundings*: Alvin Lucier, *Music on a Long Thin Wire*, 1977. Photo by Lon Holmberg.

On the other hand, a catalogue—and a superb one at that—does accompany *Soundings*. In 96 pages, it not only documents the more than 100 works displayed but contains four insightful essays ("Soundings" by Suzanne Delehanty, Director of the Neuberger Museum; "Sensoria" by Dore Ashton; "Artsound" by Germano Celant; and "Sound Waves" by Lucy Fischer), each of which makes a significant statement about the symbiotic relationships between art and music in the 20th century.

Soundings ranges from fairly traditional pictorial representations of musical instruments to the world of ideas shared by composers and painters. And it is in the latter realm that the exhibit and its catalogue complement one another so magnificently. For example, as a thought-provoking prelude to viewing works by Wassily Kandinsky, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, Georgia O'Keefe, and Morgan Russell, we can read Dore Ashton's essay, which, in one section, traces common attitudes toward silence and white. She quotes Busoni, writing in 1907—"That which . . . most nearly approaches the essential nature of art, is the Rest and Hold"—and Kandinsky, in 1912, calling white "a great silence. . . not a dead silence, but one pregnant with possibilities."

As we move to works of the present day, art and music blend into one, inseparable presence. In a section titled "Instruments as Sculpture and Sculpture as Instruments," works by Baschet, Harry Bertoia, and Reinhold Peiper Marxhausen are placed alongside Harry Partch's Kithara I, Ektara, and Harmonic Canon I; all are beautiful both visually and aurally. A group of sound installations, including Douglas Hollis's outdoor installation *Wind Ensemble* and Laurie Anderson's gallery of photographic collages together with the sounds of a jukebox, explores yet another facet of this union, with art and music fused into a total environment.

Soundings is rounded out with a display of phonorecordings and their covers (some discs record the sounds of works displayed in the exhibit), a section of mechanical musical instruments, and a two-month schedule of films and concerts.

Through its coverage of music-inspired art, art-inspired music, and music-art complexes, *Soundings* provocatively chronicles multi-media and inter-media expressions in the 20th century.

ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

Alfred Frankenstein, author, teacher, music and art critic, and a champion of American music, died last June 22nd at the age of 74. John Rockwell, in *The New York Times* (24 June), paid tribute to his "keen mind, lively writing style and profound sympathy for American and contemporary art and music." Shirley Fleming, in *High Fidelity* (October 1981), speaking of his years on the music desk of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, described him as "pugnacious, thought provoking, and sometimes controversial." When I interviewed him in San Francisco in 1975, I found him a knowledgeable critic of the American scene as well as a delightful raconteur.

Born (in 1906) and raised in Chicago, the son of the president of the University of Chicago Extension Division, Frankenstein met Carl Sandburg in the '20s when the latter came to lecture at the University.

I travelled around with him notating tunes that Sandburg sang, although he sang them differently each time. When Sandburg did notate them he would always write the tunes in A major. He needed a teacher for his children so I got Ruth Crawford the job. That's when she got interested in folk music—a natural tie-up with Charles Seeger, whom she later married.

Frankenstein went to San Francisco in 1934 to become music and art critic of *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

I became a kind of professional Americanist. Besides my job on the *Chronicle* I taught courses in American music at Mills College for a

good many years. I always did everything I could to keep the situation open for contemporary composers. My primary interest has always been in American cultural phenomena. I've always had the feeling that no one can really understand foreign cultural phenomena until he understands his own. I've gotten so deeply involved in trying to understand my own, first, that I never got on to understanding anybody else's.

When the *Chronicle's* music and art department split up in 1965, Frankenstein remained as art critic.

I got out of music criticism primarily because I got terribly tired of listening to the same few pieces of music over and over again. Virgil Thomson used to say that there were 50 pieces in the repertoire —well, there might be 53.

One thing that happened during Frankenstein's lifetime which he constantly talked about and was anxious to get on record was the change which had taken place in the arts in the university.

What was at one time the citadel of conservatism is now the citadel of experimentation—true in painting and in sculpture just as much as it is in music. Mills College was a perfect example. When I first went there, the professors of composition and theory were very conservative, reactionary. Now it's in the opposite direction. I think the reason for the change is an analogy with the sciences. The sciences do not conserve tradition; they make tradition. I think the art and music departments have finally caught on to that fact.

—Rita H. Mead



Music and Musical Life in America

JAZZ CLASSICS

FREE JAZZ

by Ekkehard Jost

The only analytic study of the music of John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Charles Mingus, AACM, and Cecil Taylor, *Free Jazz* combines historical observation with musical examples of modal and free playing techniques. One of the few musical studies of jazz since Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz*. (Graz, Austria, 1974) 214 pp., 70 examples/ \$19.50

JAZZ: A HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK SCENE

by Samuel B. Charters and Leonard Kunstadt

New foreword by Samuel B. Charters

Charters and Kunstadt have compiled the most detailed chronicle of jazz in New York—from Harlem to the Village to 52nd Street. Valuable data on extinct clubs and theatres and the economic conditions of the jazz musician. (New York, 1962) forewd. + 382 pp., 150 photos/\$27.50

...ARTHUR FOOTE

24 (*Earlier American Music Series*)

SUITE IN E MAJOR, op. 63 and
SERENADE IN E MAJOR, op. 25

by Arthur Foote. Introduction by H. Wiley Hitchcock (Boston, 1909; 1882) introd. + 58 pp./ \$18.50

#26 (*Earlier American Music Series*)

QUINTET FOR PIANO AND STRINGS
IN A MINOR, op. 38

by Arthur Foote. Introduction by H. Wiley Hitchcock (Boston, 1898) introd. + 60 pp./ \$18.50

ARTHUR FOOTE: An Autobiography
New introduction and notes by Wilma Reid Cipolla

(Norwood, MA, 1946) xvii + 154 pp./ \$25.00

Arthur Foote was a pillar of the Boston musical establishment during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The three pieces reprinted here reflect his training with John Knowles Paine and the Brahmsian warmth evident in all his music. His autobiography, with extensive notes by Wilma Reid Cipolla, is still the primary source of information on Foote the man and musician.

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STRAVINSKY IN MODERN MUSIC

Compiled and with an Introduction by Carol Oja

Foreword by Aaron Copland

Covering the years 1924-46, this selection of articles from the influential journal *Modern Music* highlights the first burst of enthusiasm for Stravinsky's work among American composers and critics. Essays by Sessions, Copland, Carter, Thomson, Kirstein, Denby, Blitzstein, and many others. (New York, 1924-46) 180 pp./ \$25.00

THE STORY OF IRVING BERLIN

by Alexander Woollcott

New introduction, index, song list
by Stanley Green

At the age of 36, Irving Berlin had already achieved sufficient renown to warrant this panegyric from theatre critic Woollcott, who was on intimate terms with the world of Tin Pan Alley. Stanley Green's index, song list, and new introduction bring Berlin's career up to date. (New York, 1925) 237 pp., 15 photos/ \$25.00

HEART SONGS

New introduction by Charles Hamm

An anthology of six hundred songs collected by the *National Magazine* to reflect the full range of popular favorites from hymns and sentimental ballads to versions of concert arias, *Heart Songs* is a priceless artifact of late Romanticism in middle-class America. (Boston, 1909) introd. + 520 pp., 14 photos/ \$42.50

NATIONAL TREASURES

Yankee Gesamtausgabe. The publication by The American Musicological Society and The Colonial Society of Massachusetts of *The Complete Works of William Billings* has reached its half-way point with the appearance of Volume One, an edition of *The New-England Psalm-Singer*. The standards of the previous volume (Volume Two, published in 1977 and reviewed in the November issue of this Newsletter) are maintained in this one: a sumptuous format, and editing and printing which "present the music and text as clearly and accurately as possible, according to present day editorial and notational standards, for performance and study." There is a new editor, Karl Kroeger, and a new feature, a generous historic and analytic introduction. Richard Crawford still serves as Editorial Consultant. Following Hans Nathan's practice, Kroeger has added and underlaid texts when Billings did not do so. These have been taken mainly from the Brady and Tate psalter and its companion *Appendix Containing a Number of Hymns Taken Chiefly from Dr. Watts's Scriptural Collections*. Most of the added texts appear with the same tunes, although some were added "in accordance with the mood and meter of the music." Users of these volumes, it is hoped, will always refer to the "Commentary" (pp. 359-372), where the sources of the texts are clearly given.

The editor has also altered some time-signatures and barlines, mostly "to correct the declamation of the text, but occasionally also to correct the metrical organization of the music." Billings's original signatures and barrings are clearly, but unobtrusively, indicated on the music. Facsimiles of the music appear throughout, placed as close to the edited versions as is possible, there usually being two tunes on a page in the original; the facsimiles are so numerous as to constitute almost a complete photo-reprint of Billings's book.

One wishes the standards of the previous volume had *not* been maintained in the indexing. There is again the fragmenting into three separate and very short indexes—of titles, of first lines, and of facsimiles. In the title index (as well as in the commentary), anthems and canons appear in separate alphabets after the psalm tunes (which are not indicated as such) and again separated—but in different locations—in the index of facsimiles. We continue to urge for one index, with a single alphabet and duplicate entries within the single alphabet for terms such as "anthems" and "canons," if desired, and, in the final volume, a cumulative index. Billings, in his anthems, knew how to cap excellent beginnings and continuations with splendid endings. There is still time for the editor to do the same in the two remaining volumes of this edition. Then we too could cap our "splendid" with "Hallelujah! Amen." (Available from the University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903; \$50.00)

— Walter Gerboth (Brooklyn College)



"**Alouette, gentille alouette.**" Just about anything you'd care to know about that best-known of all Canadian folksongs—or about some 3,100 other topics—appears in a trailblazing new volume, *The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (University of Toronto Press), edited by Helmut Kallman, Gilles Potvin, and Kenneth Winters. With over a thousand three-column pages (on well-lead paper, so that the quality of the five hundred illustrations is high) only slightly larger than those of the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, this is a hefty book indeed. Not a general music-reference work, this is a national encyclopedia about music in Canada—all kinds of music: popular, folk, religious, concert, and other types—and Canada's musical relations with the rest of the world. What is "trailblazing" about the work is its extraordinary inclusiveness: besides the predictable biographical and topical articles, there is a phenomenal diversity of topics considered and discussed in interesting, informative ways. (The writing is exceptionally clear and for the most part non-technical.) Take, for instance, the letter "C"; we find entries on such subjects as the following: Canada in European and US music; Centennial celebrations, 1967; Children's concerts; Christmas; Coffeehouses; Confederation and music; Croatia. (The last is not *about* Croatia; it's about Croatian immigrants to Canada and their music; Croatian-Canadian musical groups; and Croatian-born Canadian musicians. Other immigrant national and ethnic groups are treated similarly.)

The enlightened catholicity of the Canadian encyclopedia extends to matters of detail in composers' and writers' work-lists, inclusion of discographies as well as extensive bibliographies, and, most unusually and usefully, a 15,000-item index of "persons, organizations, companies, radio stations, churches, periodicals, schools, etc. that do *not* have their own entries in *EMC*." This index supplements the numerous "See . . ." entries and cross-references (an asterisk before a word indicating that it has its own entry in the encyclopedia).

EMC costs only \$65, a reflection of the heavy government and private subsidization its preparation and publication have enjoyed, which fortunately is now extended to the encyclopedia's consumers. And, for anyone preferring the work in French, there is an edition in that language, titled *Encyclopédie de la musique au Canada*.

— H. Wiley Hitchcock

The archives of **Oral History, American Music** at Yale School of Music, directed by Vivian Perlis, are continually growing. In addition to ongoing interviews with American composers—the most recent subjects being David Diamond, Leon Kirchner, Fred Lerdahl, Peter Mennin, Pauline Oliveros, Bernard Rands, Vittorio Rieti, William Schuman (who has been videotaped), Billy Taylor, and Mary Lou Williams—the project is conducting a series of interview/biographies of Duke Ellington (now 62 interviews strong) and Aaron Copland (30 interviews). Anyone wishing to donate taped materials to the archive or to obtain more information about the project in general should contact: Oral History, American Music, Yale School of Music, 96 Wall

Hans von Bülow in America by Siegmund Levarie.

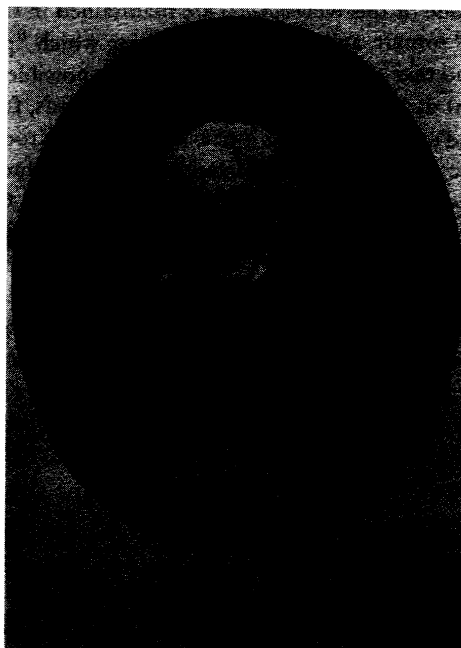
Last spring, Goethe House, with cooperation from many New York City institutions, sponsored a series of manifestations around the theme "Germany in the Nineteenth Century: Cultural Aspects of an Age." The City University of New York, as its contribution, held a symposium, "Aspects of German-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century," on 30 April and 1 May. For that symposium, our colleague Professor Levarie prepared and read the following paper (in a somewhat longer version). We are grateful for permission to print it here; in its full version, it will be published by Brooklyn College Studies on Society in Change, distributed by Columbia University Press as part of a volume of proceedings of the symposium, *Germans in America: Aspects of German-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century*.

Hans Guido Freiherr von Bülow was one of the most versatile and fascinating musical personalities in the nineteenth century. As far as we can tell, he must have been one of the best orchestra conductors of all times. In Munich (where he also functioned as director of the Conservatory) he conducted the brilliant premieres of Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (in 1865) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (three years later). As Hofmusikdirektor to the Duke of Meiningen (in the 1880s), he transformed the orchestra into one of the most famous in Germany. He was a passionate intellectual who wrote essays on all kinds of topics. His correspondence with Liszt, Wagner, and Nietzsche has appeared in separate books, not to mention eight volumes of letters (in German and perfect French) published by his widow. Bülow also composed, produced the piano score of Wagner's *Tristan*, and edited all the Beethoven piano sonatas and many keyboard works by Bach, Chopin, Scarlatti, and others.

Bülow's international fame, however, derived from his stupendous qualifications as a pianist. His concert tournées took him across Europe, from Florence to St. Petersburg, from Vienna to London and Glasgow. For the 1875-76 season, when he was in his mid-forties, he received a contract for a tour of the United States. In that year, Ulysses Grant was president. Neither Carnegie Hall nor the Metropolitan Opera House nor the Boston Symphony Orchestra yet existed, but their establishment was not many years away. Bülow's trip, which lasted from October to June and reached most major communities encompassed by the triangle Boston-New Orleans-Chicago, is the central topic of my report.¹

"I sold myself *prix fixe* for 100,000 francs in gold [plus expenses] for 8 months (172 concerts)," he wrote to a friend.² The financial gain was enormous, more than double the annual salary he later requested for his prestigious position in Meiningen. The physical load was also enormous—an average of over twenty concerts each month. Nor was he stingy with his programs: the first three concerts of his tournée, in Boston on 18, 20, and 22 October, each offered two major works for piano and orchestra, separated by a group of solo pieces. In his opening concert he played a substantial selection of Chopin solos between Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto and Liszt's "Hungarian Fantasy" for piano and orchestra, which the composer had dedicated to him. He could catch his breath only while the orchestra was playing four shorter numbers at various moments of the concert (two overtures, a march, and the slow movement from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony). Two days later, a variant of this pattern consisted of Beethoven's "Eroica" Variations between concertos by Weber and Adolphe Henselt ("possibly the 'most difficult' piece for the executant ever written," thought a Boston critic), with again two overtures and a symphonic movement thrown in.³ Before the month ended, Bülow had offered to Boston music-lovers seven such concerts with six different programs all played from memory; included was the world premiere of the then problematic but now immensely popular First Piano Concerto by Tchaikowsky, dedicated to Bülow. In between, he had long daily rehearsals, which a poor conductor rendered particularly strenuous. "The conductor," he wrote to his friend Joachim Raff, "fell victim to the 'russian' concerto . . . but I like him personally very much. I don't give a hoot about an objective judgment. I am beginning to be subjective."⁴

Bülow's arrival in the United States was without doubt the big event of the season. His reception had been well prepared. Even before he landed, several printers (such as Nesbitt in New York, at the corner of Pearl and Pine Streets) had issued monographs of considerable length acquainting American audiences with his life, previous concert tours, personality, and high reputation.⁵ A mass of quoted superlatives overwhelm the expectant reader. Liszt had praised Bülow (once his son-in-law, until



Even the sharpest eyes may not be able to read the caption to the photo above: Dr. Hans Guido von Bülow. / Drawn and Printed Expressly for the *FOLIO*, the Great Illustrated Musical Journal of America. / by / J. H. Bufford's Sons Boston. According to one of its mastheads (they changed frequently), *Folio* was "A Monthly Magazine of Music, Drama, Art, and Literature." It was published in Boston, 1869-95.

Richard Wagner took away Cosima) as "one of the greatest musical organisms to have come his way." In England, *The Times* had identified Bülow's performances as "the most brilliant and tremendous feats of the kind ever attempted in London."⁶ The influence of Bülow on America was anticipated in these words at the end of a ten-page essay:

The series of entertainments proffered by this eminent musician will be unprecedented, not alone in the interest which his presence will lend, but by the importance of the works performed, and by the attendant good taste and musical excellence of the concerts.

The widespread desire in this country to become better acquainted with the school of which Von Bülow is the representative, the intense interest taken in Wagner's theories and compositions, adds to the feeling that the appearance here of a prominent master in the new school, able to speak and perform with authority, will open an impetus to music that it has never before felt. It should be said in conclusion that Dr. Von Bülow brings with him the sympathy and respect of intellectual Europe, which is already regarding this country with curious attention. An artist and scholar of the highest rank, his visit, aside from his professional engagements, is in itself an event of great magnitude.⁷

These high expectations were fulfilled by the actual events, and excitement accompanied Bülow wherever he went and played. The biweekly *Dwight's Journal of Music* did not let a single issue go by between 4 September and 4 March without reference to Bülow—from long editorials

and detailed reviews to incidental comments. Amid the exalted panegyrics we find repeated references to the impact of Bülow's playing and personality on American music life: "He never fails; it seems impossible for him to fail. Whatever he undertakes, he is absolutely master of it all. . . . Many times as the [Beethoven Concerto] has been played in Boston, and well played, we doubt if it ever made its mark so signally upon a great audience."⁸ For such praise and more of it, von Bülow, "with a modest deprecating air," says the reporter, thanked the Boston audience with a few words from the stage: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the Athens of America. You are Athenians. I am proud of your good opinions."⁹

Later in the season, the music critic for the *Poughkeepsie Daily News*, after identifying his community as a "suburb of New York" whose citizens "possess . . . musical culture," described Bülow, among other encomiums, as a perfect pianist and unique artist who, more than anyone else, enters fully into the nature of the composer he plays. "And hence," the critic continues, "his incalculable value to American audiences. . . . Bülow is the highest possible example of all that may be acquired, with the most exalted talent and unconquerable perseverance; while, as a model, his performance may be relied on with almost unquestioning trust. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the worth of such a disinterested reproductive mind to the thousands of pianoforte students on this continent."¹⁰

Characteristically, only the critic of a new and struggling New York paper, *The Music Trade Review*, found it necessary to take issue, not with Bülow's musicianship, memory, and fingers, which were beyond fault-finding, but with the artist's "undemocratic" appearance:

Mr. von Bülow presents a soldier-like appearance, and we believe that in every sense he deserves to be looked upon in this light. He knows how to command as a leader, and, what is more difficult, how to obey as an interpreter; he appears, hat in hand, straight, erect, the brochette of decorations in his button-hole . . . , bows low before the public—a detestable habit, derived from old customs when the despised and nearly excommunicated actors were considered the unworthy servants of the public—and at last sits down at the piano.¹¹

The instruments Bülow used throughout his American tour were Chickering, products of a Boston firm which had pioneered in piano manufacturing. Rumors had it that other piano makers, particularly Steinway and Weber, had bid up to \$20,000 to secure the exclusive privilege of having their respective instruments used by Bülow in all his American concerts. Bülow, in any case, indignantly refused an unspecified financial proposal from Steinway. After trying out a Chickering, which had been especially sent to his summer resort in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight, Bülow officially declared: "I shall not be able to make so much noise on a Chickering as on a Steinway, but the tone is far more noble and distinguished."¹² He did not permit the Chickering people to exploit him for reasons of publicity. We read the following report of a rehearsal in Baltimore in December:

He walked to the piano, on which hung a sign whereon was inscribed the word "Chickering." "I am not," he said with a look of scorn, "a travelling advertisement," and jerking off the sign laid the large gilt letters face downward on the stage, and cast at it a glance of hatred as though it were a loathsome reptile. Calling out to an acquaintance in the auditorium, he said in good idiomatic English: "Mr. —, that jackass has sent a sign-board down with the piano." He then lapsed into German, in which the words "Lump" and "Schweinehund" were audible. After he began the rehearsal, in one of the orchestral interludes, he got up and tiptoed softly around, picked up the hated sign and carried and stuck it under the tail end of the grand piano; and then in another interval walked around there and kicked it. Thus was he appeased with blood.¹³

On the whole, however, Hans von Bülow fully reciprocated, at least at first, the affectionate admiration proffered him by the United States. In the midst of his tour's seven opening concerts in Boston, he wrote to a friend that the twelve days thus far spent in America had been among

the happiest of his life: "The new world is at least 66-2/3 percent more bearable than the old. . . . The orchestra members (as well as conductors) are mostly German, very capable, with an intelligence not yet drowned in Lagerbier, even with an idealistic bent. . . . My success is colossal."¹⁴

He was impressed that all big New York newspapers ("except the German papers which are, of course, petty and stingy") had sent critics to Boston for all his programs.¹⁵ "I played Monday night," he wrote:

Tuesday morning at 9 I received a congratulatory wire from my old friend Damrosch from New York, who had already read the most detailed reviews in four newspapers. I am enclosing one of those telegraphed reviews—it cost over \$300 to send it. This kind of large-scale generosity is here characteristic of everything.¹⁶

He commented:

The New Englanders are a highly improved edition of the Old, much warmer, more cordial, and withal even better mannered than the Old Englanders—and [he adds in English] *there is more "ginger" in them*. Do you understand this slang? It is good and sounds better than the French "*chien*."¹⁷

On the way from Boston to New York, Bülow played in Providence, New Haven, Springfield, Worcester, and Hartford. During his three weeks in New York—which he called "Yankeepolis"—between 12 November and 4 December he gave twelve concerts, besides two in Brooklyn. "Don't recall since Italy," he told his mother, "to have felt so marvelous anywhere as since my arrival just fourteen days ago in this very curious but very comfortable and truly magnificent country."¹⁸ He referred to his New York debut as "*tout simplement* the most colossal success in my virtuoso career," and he compared his life with that of a prince.

American civilization is such that I declare Europe backward by more than half a century and full of medieval barbarisms. . . . I think of the old morbid European world with horror. . . . I wish I could send you just part of the grandiose flower garden which the people have amassed in my room! Such flowers, such bouquets and baskets one does not find even in Italy.¹⁹

He considered the tediousness of his travels, his "Wanderschaft," not fatiguing, because (he reassured his mother):

. . . everything in America, as I told you, is far advanced. Railroad cars are like cabins, wonderfully heated, and with beds of a quality not imagined in Germany and surroundings. One can fully undress for the night, one is promptly awakened by a porter who has cleaned your shoes overnight, and one can even thoroughly wash oneself. . . . [By comparison] Europe is old and lame—there are only two young countries, Russia and America. If I were half my age, I would move to the former. With my almost 46 years (forgive this ungallantry of a son) I belong here, as every hour of these last eight weeks has shown me.²⁰

This was not just a phrase, for in February, after 83 concerts, he wrote to a friend: "In this life I hope never to cross the ocean again—the last quarter of my existence is dedicated to the New World, the country where for the first time I can be myself. My decision stands: I have taken the first steps toward becoming an American citizen—*enfin*. . . ."²¹ This letter was posted in New Orleans, where Bülow particularly enjoyed "the patrician perfume of the South, especially welcome after the immoderate German-plebeian odor of the West. . . . Here [in the South] I am better understood, the people have finer nerves, comprehend my subtle nuances, follow me spontaneously, and I can act the Southerner which I truly am and which I was unable to unfold in frosty Germany and England."²²

He liked Philadelphia most of all American cities, although the reasons were not exclusively musical. While recognizing widespread musical

Hans von Bülow in America (continued from page 9)

understanding and a special hunger for music, he thought that the women constituted a singularly sensitive audience. He openly preferred American to European women.

I like them. They have small feet and hands, and to me that is the most important thing for a pretty woman. . . . I love particularly the form and character of their ears. I immediately look at a woman's ears. A beautiful ear is a woman's magic charm; well rounded and chiseled, it acts like a magnet. People who consider American women too thin are not experts. I love thin women, tall, slim, graceful. . . . I have fully surrendered to American women.²³

Washington, D.C., competed temporarily with Philadelphia: to Bülow, America looked "heavenly" because through the German ambassador he had met two of the most radiant beauties ("both of course American") who were dividing his heart. "All the splendid females I have seen thus far are stablemaids or grisettes compared with these gorgeous specimens [*Prachtexemplare*]. May I add that female admirers from New York and Boston have come down here to my concerts?"²⁴

At the same time, Bülow found it necessary to write a letter, in English, to the editor of the *New York Herald*: "Sir, Allow me most humbly to decline the honour given me this morning by the musical critic of the N. Y. H. in calling me the son-in-law of Abbé Liszt, this honour belonging since 1870 exclusively to the composer of *Lohengrin*, Richard Wagner Esq."²⁵

Bülow's letters report on big events and small details of American life. He is amused by the request of a clerk in a telegram office for a concert ticket in exchange for expediting a wire.²⁶ He is impressed by his own "strong nerves: think of it—am just about to leave for the concert—I hear a shot—twenty steps from me one Yankee has shot another one dead."²⁷ (That was New Year's Eve 1875, in New York.) He expresses "great sympathy for [his] black human brothers," among whom he places a barber and a waiter far above their immigrated German counterparts.²⁸

His ambivalent feelings toward Germany are well illustrated by an episode in Chicago, which the press of the heavily German population of that city never forgave him. We have the report of an eye-witness:

Bülow appears on the stage rapidly like somebody afraid that the bank will close before he can make his deposit. In one hand the program, in the other his hat, which he placed on the piano, . . . he peeled off his gloves and sat down. Then he moved forward and said in intelligible English: "Ladies and gentlemen, . . . I want to thank my countrymen for the warm welcome they have given me. . . . Concerned about my success in America, they have raised some objections against my programs. . . . They regret that I am endangering my popularity by too much serious classical music. . . . They think that American education is not mature enough for the best composers and that I should therefore play pieces like 'Sweet home,' 'Last Rose of Summer,' and 'Yankee Doodle.' I have to reply, first that I am a German artist and therefore always worship in the temples of the great masters. And, second, that American audiences are among the best before which I have had the honor to play anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, permit me, as a kind of prelude, to give you a sample of this so-called popular music." The audience applauded vividly, and Bülow immediately began a noisy, bizarre, careless improvisation, [not on a German tune] but on the Marseillaise, the French national anthem. . . .

"The episode," concludes our reporter, "caused a sensation. . . . he, a German," etc.²⁹

Disillusionment, once it set in, engulfed Bülow rapidly, doubtless aggravated and perhaps caused by the enormous fatigue that suddenly hit him. There had been earlier symptoms. In late winter, judging America from Cincinnati, where he could not see much charm, he refers to the "awakening excusable yearning for *Retourseekrankheit*," the journey

back to Europe even with seasickness.³⁰ Having at first raved about the elegant comfort of American hotels, he begins a letter from Louisville five months later with a complaint about mosquitoes.³¹ A New York doctor in early Spring charged him \$120; for \$85 he could have bought an elegant three-piece suit and at least have had a lasting souvenir apart from the bill.³² Suddenly, in the middle of April, after 132 concerts and "eight months of servitude," he asked his agent to release him from the remainder of his contract.³³ Sitting in Salem, Massachusetts, where dead-tired and sleepy he had played before rather empty benches, he felt depressed by having "again to get through a classical program . . . before the musically half-barbaric audience in the provinces."³⁴ His life as a traveling concert artist suddenly appeared to him "über alle Begriffe scheusslich"—hideous beyond all concepts.³⁵

He played a few more concerts. His last one in St. Louis was number 139 in less than seven months. For the missing 33 concerts, the agent subtracted 25,000 francs, or one-fourth of the stipulated fee. Bülow did not care. He was so exhausted that he traveled "half conscious 50 hours by train" to New York, where he placed himself under medical care.³⁶ In his last overseas letter to his mother we read: "My condition is exceptional and can only be called *nervous prostration*. . . . My brain is so weak that I have difficulties expressing myself coherently. . . . As soon as I feel strong enough, I shall expedite my return to Europe. I am too old, too used up, to take root in the New World. . . . As long as possible I was violently clinging to self-produced illusions about me and this land. . . . It was a continuous trance."³⁷

NOTES

¹ My main source is *Hans von Bülow: Briefe und Schriften*, ed. Marie von Bülow in 8 volumes (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1895-1908). Volume 6 contains his letters from America, referred to in subsequent footnotes by number and date. The translations are all mine. Other sources will be identified in the context.

² No. 218, 16 February 1876.

³ *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 30 October 1875, p. 118.

⁴ 29 October 1875 (p. 296, fn. 1).

⁵ *Hans von Bülow: A Biographical Sketch. His Visit to America* (New York: George F. Nesbitt, 1875). ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6. ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁸ 30 October 1875, p. 118. ⁹ 30 October 1875, p. 119.

¹⁰ 19 January 1876. ¹¹ Quoted in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 27 November 1875, p. 133.

¹² *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 13 November 1875, p. 125.

¹³ *Baltimore Bulletin*, 11 December 1875.

¹⁴ No. 180, 21 October 1875. ¹⁵ *Ibid.* ¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ No. 181, 24 October 1875. ¹⁸ No. 182, 24 October 1875.

¹⁹ No. 183, 15 November 1875. ²⁰ No. 185, 6 December 1875.

²¹ No. 218, 16 February 1876. ²² *Ibid.*

²³ Interview reported in *Briefe*, vol. 6, pp. 311-12.

²⁴ No. 192, 19 December 1875. ²⁵ No. 197, 28 December 1875.

²⁶ No. 192, 19 December 1875. ²⁷ No. 200, 1 January 1876.

²⁸ No. 192, 19 December 1875. ²⁹ Reported in *Briefe*, vol. 6, pp. 312-13.

³⁰ No. 218, 16 February 1876. ³¹ No. 219, 27 February 1876.

³² No. 224, 5 April 1876. ³³ No. 229, 12 or 13 April 1876.

³⁴ *Ibid.* ³⁵ No. 230, 27 April 1876. ³⁶ No. 232, 22 May 1876.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Susan Barron, who made the piece of American music to the right and, as of course you can see, signed and dated it (6/18/81), is no stranger to these pages. She contributed an almost illegibly fine-scripted report on the whereabouts of Anthony Philip Heinrich's grave to our issue of May 1979, and in May 1980 we announced her 39-photograph collection, with text by John Cage, *Another Song* (Callaway Editions). On exhibit right now (and through 24 January 1982) at the Brooklyn Museum is a group of her recent *papiers collés* (collages, if you will); these have been said by one critic to "take us up to a threshold where we are allowed to discover some strange mystery, look into the very nature of a secret, or eavesdrop on a private restless moment." Susan Barron has, we aver, combined this same kind of sensibility with her earlier (and less well known) training as a musician to produce *A Piece of Unaccompanied String*, of which you are viewing, if not the premiere performance, at least the premiere publication.

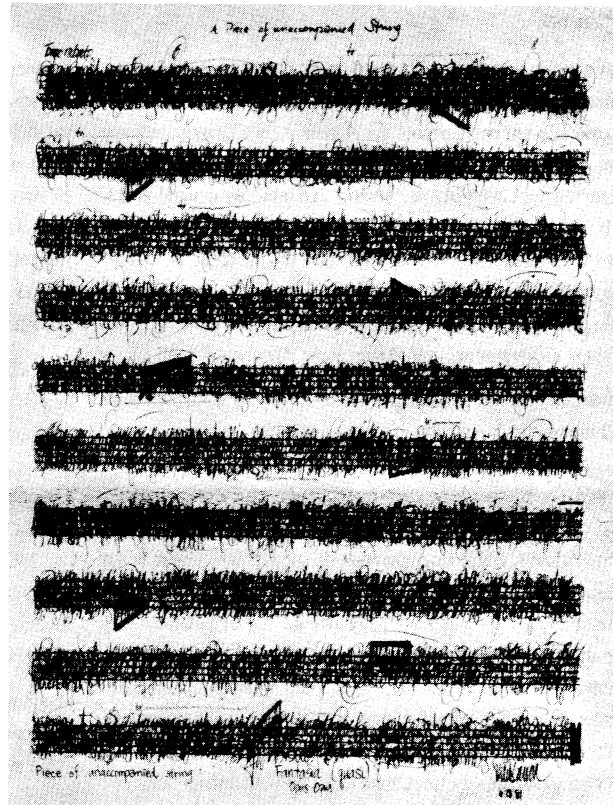


Photo by George Bing

THE WOLVERINES GO FOR SPAM

It happened last year in Ann Arbor. If the town could accommodate both a winning University of Michigan football team and the Gerald R. Ford presidential library, why not SPAM to boot? That's right, SPAM: the Society for the Promotion of American Music. The group was formed by Mark Tucker and Nym Cooke, two graduate students in musicology. One of SPAM's initial goals was to create a forum where people could discuss, listen to, and perform different kinds of American music. Accordingly, the group held gatherings where American-music enthusiasts gave presentations on a variety of topics: New England psalmody, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Bert Williams, avant-garde jazz, Louis Armstrong, and nineteenth-century march music. Other sessions found composers on the University of Michigan faculty tackling such questions as "What is American Music?" (William Albright) and "Is Rock a Terminal Case?" (Christopher Rouse).

In addition to these informal lecture/discussion meetings, performances formed the main part of SPAM's promotional activities. In February there was a "Sing-In of Nineteenth-Century American Music," where the audience used an anthology of songs prepared by members of Richard Crawford's American-music doctoral seminar. Then in March, the big event: SPAM-O-RAMA, a gala concert of bluegrass; gospel music; early New England choral music; art music by Alec Wilder, Douglas Townsend, Samuel Barber, and Charles Ives; piano pieces of

Jelly Roll Morton; Irish-American fiddle tunes; a Civil War melodrama; 1940s vocal-trio jazz; nineteenth-century brass-band music; and renditions of Gottschalk, Sousa, and Joplin on bones and piano. It all added up to a colorful, invigorating (some said overwhelming) three hours of American music.

And SPAM marches on. For the 1981-82 season SPAM's organizers are planning a talk by Martin Williams (Director of the Smithsonian's Jazz and American Culture Program and current I. S. A. M. Senior Research Fellow) and meetings devoted to music of the Pennsylvania River Brethren sect, The Band, Willard Robison, minstrel banjo styles, and more. Performances under consideration include SPAM-O-RAMA II, an all-Alec-Wilder concert, an evening of Harrigan and Hart scenes, and a Victorian Christmas Sing-In. 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.

— Mark Tucker (University of Michigan)

The literature on American popular lyric theater has two fine new additions: Deane L. Root's *American Popular Stage Music 1860-1880* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press; \$39.95) and Henry T. Sampson's *Blacks in Blackface: A Source Book on Early Black Musical Shows* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press; \$27.50).

NEW MUSIC NEWS

. . . *in interviews*

"The purpose of this symposium is to present the composer's own point of view concerning creative music in America." So begins Henry Cowell's introduction to *American Composers on American Music*, published in 1933, which included (among other things) nineteen essays about living American composers. Not since then has another volume summed up succeeding generations as well as Cowell's book did his. Not, that is, until *Soundpieces*, an extraordinary collection of twenty-four interviews by Cole Gagne and Tracy Caras, which may well turn out to be the *American Composers on American Music* of 1981.

Of course the two books are different in many ways. *American Composers on American Music* included essays by American composers writing about their colleagues, and it focused on young men, most of whom were newcomers to the contemporary-music scene of their day. *Soundpieces*, on the other hand, is made up of interviews with composers who discuss their own work, and it includes both elder statesmen and young explorers. But these differences tell us a great deal about the direction of American music since 1933: audio-communication and audio-documentation are now vying for equal status with the written word, and an impressive roster of elder statesmen/composers now exists (in 1933, the only older American composer with whom many of the younger generation felt any kinship was Charles Ives).

In *Soundpieces*, the interview is skillfully used to draw out each subject, gently prodding him into discussing his work in lucid detail. (The pronouns in that sentence are almost accurate: Barbara Kolb is the only female interviewee.) There is a firm overall shape to the book, with several topics, including electronic music, audience accessibility, and rock music, being touched on repeatedly. Among the highlights are Milton Babbitt's rejoinder to "Who Cares If You Listen?," Philip Glass's lengthy description of the genesis of *Satyagraha*, Charles Dodge's explanation of the techniques of computer composition, and Conlon Nancarrow's terse description of the method he uses to punch his piano rolls. Throughout, personalities emerge strongly, from Charles Wuorinen's articulate reserve to Ralph Shapey's cantankerous bluster.

Soundpieces was conceived six years ago when Gagne and Caras, as undergraduates, hosted a radio show at Fordham University. They began interviewing composers for their programs and, once the interview bug bit, kept at it until the present volume emerged. *Soundpieces* is modestly presented: Gagne and Cole keep a low profile (which is especially remarkable in light of how deeply their interviews penetrate), and the book is reproduced from typescript. Splendid photographic portraits by Gene Bugnato precede each interview, and essays by Nicolas Slonimsky and Gilbert Chase open the volume. In addition, a list of each composer's works is given. (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press; \$22.50)

— Carol J. Oja

. . . *in scores*

Roger Johnson teaches at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey, and we wish we could attend his classes; they must be wonderful. We say this on the strength of only one piece of evidence—*Scores: An Anthology of New Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1981), which Johnson compiled, organized, and annotated out of a need for "contemporary performance material . . . for inexperienced musicians and liberal arts students." The idea behind the book is genial and its realization stunning.

The vital statistics are these: 163 pieces by 88 composers, plus brief bios of the latter (including discography); a list of names and addresses of publishers, distributors, and agents for new music; and an index of titles and composers included in the book. The composers cover a time-span of almost sixty years: the oldest is Otto Luening (b. 1900), the youngest Carl Michaelson (b. 1959). They cover almost as wide a span of fame (or notoriety), from household names like John Cage through figures of recent fame like Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Laurie Anderson to total unknowns.

Most of the compositions in the anthology might be classified as "avant-garde," but, as Johnson points out, they represent "the widest possible cross-section of innovative, serious music . . . crossing over all categories, schools, and movements." Moreover, the volume includes "music enough to interest and engage just about anyone"—from highly skilled virtuoso performers to musically illiterate but adventuresome amateurs. The section-headings can only hint at the wild and wonderful diversity of the individual pieces: (1) Exercises, Rituals, and Meditations; (2) Music for Voices (speech-sound pieces; pieces sung, by chorus or ensemble; solo voice music); (3) Percussion Music; (4) Piano Music (both solo and plural); (5) Music for Instruments (some with verbal and/or graphic scores, some with pitch-notated scores); (6) Electronic Music (both tape and live); (7) Music for Mixed Ensembles; and (8) Music/Theater/Dance Pieces.

This is a really mixed bag, with the potential for more fun, making music, than just about anything we've ever seen. (351 pp.; \$15.95)

— H. Wiley Hitchcock

. . . *in a recording*

Maximally minimal. There are minimalists and minimalists, it becomes ever more clear. John Adams murmurs with a very different voice from those of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and other masters of the musical module. At least, this is true in two half-hour-long works—*Shaker Loops* and *Phrygian Gates* (both of 1978) on 1750 Arch Records S-1784. The former is for three violins, viola, two cellos, and bass and is both completely idiomatic for the strings and totally fresh in sound; the latter is for solo piano and is dramatic and demanding. Really interesting music by a New England-born West Coast composer. (Adams directs the New Music Ensemble of the San Francisco Conservatory.)

. . . *in more recordings*

Laurie Anderson's recent recording of *O Superman* and *Walk the Dog* is small in size (7" disc) but large in imagination. Excerpts from an extended work, *United States I-IV*, which looks at various aspects of American culture, these haunting and provocative pieces feature Anderson as vocalist, supported by electronic instruments. This past summer, Anderson's reputation moved beyond new-music circles as *O Superman* climbed to the top of the British pop charts. If you are not yet familiar with her work, this might be the recording for you. (One Ten Records, 110 Chambers Street, NYC 10007; \$3.98)

From Cold Blue Records, a new label, come four 10" discs of varying techniques as well as quality. Barney Childs's *Clay Music* was written for Susan Rawcliffe's ceramic instruments and designed, as he says, to "grow from the nature of these instruments [and] evolve from their peculiar qualities and sonorities"—in other words, the music is simple and primitive, evoking a time long past. . . . In direct contrast is Daniel Lentz's *After Images*. Highly sophisticated, Lentz's keyboards, voices, and cascading echo systems offer fascinating textures and shimmering sonorities. . . . Other beautiful sounds come from Rick Cox's electric guitar in his two works, *These Things Stop Breathing* and *Taken From Real Life*. The former combines the guitar with clarinet; the latter uses voice and guitar. . . . The last and decidedly least of this group is Read Miller's *Mile Zero Hotel* and *The Blueprint of a Promise*. This is not music, only voices, and the voices are not too interesting at that. *The Blueprint* consists of Miller reading a poem. (Order Cold Blue Records from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012; \$5 each plus \$2.50 mailing charge.)

An entire course on electronic music is contained on **The New Nonesuch Guide to Electronic Music**. Bernard Krause, the author of the first Nonesuch guide in 1968, has updated information on the new technology. Included with the disc is a table of diagrammatic symbols, a detailed description of electronic techniques, a bibliography, and various other goodies. The recorded music examples, illustrating Krause's text and composed by him, are produced by synthesizers, vocoders, etc. (Nonesuch NB-78007; \$7.98)

Eric Salzman and Michael Sahl have teamed up yet again in the music-theater comedy *Civilization & Its Discontents*. In his liner notes, Salzman describes the work as similar to "an *opera buffa* or operetta with mistaken identities, farcical turns of plot, burlesques of serious emotional scenes, [and] ensembles in which different people sing opposite points of view." It is a delightful, tuneful satire set in the Club Bide-A-Wee with characters named Jill Goodheart, Jeremy Jive, and Derek Dude. But, as Salzman points out, not everything is funny: the "underlying subject is something very real and distressing: emptiness and the way in which people attempt to fill it up or ignore it." This is a wonderful work. (Nonesuch N-78009; \$8.98)

— Rita H. Mead

. . . *in a festival*

San Francisco hosted the third annual **New Music America** festival on 7-13 June, a week-long flurry of concerts, workshops, installations, and social gatherings that left this participant totally exhausted (so much for a vacation!). One's personal opinions about new music were left far behind in the diversity, abundance, and quality of the work presented.

The big event, of course, was the return of Conlon Nancarrow to the USA for the first time since 1948. His music was warmly received at the 12 June concert, and on the following day a workshop/panel discussion on his music was held at the Exploratorium. Charles Amirkhonian and Eva Soltes were largely responsible (with festival director Robin Kirck) for bringing Nancarrow back "home" (as James Tenney put it in his welcoming speech): theirs was a remarkable achievement.

Other highlights of the festival were performances by John Adams, Laurie Anderson, Stuart Dempster, Paul Drescher, Julius Eastman, Diamanda Galas, Ali Akbar Khan, George Lewis, Joe McPhee, and Ned Sublette. Lou Harrison also presented a half-concert of American gamelan music—an acoustic relief after Anderson's amplified "hard-edge" style.

The most important issue raised by this festival concerned the recent incursion made by pop culture into new music. I have not answered this problem for myself yet, but the festival left me still unconvinced. So much of that work involves parody of one sort or another, or comments on ephemeral aspects of our culture—a situation that I don't think is particularly healthy or strong (or original) from an artistic point of view.

My only criticism was that the West Coast as a whole was underrepresented, southern California in particular. And where was 86-year-old Dane Rudhyar of nearby Palo Alto, who was "new music America" before many of our parents were born? Fascination with the new should not obscure our debt to history!

But, these quibbles aside, the Festival was a delight. Broadcast live nationally by NPR, it was an event of major significance and is becoming perhaps the single most important forum for contemporary music and performance in the United States—an event that is watched and listened to with great interest, both here and abroad. Next year's festival, scheduled for Chicago, 6-11 July, will honor John Cage on his 70th birthday.

And a Nancarrow postscript: After this first contact for Nancarrow and his music with the United States and an appreciative audience, the question arises: What next? A complete retrospective of his player-piano work, obviously. Where are the institutions to sponsor that? Since tape is the performance mode for his music, logistical problems are simple. The panel discussion in San Francisco provided a good model too. Recently, Nancarrow discovered in his studio several pieces from the 1940's (including the String Quartet) that were previously considered lost. An evening of early instrumental work could also be presented. His work is going to be the focus of the 1982 ISCM Festival to be held in Graz, Austria, with György Ligeti introducing it. Nancarrow's 70th birthday will be in the fall of 1982. How about a major retrospective of his work?

BOOK BONANZAS

Scarecrow Has New Stuffing. A landslide of American-music titles (eight, to be exact) has tumbled across our desk this fall from **The Scarecrow Press** (Metuchen, NJ). Two of them, *Soundpieces* and *Blacks in Blackface*, are highly touted elsewhere in this issue. Although their press-mates aren't nearly as compelling, some may prove to be useful reference works. D. Antoinette Handy's *Black Women in American Bands and Orchestras*, despite some awkward features (including thick prose and an annoying footnote format in which the citations are placed in parentheses within the main text), is chock-full of information, especially about "all double-minority ensembles" (for which, read "all-black, all-woman groups"). Although it chronicles the position of black women in established, big-city concert orchestras and bands, its strength lies in its coverage of them in small-town vaudeville troupes, jazz ensembles, and minstrel groups. (394 pp.; \$17.50) . . . Gordon W. Hodgins's *The Broadway Musical: A Complete LP Discography* lists, by album name, recordings of musicals, with information on composers, lyricists, book authors, casts, record companies and numbers, and release dates. (185 pp.; \$10) . . . Other new Scarecrow titles include *American Art Song and American Poetry, Volume I: America Comes of Age* by Ruth C. Friedberg (an analysis of songs by MacDowell, Loeffler, Ives, Griffes, and Harris); *Choral Music by Afro-American Composers: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography* by Evelyn Davidson White (a catalogue of published and unpublished choral works by 85 Afro-Americans, designed for performing musicians); *Elvis Presley: Reference Guide and Discography* by John A. Whisler (for the hard-core Presley nut: an exceedingly detailed listing of published information about the singer and of recordings of his music, including a chronological survey of all the articles about him in *The New York Times*, the *Commercial Appeal* [Memphis], and the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*); and *Women Composers, Conductors and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies* by Jane Weiner LePage (a disappointing collection of biographical essays).

With the Folk. Two new typescript "finding aids" have been published by the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress: *Pennsylvania Field Recordings in the Archive of Folk Song* and *Irish Music in America: A Selected Bibliography*. With these handy "aids" appearing steadily, the Archive's publications now total nearly 250 titles, ranging from *Alaskan Music to Zuni and Eastern Pueblo Indian Music*. For a list of publications, write: Joseph C. Hickerson, Head, Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540 . . . Garland Publishing has added another title to its growing catalogue of American-music reference tools: *Folk Song Index: A Comprehensive Guide to the Florence E. Brunnings Collection* by Florence E. Brunnings. Although we know little about the author or her collection, the latter is obviously enormous, including over 1,000 anthologies of folk songs and 800 recordings. She indexes the contents of all 1,800, providing access to more than 50,000 titles of ballads, cowboy songs, work songs, sea chanties, nursery rhymes, and other folk ditties. (700 pp.; \$75)

SOUNDINGS PRESS

"You are the far edge of American music today."
Charles Seeger (1977)

Available:

SOUNDINGS 9 (1975)	\$10
SOUNDINGS 10 (1976)	\$15
SOUNDINGS 11 (1981)	\$10
Conlon Nancarrow: Selected Studies	\$15
Conlon Nancarrow: Study No. 41	\$10

Forthcoming:

Peter Garland: Americas (1/82)	\$10
Conlon Nancarrow: Study No. 37 (1/82) .	\$10
SOUNDINGS 12 (5/82)	\$10

948 Canyon Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Vestal, New York, and Brattleboro, Vermont, step out together in Robert B. Whiting's book *Estey Organs on Parade*. The name of Vestal is associated with Harvey Roehl and his Vestal Press, purveyors of volumes about mechanical instruments; Brattleboro was the home, from 1846 to 1961, of the Estey Organ Company. Whiting's book, after a solid historical essay, reproduces Estey catalogues from 1867 on—an evocative pictorial review of the parlor, drawing-room, cottage, cabinet, boudoir, studio, school, chancel, cathedral, and philharmonic models of America's foremost reed organs. (Box 97, Vestal, NY 13850; \$15)

Shepherd's Story. Richard Loucks's *Arthur Shepherd: American Composer* is both an account of the composer's life and a study of his music. Adapted from Loucks's dissertation (University of Rochester, 1960), the book, in large part, is geared toward those with a special interest in Shepherd's music, concentrating on his style and compositional technique. Loucks also presents the details of Shepherd's life by drawing upon the correspondence and writings of the composer and his contemporaries. Although few music examples are included in the main text, facsimiles of some piano and vocal manuscripts are placed in a separate section. Even more valuable is a catalogue of Shepherd's works. In it, Loucks not only supplies publishers and publication dates but dedications, alternate titles, and indications of lost manuscripts. Despite some organizational problems, *Arthur Shepherd: American Composer* is an important starting point for anyone wishing to study Shepherd's music. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1980, 256 pp.; \$19.95)

— Judy Sachinis (Brooklyn College)

DELECTABLE DISCS

Ragtime Indi-Style. Indianapolis a ragtime center? The city has been shortchanged by history books, maintains John Hasse, formerly coordinator and archivist for the Indianapolis Ragtime Project (Indiana University). Demonstrating his point, Hasse has recorded music of some of Indianapolis's finest (Aufderheide, Pratt, Russ Smith), along with more familiar ragtime figures. Reflecting practices of the period, his performances range from faithful score readings to elaborate, bouncing arrangements. (*ExtraOrdinary Ragtime*, Sunflower Records, P.O. Box 2025, Bloomington, IN 47402; \$6.98)

— Edward A. Berlin

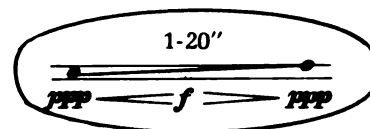
Strange discmates—or so it seems before you hear the record. But then eerie affinities emerge between Chopin, Ravel, and . . . MacDowell! We're referring to pianist Leon Bates's perfervid performance of MacDowell's Sonata Tragica (No. 1), Op. 45, alongside a Ballade and the Barcarolle of Chopin and the Ravel Sonatina, on Performance Records ("The Black Artists Series") CR-77002. (Available from Cespico Records, 1790 Broadway, NYC 10019; \$8.98)

If you haven't yet bought, or had your institution buy, *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music*, don't wait another instant. Selected, organized, and accompanied by stunning commentary by Bill C. Malone of Tulane University (still too young, maybe, to be called the dean of country-music scholars, but what the hell), this is a 16-side, 143-song album documenting hillbilly, bluegrass, and country music from the 1920s through 1975—from Eck Robertson's "Sallie Gooden" of 1922 to Willie Nelson's "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" of 1975, with whistle stops along the way for classics like the Carter Family's "Wildwood Flower" (1928), Jimmie Rodgers's "Waiting for a Train" (1928), Roy Acuff's "Great Speckled Bird" (1936), Woody Guthrie's "Do Re Mi" (1940), Gene Autry's "You Are My Sunshine" (1941), Flatt and Scruggs's "Earl's Breakdown" (1951), Tennessee Ernie Ford's "Sixteen Tons" (1955), Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line" (1956), and many others. At a price of \$0.4035 per number (\$54.95 plus \$2.75 shipping), this is the buy of the year. (Order from Smithsonian Recordings, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, IA 50336)

Victor Herbert's *Sweethearts* is treated with great affection and élan by **The Gregg Smith Singers** and the Lake Placid Sinfonietta (Moss Music Group MMG 1129). The orchestrations, quite stylish, are by Gregg Smith; the lead solos are sung by sweet soprano Rosalind Rees and sturdy baritone Kevin Elliot. Comparison with the original recordings of 1913—re-issued in one of the Smithsonian Institution's marvelous American Musical Theater Series albums (*Music of Victor Herbert*, RO17 DPM 30366; released 1979)—is fascinating; it proves one thing certainly: American singers in 1980 really sing *American*, not a three-way cross between British English, Vienna-accented ditto, and Irish brogue. We've come a long way, baby! (Order from Moss Music Group, Inc., 48 West 38 Street, NYC 10018)

Speaking of Americans singing American-style English stylishly, let's do just that. Among the most spectacular and satisfying examples we've heard recently are: **Ella Fitzgerald** singing songs by Gershwin, and **Sarah Vaughan** singing Gershwin plus lots of others (both available from Book-of-the-Month Club Records, Camp Hill, PA 17012); **Betty Allen**, singing Virgil Thomson with a pre-retirement voice described by a New York critic as "only slightly less powerful than an amplified trombone" (*Four Saints in Three Acts*, just recorded by Nonesuch); and **Phyllis Bryn-Julson**, singing the title (and unique) role in Robert Starer's dramatic monologue with chamber accompaniment, to a rich and poignant text by Gail Godwin, *Anna Margarita's Will* (CRI SD 453).

We've just mentioned CRI. That fine not-for-profit label, with its virtually unique non-deletion policy, continues to release American music, especially contemporary, at a rapid rate. It can afford to, mainly because most of its releases are supported by subventions. One case in point is the lovely monodrama by **Robert Starer** cited above: its recording was supported by a 1979 grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Similarly, the Horace Rackham School of Graduate Studies of the University of Michigan provided funding for another recent CRI release, this one of music by two U of M faculty members, **William Bolcom** and **Ross Lee Finney** (retired). Bolcom's Piano Quartet (1976)—the third movement of which, a bluesy "Intermezzo," has got to be the most immediately ingratiating chamber movement since the variations of Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet—and Finney's Piano Trio (1954), exemplifying well the composer's "preference . . . for consonance and for singing melodies," are well performed and recorded by the American Trio (joined by David Ireland, violist, in the Bolcom work) on CRI SD 447.



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