

NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN AMERICAN MUSIC

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

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"THE COMPOSERS ORGANIZE": Fifty Years of the American Composers Alliance by Emily Good

"The Composers Organize: A Proclamation"—thus cried *Modern Music* in its issue of January-February 1938. And indeed they had organized a new advocacy group in the American Composers Alliance, which celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this season. When asked today about ACA, composers respond in a variety of ways. Young ones most often point to its American Composers Edition, or to the recording awards it gives. Their seasoned colleagues are more likely to recall the early struggles of "serious" composers to establish their economic rights. But although ACA's activities have varied during the past half-century, its goal has remained unchanged: to help composers assume their rightful place on the American musical scene by promoting their work, by helping them receive just compensation, and by providing support for their creative activities.

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On 19 December 1937, forty-eight composers gathered at the Beethoven Association in New York to discuss how to "regularize and collect all fees pertaining to performance of [our] copyrighted music, in other words, to protect the economic rights of the composers," and how to "stimulate interest in the performance of American music, thereby increasing the economic returns." They adopted the name American Composers Alliance and appointed a temporary executive committee led by Aaron Copland to fine-tune the aims of ACA and make plans for the immediate future.

Many developments in American musical life were bringing the promise of greater opportunities for serious composers, and by 1937 there was a need for an organization such as ACA, to extend to all composers the rights that Broadway and Tin Pan Alley songwriters (plus a select few of their concert-music colleagues) had enjoyed since the founding in 1914 of ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). The number of symphony orchestras had multiplied, and conservatories and college music departments were emerging to train a new generation in concert music. Record companies, though more interested in hit songs, were beginning to consider such music for their catalogues. Commercial radio stations, still in their infancy, were actually required to allot air time to prestigious "public service programming" (such as "Saturday

Afternoon at the Met" and Toscanini's NBC Symphony or New York Philharmonic programs); the networks even sponsored a few composition contests and commissioned new works. And Hollywood film studios were no longer the exclusive preserve of popular songwriters. For a composer, a recording, a radio broadcast, or a film score meant not only exposure to an immense audience, but entrée into a world where large sums of money were changing hands.

But within the musical establishment, vestiges remained of the attitude that American composers were unskilled primitives or, at best, moderately talented imitators of their European counterparts. Conductors and performers deserved compensation for their expertise, but composers should be grateful just for public hearings of their "novelties." Even those composers who did get royalties from ASCAP or their publishers rarely earned enough to cover copyists' bills, let alone repay their own efforts.

The members of the fledgling ACA were determined to change all that. The previous May, many had joined the American Grand Rights Association, organized by attorney Milton Diamond; when the Association proved to be dedicated to collecting fees for performances of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European operas, it was dissolved. But inspired by the contagious spirit of the time—slogans resounded everywhere as the union movement gained momentum—the composers, some with left-wing sympathies, were not to be dissuaded:

The composer plays a very minor role in the musical councils of the nation. We wish to change that!

The composer comes last instead of first in the musical scheme of things. We wish to change that!

The cultural future of music in America depends on the development and encouragement of a sound native music. We wish to further that!

A month after ACA's inaugural meeting, the temporary executive committee met to consider an outline of the goals of ACA drawn up by Elie Siegmeister. The committee affirmed the composers' belief in their rights to just compensation for their work (whether it be for the concert hall, opera house, radio, dance, theater, or motion pictures) and to fair contracts with their publishers. They proposed setting minimum standards for com-



Makouf

ACA (continued)

posers to use as a guide in their business dealings. They also proposed to encourage performances and commissions of American works, especially by musical institutions receiving public funds, and to make information about American composers and their works accessible—not only to performers through catalogues, but to one another through a published bulletin. Membership in ACA was to be open to “any resident of the United States who is a composer of serious music, and who has had published one composition or who has had one composition performed by a professional organization or performer of standing. . . .” Dues were set at six dollars per year.

To alert the public and prospective members, press releases were issued, and *Modern Music* ran the “Proclamation” piece. The first issue of the *ACA Bulletin*, a four-page folio, followed in April; in it were a statement of ACA’s aims, quotes from favorable press comment, and a list of the membership, which had grown from 48 to 204 in only three months. Officers had been elected in February: Copland, president; Goddard Lieberman, vice-president; Harrison Kerr, secretary; and Henry Gerstlé, treasurer; serving on the first Board of Governors were Marion Bauer, Wallingford Riegger, Douglas Moore, William Schuman, Otto Luening, Elliott Carter, Colin McPhee, Marc Blitzstein, and Samuel Barlow.

When a composer joined ACA, he assigned it the right to collect fees on performances of his music. To determine just what *was* the body of music now in its control, ACA turned to ASCAP, which in 1941 contributed \$7,500 toward the compilation of a catalogue—the first of its kind—of works by American concert composers who were members of either ACA or ASCAP; the newly founded American Music Center would conduct the survey of works and serve as a rental library for the scores. In April, questionnaires were mailed to 411 composers; by December, information had come in on 33,654 works (21,549 of them published); of these, about a third (12,299) had been composed by ACA members.

Lacking the resources to log performances and collect fees on such a multitude of works, ACA again hoped to enlist the aid of ASCAP, whose concerns were thought to be sympathetic to its own. But ASCAP viewed ACA with ambivalence, and little came of the early discussions. In 1940, a rival licensing organization, Broadcast Music, Inc., was founded by the National Association of Broadcasters. This gave ACA a new avenue to

pursue, and the next several years were marked by grueling and frustrating negotiations with both ASCAP and BMI. By 1944, the time had come to take stock. ACA’s financial resources were depleted, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the membership’s interest in negotiations that were producing few results. BMI was offering ACA, for its radio rights, \$10,000 per year for six years. Some ACA board members, including Copland and Thomson, were still hoping to work things out with ASCAP, but a competitive offer from ASCAP was not yet on the horizon. Others—among them Bauer, Lieberman, Carter, Cowell, Kerr, Riegger, and Luening—felt the majority would best be served by accepting BMI’s terms.

After careful deliberations by the board and the executive committee, officers Luening and Kerr were empowered to sign the contract with BMI. This meant that many members would for the first time benefit financially from performances of their music. However, those who belonged to ASCAP or who were published by ASCAP publisher-members were forced to choose between leaving ASCAP for ACA—and BMI—or remaining with ASCAP . . . and leaving ACA. When the new contract went into effect, a number of composers resigned from ACA.

Implementing the new contract occupied ACA’s energies for the next few years. Procedures were devised for the collection of royalties, and a formula was created for the division of profits among the members; it was based on the English point system, in which a work’s size and length are the most important considerations. Nevertheless, overhead was high; the returns were low . . . and they got lower. In the next round of negotiations with BMI, ACA would have to do better.

ACA’s fortunes improved in the early Fifties when the negotiating committee (headed by outgoing president Otto Luening and his successor, Henry Cowell, and armed with six years of experience) succeeded in procuring increased subvention from BMI. A strong ally was recruited in Oliver Daniel of CBS radio, an ardent and persuasive champion of American music with a great deal of business savvy, who served as ACA’s Coordinating Manager in 1951–55 before becoming head of concert music at BMI.

Under Daniel’s guidance a flurry of activities began at ACA. The Laurel Leaf award, a citation given annually for “distinguished achievement in fostering and encouraging American music,” was established in 1952; the first recipient was radio station WGBH in Boston. The *ACA Bulletin*, which had lain dormant for fourteen years, resumed publication (1952) as a full-fledged magazine with news and information as well as thoughtful articles about the music of ACA members by fellow members (accompanied by exhaustive work-lists). An ambitious program of sponsoring radio broadcasts and underwriting concerts was initiated; among the latter were a series of programs conducted by Leopold Stokowski at the Museum of Modern Art which included the first public performance of the early tape music of Luening and Ussachevsky, Max Pollikoff’s *Music in Our Time* series, the early concerts of the Group for Contemporary Music, concerts of American music on college campuses and at music festivals across the country, and programs of computer and theater music in the 1970s.



Malouf

CHATTILY AT HIS RESIDENCE . . . DR. DVOŘÁK GIVES A FEW DETAILS

Everyone has read that on the eve of the premiere of his Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World"), Antonin Dvořák offered some remarks about it in connection with the music of American blacks and Indians. Few, perhaps, have seen these remarks as originally printed in the New York Herald of 15 December 1893. Here they are; note also Dvořák's mention of a planned "cantata or opera" on Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha" (never realized) and two "American" chamber works to be premiered by the Kneisel Quartet later in the season the Quartet in F, Op. 96, and the Quintet in E^b, Op. 97).

Dr. Antonin Dvorak, the Bohemian composer and director of the National Conservatory of Music, has been in this country a little over a year. America has strongly affected his sensitive imagination. He has made a serious study of the national music of this continent as exemplified in the native melodies of the negro and Indian races. What the effect of this study has been the New York public will have an opportunity of hearing this afternoon. Then will be played at Carnegie Music Hall the first fruits of his musical genius in this country. It is a long symphony for full orchestra, is called "From the New World" and will receive its first performance in public at the Philharmonic concert to-day.

Chattily at his residence, No. 327 East Nineteenth Street, last evening Dr. Dvorak gave a few details regarding this his latest composition. "Since I have been in this country I have been deeply interested in the national music of the negroes and the Indians. The character, the very nature of a race is contained in its natural music. For that reason my attention was at once turned in the direction of these native melodies. I found that the music of the two races bore a remarkable similarity to the national music of Scotland. In both there is a peculiar scale, caused by the absence of the fourth and seventh, or leading tone. In both the minor scale has the seventh invariably a minor seventh, the fourth is included and the sixth is omitted.

"Now the Scotch scale, if I may so call it, has been used to impart a certain color to musical composition. I need only instance Mendelssohn's 'Hebrides' overture. This device is a common one. In fact, the scale in question is only a certain form of the ancient ecclesiastical modes. These modes have been employed time and time again. For example, Félicien David in his symphonic ode 'Le Desert,' Verdi in 'Aida.' I have myself used one of them in my D minor symphony.

"Now, I found that the music of the negroes and of the Indians was practically identical. I therefore carefully studied a certain number of Indian melodies which a friend gave me and became thoroughly imbued with their characteristics—with their spirit, in fact.

"It is this spirit which I have tried to reproduce in my new symphony. I have not actually used any of the melodies. I have simply written original themes embodying the peculiarities of the Indian music, and, using these themes as subjects, have developed them with all the resources of modern rhythms, harmony, counterpoint and orchestral color.

"The symphony is in E minor. It is written upon the classical models and is in four movements. It opens with a short introduction, an adagio, of about thirty bars in length. This leads directly into the allegro, which embodies the principles which I have already worked out in my Slavonic dances; that is, to preserve,

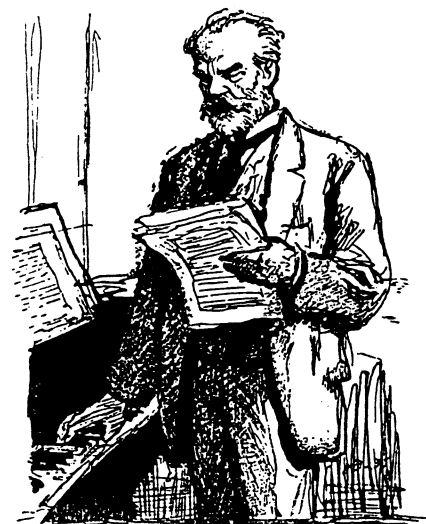
to translate into music, the spirit of a race as distinct in its national melodies or folk songs.

"The second movement is an adagio. But it is different to the classic works in this form. It is, in reality, a study, or sketch for a longer work, either a cantata or opera which I purpose writing, and which will be based upon Longfellow's 'Hiawatha.' I have long had the idea of some day utilizing that poem. I first became acquainted with it about thirty years ago through the medium of a Bohemian translation. It appealed very strongly to my imagination at the time, and the impression has only been strengthened by my residence here.

"The scherzo of the symphony was suggested by the scene at the feast in 'Hiawatha' where the Indians dance, and is also an essay of Indian character to music.

"The last movement is an allegro con feroce. All the previous themes reappear and are treated in a variety of ways. The instruments required are only those of what we call the 'Beethoven orchestra,' consisting of strings, four horns, three trombones, two trumpets, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and tympani. There is no harp, and I did not find it necessary to add any novel instrument in order to get the effect I wanted.

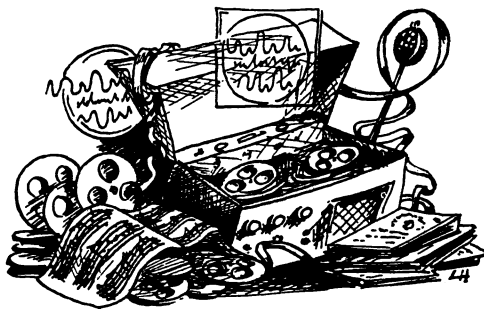
"I have indeed been busy since I came to this country. I have finished a couple of compositions in chamber music, which will be played by the Kneisel String Quartet, of Boston, next January, in Music Hall. They are both written upon the same lines as this symphony and both breathe this same Indian spirit. One is a string quartet in F major and the other a quintet in E flat for two violins, two violas and violoncello."



(Drawing by Hugo Boettinger)

REGARDING RECORDINGS

• A fine new batch of four albums from New World Records has works by George Crumb (NW-357), Faye-Ellen Silverman and Ralph Shapey (NW-355), a repressing of the 1972 Master Jazz album *Going to Kansas City* by Jay McShann (NW-358), and—most notably—John Knowles Paine's *Symphony No. 2* (1879), which gets a reading by the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta that glows like burnished brass. Steven Ledbetter's jacket notes are exemplary,



• Defiantly lacking jacket notes, on the other hand, is a new album from the fabulous **Kronos Quartet** (Nonesuch S-205229), so we're left in the dark (except to learn that he was born in South Africa in 1949) about one Kevin Volans, two intriguing minimalist works by whom join others by Ives, Bartók, Ben Johnston, and Jon Hassell (no household name his, either). Impeccable performances of strange bedfellows—though Johnston's fantasy around "Amazing Grace" lies comfortably next to Ives's little *Scherzo: Holding Your Own*.

• Nonesuch has also released a delectable album of Elizabethan lute music played by Paul O'Dette (S-233287). American music? Well, not quite—but ballad tunes like "Greensleeves" and "Goe from my window" and lilting Scottish folk tunes and dances (anonymous, and here just called "Scotts Tunes") would have been the welcome daily fare of the British colonists (despite their Puritan sensibilities). O'Dette writes his own jacket notes, articulate and helpful, quoting in them from the lute tutor of Thomas Robinson (1620): "Musicke hath a salve for everie sore!" Noted!

• The music of **La Monte Young**, no longer young at fifty-two, has long been heard about but not often heard. Now, though, five hours' worth of the partly composed, partly improvised piano work *The Well-Tuned Piano*, which has been germinating for about twenty years, is available in a spectacular five-LP (or -cassette) recording from Gramavision. Young is the pianist in this concert performance on a huge Bösendorfer Imperial Grand, retuned in just intonation so that "all the pitches . . . are derived from various partials of the overtone series of an inferred low fundamental E^b reference [tone] ten octaves below the low[est] E^b on the Bösendorfer," he writes in his contribution to the generous booklet that comes with the boxed album. This strange and wonderful music—now as delicate as a butterfly's wing, now as brutal as heavy-metal feedback—may not be to your taste, but mark my words: the album will be a collector's item (in much the same way that George Avakian's 1960 "25th-Anniversary Concert" album of John Cage's music turned out to be). Wanna bet?

• **Steve Reich: Early Works** (Nonesuch S-250533) offers something old, something new. The old: digitally remastered reissues of the historic mid-Sixties phase-shift tape pieces *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, originally produced in 1967 by David Behrman for CBS (Odyssey) and long unavailable. The new: *Piano Phase* (1967) and *Clapping Music* (1972) for, respectively, two pianists and two pairs of hands. Definitive performances of the live works, with Reich and his musicians in charge (and Reich writing the jacket notes). (Nonesuch has also released a new full-length, digital recording of the epochal *Drumming*, replacing the 1972 Deutsche Grammophon version, but we have not yet received a review copy.)

• Two things are interesting about the fifteen songs on **Kiri Sings Gershwin** (EMI/Angel DS-47454). One is their accompaniments' orchestrations, all but three carefully-researched and -reconstructed originals (reflecting in part the "Secaucus warehouse" cache of scores and parts exhumed a while back), and beautifully prepared and conducted by John McClinn. The other is the mixed blessing of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's performances: in lustrous voice, she gives us, with extremely strange results, an amazing lesson in how to turn Gershwin into a clone of Victor Herbert and a composer of, I swear, turn-of-the-century operetta airs.

—H.W.H.

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NEWS AND INFORMATION

• You'll never guess who's been appointed Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard for 1988-89, so we'll tell you: **John Cage!**

• Which reminds us that Wesleyan University (Middletown, Connecticut) is holding an international festival-conference marking **Cage's 75th birthday**, 22-26 February 1988. The philosopher Norman O. Brown will deliver the opening address; Cage himself will close the celebration with an address. It's an appropriate venue for this event: Cage has associations with Wesleyan that go back to the 1950s, and it was Wesleyan University Press that published Cage's first (and most influential) book, *Silence* (1961).

• C. F. Peters will publish very soon *Democratic Souvenirs: An Historical Anthology of 19th-Century American Music*, a collection compiled by **Richard Jackson**, head of the Americana Collection in the Music Research Division of the New York Public Library. The anthology will consist of ten songs, seven piano pieces, eight excerpts from music-theater works, eight choral compositions, two chamber works (one of them—get this!—the legendary piece of 1879 for four saxophones by Caryl Florio), and a pair of orchestral movements.

• Just off the press: transcriptions by **Artis Wodehouse** of eight of *Gershwin's Improvisations* for solo piano (Warner Bros.; \$10.95) She has taken these off disc recordings made by Gershwin in 1926 and 1928 for the Columbia Recording Company (not from piano rolls, which Gershwin could gussy up in various ways), so they represent exactly what Gershwin played in the studio—well, as exactly as a gifted transcriber can get from mid-1920s discs. What will excite pianists who have been frustrated trying to make important statements out of *The Gershwin Song Book* (eighteen snippets of piano arrangements of his tunes published by Gershwin in 1932) is the *length* of the new transcriptions. They range from 96 to 130 measures for single tunes, 134 for a kind of "Foxtrot and Trio" version of 'S Wonderful (66 measures) followed by *Funny Face* (32), with a 36-measure return to 'S Wonderful. There is very little duplication between the two collections, but comparison is illuminating: the *Song Book* has a 32-bar run-through of *Sweet and Low-down*, the *Improvisations* a 128-bar ramble; *That Certain Feeling* gets 34 bars in the *Song Book*, 116 in the *Improvisations*. An important addition to Gershwiniana in this special Gershwin year!

• A lively, ecumenical, informative, and inexpensive—if also diminutive—new-music periodical you may not have heard of is *Living Music*, edited by Dwight Winenger and published by his appropriately named firm, Minuscule University Press, near Palm Springs in lower California. It's composer-, score-, and issue-oriented—also, understandably, somewhat West Coast-oriented—and packs a lot of energy and information into a short space: the maximum so far (the Fall 1987 issue is Vol. 5, No. 1) is four tabloid-size pages per issue. Annual subscriptions to this quarterly are \$8; write the press at 66358 Buena Vista Avenue, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240.

• For those interested in life in the 1930s, George Mason University's Institute for the Federal Theatre Project and New Deal Culture publishes *Federal One*, a semi-annual newsletter brimming with news and information, lists of projects under way, and bibliographies of recent publications in many related fields, including music. Subscriptions are free (write to IFTPND, Fenwick Library, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030). The institute is also assembling a massive oral history of the Federal Theatre Project, and staff members Roy Rosenzweig et al. have compiled *Government and the Arts in Thirties America: A Guide to Oral Histories and Other Research Materials*, which includes more than 1,000 oral histories, a list of films, and a bibliography. It may be ordered (\$16.50 paperback; \$27 hardcover) from George Mason University Press, c/o Book Ordering Dept., University Publishing Associates, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706.

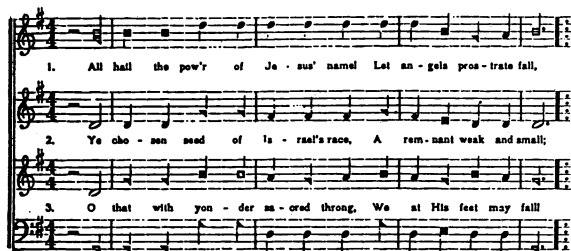


• Another sprightly periodical, now in its tenth year of publication, is the quarterly *Come-All Ye*. As its masthead puts it, this is "A Review Journal for publications in the fields of Folklore, American Studies, Social History and Popular Culture." Printed in modest newsletter format and averaging sixteen pages an issue, *Come-All Ye* offers brief reviews of current publications (both signed and unsigned, the latter presumably written by Richard K. Burns or Lillian L. Krelove, the editors). Each issue also includes one or more lists of publications available on a special topic; the Fall 1987 issue has one on Appalachian culture. Subscriptions to *Come-All Ye* are \$5 per year, and any book reviewed or cited may be ordered from its publisher: Legacy Books, P.O. Box 494, Hatboro, PA 19040.

SACRED HARP: SINGING IN THE SQUARE by Roxane Orgill

Doubting, somehow or other, that even a small minority of our readers are also regular readers of the Wall Street Journal, we leap at the chance to reprint the following pleasant piece, which appeared in the 10 August 1987 issue of the Journal. Roxane Orgill, who gives us permission to do so, is music critic of The Record in Bergen County, New Jersey.

Birmingham, Ala.: You'd think three days of singing would be enough. But when the Eighth Annual National Sacred Harp Singing Convention adjourned for the day, the singers went to the local Quality Inn, hung out by the pool and sang in their swimsuits. After supper, they crowded into a few of the rooms, and sang from the double beds till midnight.



Once Sacred Harp grabs hold, it doesn't let go.

Sacred Harp is distinctly American music, with a continuous 143-year-old tradition, Southern roots and a sound all its own.

Some 200 people from 14 states gathered recently in the band room of Homewood High School here for the national convention, the largest of about 300 singings held annually across the U.S.

At this and all singings, the participants sit in folding chairs arranged in a hollowed-out square, with the altos on one side, basses on another, tenors and trebles along the other two. A leader stands in the middle of the square, calls out a page number, and the singers shuffle through their oblong song books. Suddenly a sound flies up from the folding chairs like a flock of birds. The song has no obvious tune. The four-part harmony is as thick as pudding, and the tone is as nasal as if they all had colds. Feet are stamping, arms are waving, beating time: "And I heard a mighty angel flying through the midst of heav'n, crying with a loud voice, wo, wo."

There is no audience. This is music to be sung, not to be listened to.

Fifty years ago, Sacred Harp singers numbered in the tens of thousands. Today the total number of singers in the U.S. is only about 4,000 but, in a recent phenomenon, small groups of singers have been developing in the North.

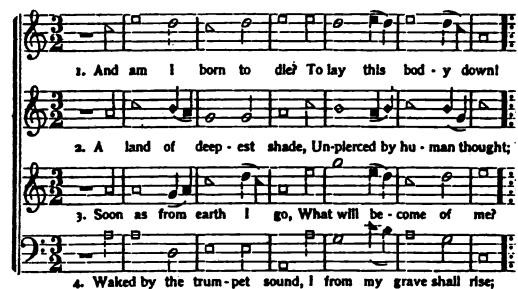
The main attraction of the gatherings, besides the fried chicken, biscuits, black-eyed peas, chowchow, fried pie and other local dishes served during enormous potluck lunches, is the 7-by-10 inch song book, "The Original Sacred Harp." It is a collection of 537 sacred songs, with the notes printed in shapes. The shapes have names: Triangles are fa, ovals are sol, squares are la and

diamonds are me. Singers go through the song first on the fa-sol-la syllables, in order to learn the tune, then sing it again with the words.

The "Sacred Harp" was just one of more than 100 shape-note songbooks in use before the Civil War. Their main purpose was to teach country folks to sing, in schools held nightly for a week or two by itinerant singing schoolmasters. Kelly Beard went to a singing school in Dallas when he was 15, and caught the Sacred Harp bug. Now retired in Texas, Mr. Beard has been coming to Alabama singings ever since he was a young man (he heard they sing better here).

One singing schoolmaster was Benjamin Franklin White, who taught himself music, fathered 14 children, published a newspaper, and served as mayor of Hamilton, Ga., among other accomplishments. In 1844, he compiled "A Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes, Odes, and Anthems; Selected from the Most Eminent Authors," and called it "Sacred Harp." In this case, the word harp probably had nothing to do with the stringed instrument, but was a general reference to heavenly music.

While most of the other shape-note songbooks disappeared into libraries, Mr. White's book has never gone out of print. His collection is a rich one, and people sing from it all their lives without ever tiring of the tunes.



The songs can be lightning quick and joyful, with singers practically shouting the words: "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" Others are mournful, with crawling tempos: "And am I born to die?" Still other songs combine mournful words and joyous tempos.

At the gatherings, musicologists sing with people of no musical education, and devout Christians sit beside unswerving agnostics. Most singers are white, although a few blacks attended the national convention. Dewey Williams, a skinny, elderly black man from Ozark, Ala., gave a little impromptu speech when he got up to lead a song. "I love you, every one of you," he said in a creaky voice. "If you don't know what love is, I ain't got time to tell you." He's 89.

BEHIND THE BEAT *with Mark Tucker*

Songs by Alec Wilder (1907–1980)

As man and composer, Alec Wilder seemed to exist on the edge of obscurity. Adored by a circle of intimates, respected by fellow musicians, he was never embraced by the American public—nor did he seem to care. He was a dreamer and wanderer, a maverick who shunned publicity and scorned material possessions. For many years he lived out of a suitcase in the Algonquin Hotel; when he got restless, which was often, he headed for his hometown of Rochester, New York, or Key West, Florida, or the country house of a friend. He took a dim view of contemporary society and its values. With music and words he celebrated the memory of things past—childhood, young love, simple pleasures, old-fashioned ways—that offered refuge from the troubling present and uncertain future.

In the early 1940s, when Wilder was working as a songwriter and arranger in New York, some of his songs became popular, among them *It's So Peaceful in the Country* (1941), *I'll Be Around* (1942), and *While We're Young* (1943). These, and a handful of others, still find favor with certain jazz and cabaret performers. Now and then one of the woodwind octets, brass sonatas, or piano pieces turns up on a recital, but most of Wilder's music was unknown during his lifetime and remains so today.

Fortunately, though, Wilder had champions—firm believers who stood by his talent, performed his music, and upheld his reputation. Among the stalwarts have been the singers Eileen Farrell, Mabel Mercer, Frank Sinatra, and Marlene Verplanck; the pianists Loonis McGlohan and Marian McPartland; the writer Whitney Balliett; the educator and tuba virtuoso Harvey Phillips; and the composer-conductor (and publisher of many of Wilder's works) Gunther Schuller. Then, too, in his last decade, Wilder finally found a wide audience with the book *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900–1950* (written in collaboration with James R. Maher and published in 1972), and with the National Public Radio series “American Popular Song,” aired in the mid-1970s and still re-broadcast from time to time.

Wilder brought to *American Popular Song* long experience as a composer and listener, keen analytic insights, fresh observations, crusty opinions, and maddening modesty. Out of the seventeen thousand songs Wilder examined (according to Maher in the introduction), the three hundred he discussed, and five hundred he quoted in musical examples, not one of his own is mentioned. Several of them (he wrote more than two hundred) belong in Chapter 11, “Outstanding Individual Songs: 1920 to 1950”; if the period under survey were extended another thirty years, one or two more titles might be added to the list.

In discussing what I consider among Wilder's most important songs, I have tried to follow his own approach in *American Popular Song*. My field, however, was limited to sixty-three songs that I have played through and lived with over the years; they are available in three published folios (listed below).

* * *

Our greatest songwriters have excelled in different ways—Gershwin was a rhythmic genius; Berlin, Rodgers, and Porter wrote beautiful, durable melodies; Kern and Arlen had exceptional gifts of harmony. Wilder was a master of the expressive

interval. Perhaps that is why so many of his songs are moderate or slow in tempo. He seems most at home with tender, wistful ballads that give the singer plenty of time to breathe, and that allow his sometimes wayward melodic lines to unwind at leisure.

It's So Peaceful in the Country was written for Mildred Bailey (and first recorded by her). The chorus begins with two big downward leaps (minor seventh, major sixth) remarkable for the pop-song genre, yet perfect for conveying the sighing relief of the text. Like his hero, Harold Arlen, Wilder took care in composing (not just filling in) accompaniments, and the lazily swooping vocal line is answered by minor-second suspensions that lend warmth and intimacy:

By contrast, the preceding verse describes the attractions of various cities with busy eighth-note motion, syncopation, narrower intervals, and quicker harmonic pacing. And the bridge paints a bleak picture of urban life: the loping melody of the A section becomes suddenly monotonous, caught in a rut, and the rising vocal line complains of “too much stone, too much telephone,” before sauntering to the countryside for the final eight bars.

It's So Peaceful in the Country, like Wilder's *Just an Old Stone House* and *A Month in the Country*, hearkens back to a nostalgic, pastoral songwriting tradition rooted in the nineteenth century and carried on most faithfully in this century by Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Mercer, Willard Robison, and Wilder himself.

I'll Be Around, perhaps Wilder's best-known song, has at least three endearing and enduring qualities. First, there is the tune, forthright and strong, needing no harmony for support, flowing smoothly and without effort:

Second, there is the intervallic expansion that takes place over the course of the thirty-two-bar, AABA form. From the upward thirds and fourths of the first sixteen bars, Wilder moves in the bridge to leaps by fifths and one minor sixth, preparing for them chromatically—the first such instance in the vocal line:

In the last eight bars, instead of repeating the pattern of the first two A sections, Wilder widens the intervals further, stretching up with two major sixths to give the lyric added urgency:

per-haps you'll see you're meant for me, so,
I'll be a - round when (s)he's gone.

A third attractive feature of *I'll Be Around* is what might be called, for lack of a better term, its *gestalt* (forgive me, Alec). Here is a text about a jilted lover that might have invited a self-pitying or bitter musical treatment. But Wilder's setting assures us that the lover has not lost for long, and certainly not forever. While popular songs commonly depict agitated states—people pining for love, pained by loss, or eager to share happiness with others—*I'll Be Around* shows another side of experience: the philosophic calm that may follow emotional turmoil. In tone and mood, it is close to Harold Arlen's *My Shining Hour*, which Wilder once praised for its "spare, hymn-like translucence," and for achieving the objective of "sexless innocence and distilled simplicity."

Wilder wrote many lovely songs in 3/4 time, bucking the duple trend of his fellow Tin Pan Alley tunesmiths—among them *If Someday Ever Comes Again*, *Be A Child*, and *Remember, My Child*. Perhaps loveliest of all is *While We're Young*, which opens with a brief, ten-bar verse ("We must fulfill this golden time when hearts awake so shyly, softly") before easing into the refrain:

Songs were made to sing while we're
young.

The held pitch in measures 5–8 returns four more times, always on words that reinforce the message to seize the day ("young," "today," "[while we] may"). As in *I'll Be Around*, Wilder expands already big intervals for emotional intensity, from the opening perfect fifth ("to sing," measures 2–3) to major sixth ("is spring," measures 10–11), to the climactic minor sixth at a higher register and two major sixths ("all sweet," "our eyes") before the step-wise conclusion.

So blue the skies.

all sweet sur - prise
shines be - fore our eyes while we're
young.

By the way, I should mention one delightful characteristic of Wilder thus far missing from this brief survey: humor. A whimsical sense of play pervades many of his concert pieces, and his songs, too, are not all tender, wispy, or sad, as the following titles prove: *Give My Brain to Harvard*, *The Result Was Dad*, *The Par Boiled Ape*, and *How Can I Long for Your Sweet Return When You're Sitting On My Lap?*

Wilder frequently collaborated with the South-Carolina-based pianist and songwriter Loonis McGlohan, who co-hosted the "American Popular Song" radio series and accompanied all the guest artists. In 1976 they wrote together *Blackberry Winter*, the title, as a note on the sheet music tells us, refers to a "sudden 'cool spell' in the south coming around the first of June, after the blackberry briars blossom." The real subject, however, is not regional weather but the changing seasons of the heart.

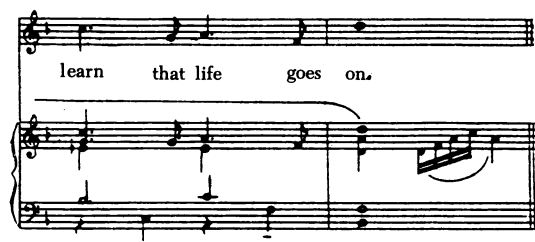
The melody has the plain diatonic profile of a folk song, but its rhythms are unusual, almost ungainly, and must be interpreted freely to avoid any hint of rushing. A sixteenth-note motive based on perfect fourths (a forest bird?) helps keep the singer from getting too sappy with the preceding stepwise motion:

Black - ber - ry win - ter comes with-out a warn - ing just
when you think that spring's a - round to stay so you wake up on a
cold rain - y morn - ing and won - der what on earth be - came of
May.

The song's bittersweet essence is released at the beginning of the bridge; the triteness of the text here doesn't bother me at all, so original is the melodic contour (especially the E-natural in measure 10) and so effective the sinking-down to a D-minor-seventh chord on "losing," then the resolute climb up to the sub-dominant:

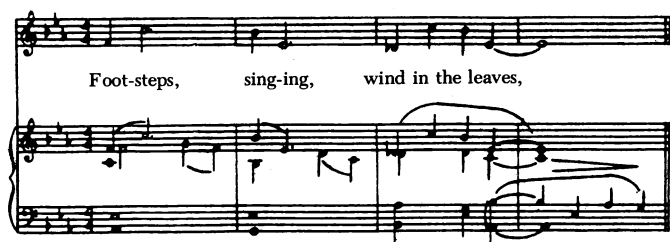
I'll nev - er get o - ver los - ing you but I've had to

WILDER (continued)



The rest of the bridge is ordinary. But these four bars alone make *Blackberry Winter* memorable.

For *The Sounds Around the House* (1976), Wilder found another sympathetic writing partner in Johnny Mercer, who supplied the lyrics. The song is another slow, reflective ballad with typically Wilderian features—lots of perfect fourths and fifths in the melody, gradual intervallic expansion, and a rich carpet of seventh-chords in the accompaniment. Wilder never shies away from simple musical statements:



But even here the wide intervals, active inner voice in the piano, and rhythmic bump on “leaves” bear the stamp of Wilder’s quirky musical personality. Vance Bourjaily has written about the power of old popular songs to “stir memory, revive hope, promise beauty”; in *The Sounds Around the House*, a song neither old nor popular, Alec Wilder achieves these goals with composerly craft, and with a loving, gentle spirit all too rare in the music of our age.

Some Wilder Books:

Whitney Balliett. *Alec Wilder and His Friends* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

Alec Wilder. *Letters I Never Mailed* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975)

Alec Wilder, with James T. Maher. *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

... Two Recommended Recordings:

Marlene Verplanck sings Alec Wilder (Audiophile (D)AP-218) The best LP of Wilder’s songs available, containing *I’ll Be Around* and *Blackberry Winter* together with sparkling up-tempo performances of *Love Among the Young* and *Lovers and Losers*.

Roland Hanna Plays the Music of Alec Wilder (Inner City IC 1072) Sir Roland brings a warm touch and inventive, richly textured arrangements to thirteen Wilder songs, both familiar and obscure. Although my two new copies of this LP were marred by surface noise, the quality of Hanna’s playing still shines through.

... Published Music

The three Alec Wilder song folios are:

Songs by Alec Wilder Were Made To Sing (TRO, \$7.95) This includes all the songs mentioned in this article and twenty-one others.

Songs By Alec Wilder (TRO, out of print) The songs here are both lesser known and just plain lesser—but there are also gems like *Ellen*, *I Like It Here*, *The Lady Sings the Blues*, *You’re Free*, and *Remember, My Child*.

Alec Wilder: The American Popular Song (TRO; available January 1988) This will include many songs from the now out-of-print *Songs by Alec Wilder*, plus several hard-to-find and previously unpublished items.

Folios may be ordered from TRO Songways Service, Inc., P.O. Box 24330, 170 N.E. 33rd St., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307.

The principal publisher of Wilder’s concert works is GunMar, Gunther Schuller’s company. For a catalogue and a seven-page mimeographed list of Wilder songs not contained in the above volumes, write to GunMar Music, Inc., 167 Dudley Road, Newton Centre, MA 02159.

... and Friends

The Friends of Alec Wilder sponsor an annual concert of his music at the Weill Recital Hall in New York City, on or near Valentine’s Day (two days before Alec’s birthday). The group, according to Harvey Phillips, is dedicated to “keeping the tradition of Alec’s spirit and music alive.” It also helps the Eastman School of Music collect materials for its Alec Wilder Archives. For more information, write to Friends of Alec Wilder, c/o Harvey Phillips Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 933, Bloomington, IN 47402, or call (812) 824–8833.

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SORRY ABOUT THAT!

Marilyn J. Ziffrin, Carl Ruggles expert (she’s completing a biography, after writing on Ruggles in *The New Grove*, *AmeriGrove*, and elsewhere), has pointed out a goof in our last issue. In a review of recorded “Tiddbits and Two Smart Sets,” we invented a daughter Catherine for Ruggles (who had an only child in the person of his son Micah) and claimed she was author of the text of Henry Cowell’s songs *Sunset* and *Rest*. It was Catherine, all right, but the daughter of Riegger—Wallingford Riegger—not of Ruggles.

MORTIE MUSES (Darmstadt, 1984) by Emilio Ros

The composer Morton Feldman died on 4 September 1987. He will be missed. His unique personality, given to quietly stated outrageousness, was well captured in an interview taped in a cafeteria the evening before the 1984 Ferienkurse für Neue Musik were concluded. Emilio Ros, a New York conductor and a candidate for the Ph.D. in music at the City University of New York, explains, "Rather than an interview as such, this was a monologue à la Mr. Feldman into which I inserted some questions whenever I thought his freely associated ideas were coming to an end." From Feldman's rambles through many musical fields, Ros has chosen excerpts that are mostly musings about composers.

Ros: Is Darmstadt a useful alternative for young composers?

Feldman: You've never heard of young composers coming out of Darmstadt. The only good ones were the people who already were in Darmstadt. I think Darmstadt is good, not that it encourages young composers, but that it kills them off. . . .

Ros: How do you see the future of Darmstadt?

Feldman: [Long pause] Padova was one of the oldest universities in the world, right? Would you go to study at Padova now? I can't predict the future of Darmstadt. My instinct is that it is probably not going to happen again. But maybe after another war.

I'm a first-generation American, and when I started to write music, I started to write as hard as my father worked to make a living. Young composers don't *have* to write music, so they don't know how to work. . . . How many people could write a Bach fugue? It is either too much like a fugue, or the registration is lousy. Millions of fugues, but only Bach could write a fugue. How many serial pieces are there? Even by the people famous for them, there are not many. And one of the great serial pieces [Boulez's *Structures?*] was a lie—it was written the way John Cage wrote. It's a great piece—it's a good piece. Boulez was an adventurer. He didn't know what he was doing, but he took a chance, following the notation more than his ear. . . .

A woman I know goes to Freiburg. She had a genius teaching her in Japan, a brilliant, strange theorist who knows everything that's ever been written. Thirty-three years old, his name is Jo Kondo. A marvelous guy, wonderful guy, but a little too conceptual. Now this is a very funny story. He writes a piece and then he orchestrates it, and in a very crazy way—you know, cowbells—. When I was in Japan, I said, "Do you ever orchestrate it directly? Do you ever hear the pitch and orchestrate it directly?" I saw him later in New York and he started to laugh. "I want to play you something," he said. He played me a piece they did in Paris, and it was like my music. I said, "Why is it like my music?" "That's why I wanted to play it," he said. "When I heard the pitch, and I got an instrument, by the time I finished the piece it sounded like your music."

Ros: Many young composers complain that their works are not performed.

Feldman: They are lucky. If they were performed it would be worse. There is a great German novel that was made into a movie, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. At the end of the movie there is a butterfly, and a soldier reaches for the butterfly and is killed. That's what would happen to them if they lifted their heads out of the trenches. If composers come to Darmstadt they should lie under here [pointing under table]. When they come to Darmstadt they are coming to war. . . . But this is true all over, not only in Darmstadt. Darmstadt is like the U.N.: nobody has a sense of reality about themselves, so how could they have a sense of reality about music? The tragic thing is that nobody here loves music. I love Schubert more than any of these kids here: from

Schubert I learned my registration. The cello quintet—beautiful. I learned my harmony from Chopin, but they don't know Chopin! I seem to be the European—they, the Americans. . . . Do they hear the double stops in the slow movement of the Debussy string quartet? It sounds so beautiful, but they don't see these things. They have no *feeling* for music. They don't like music—they are dentists. . . .

Ros: What's wrong with the teaching of composition in universities?

Feldman: The time is too fragmented and you have too much to do. . . . I like the old conservatory teaching. I don't think that composition should be taught in the university, and I actually don't think that it should be taught anywhere. I give the kids things to analyze on their own. I give them two pieces, *Erwartung* and *Jeux**. . . . In universities in America they analyze the baby pieces, like Webern's Op. 24—the bass takes these notes, the piccolo takes these notes—that's the way they analyze. I refer to Webern as Peter and the Wolf. I give a seminar on registration, and the most important piece for the kids that I give is [Boulez's] *Sonatina*. In terms of registration it is fantastic, how he gets rid of the row without separating the registration.

The minimal people (I was very influential as a minimalist in some of my early pieces)—the only thing that makes it difficult for them is that that they cannot get into a chromatic field. . . . Did you hear Peter Garland's piece? . . . It is the worst aspect of Satie. Copland!—that openness, beautiful and sonorous. If you want to learn how to orchestrate you should study the first page of *Appalachian Spring*. Get hold of that page: . . . the colors changing all the time in the orchestration. . . . fantastic!

If you really want to know how serial music should sound, listen to Milton Babbitt, who brought it to America. He'll teach you how to double, he'll teach you how to move things around in registration, he'll teach you how to think of the instrument at the same time. Milton Babbitt, I think, is the only serialist, a great serialist composer in the pure sense of the word, and there is much to learn from his music. He serialized the parameters before Boulez, in 1947, including rhythm (he influenced Carter's metronome modulations). He's very important to us in America—and he's also very funny. . . . By now he can do it like Fred Astaire: beautiful, wonderful—and the rhythm! But they don't have rhythm here, they only have gesture. They've forgotten what rhythm is. Rhythm to them is Stravinsky or Schoenberg.

Ros: What did you think of the [Terry] Riley piece the other night?

Feldman: I didn't actually like the Riley piece, but I did like it for personal reasons. He hasn't been writing; he has been improvising for many years, and I was happy to see it. He worked very

*Renata Birnstein, a former student of György Ligeti who was also present, later observed that Ligeti, too, assigns these pieces to his students.



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FELDMAN (continued)

hard on the piece, and I was happy for that. . . . [But] I found the piece schizophrenic, just as I find Boulez schizophrenic, actually.

Ros: Why?

Feldman: He can't find a form. It's like a man who gets married too many times. It's not like Penderecki, who goes to Yale and says that there is only one form: A B A, that's it. That's a teacher! I tell my kids, "I'll give you another formula, unless you know differently. All of you know only one form." Then they all get insulted. I say, "Beginning, middle, and end." . . .

One kid showed me his piece, which had twelve dynamics. I said, "There are only two: something is either loud or soft." . . . This kid said, "I can't write with only two dynamics." I said, "Don't you think there is such a thing as a soft sound and a loud sound?" That idea had never occurred to him. That's how I could write a four-hour piece, and I don't even have loud! . . . I told him, "Don't you know that composition is limitation? And then your brain is supposed to do it." Like the opening of the *Hammerklavier* [*recte* Op. 111], which has only two notes, and that's the whole piece. That's the Europe I love: E-flat to F-sharp.

Unidentified person: He's such a wise man. I wonder how it feels to be a wise man.

Feldman: I'm not such a wise man—I'm just not living here. There are a lot of people like me in New York, at least there used to be.

Unidentified person: Who's around now?

Feldman: John Cage is. He's just as wise. . . . I'm not wise. I've been in music all my life. If there's a nail sticking out of a piece of wood and you cut yourself, hammer the nail down. A young girl showed me her piece here. . . . I said to [Wolfgang] Rihm (he's going to take her as a student), "It's like the march to Calvary—there's blood on every page." . . .

I remember few children's stories in my life, but one of the few that I remember I've always felt was very strange. A traveler comes into a village, and everybody is crying. He says, "Why are you crying?" They take him into a building, and in the building there is a hatchet stuck in the ceiling. They say, "What if the hatchet falls and hurts one of us?" and they start to cry more and more. The man gets on a table and takes down the hatchet. They make him their mayor, and he gets the richest and most beautiful girl in the town, and they no longer cry but laugh and dance. When he dies they build a big monument. It's as simple as that. . . .

Sassy but smart comment from *The Nantucket Diary 1973-1985* of Ned Rorem (North Point Press; \$30): "People often compare Bessie and Billie as though they were the same thing, like Bardo and Brigitte, or as though they could be blended, like benedictine and brandy. In fact, they were not even chipped off the same block. Bessie Smith was a big-scale rural belter of Negro-oriented song. Billie Holiday was a small-scale urban 'stylist' of songs by white masters. . . ."

BILLINGS III REVIEW REDUX

We do not have a regular "Letters to the Editor" column. However, a letter from Karl Kroeger, chief editor of the Complete Works of William Billings (in progress), merits publication, we think.

To the Editor:

I read with interest, but also with a certain chagrin, Nym Cooke's review of the third volume of the Billings Complete Works edition in the *I.S.A.M. Newsletter*, XVI/2 (May 1987), p. 7. Nym is a friend and scholar whose opinion I value highly, but I hope that you will allow me the opportunity to reply to some of his points.

First, by implication he accuses me of having my head so buried in Billings's music that I am unaware of what other composers around him were doing. He mentions Walter Janes, Benjamin Leslie, Charles Robbins, and M. Kyes. I wish to assure him and others that I do, indeed, know the music of these composers and many others as well, and in terms of their grasp of their material—i.e., their ability to use it in an imaginative and creative way—they all fall well short of Billings. About the only composers among his peers who approach Billings in this regard are the Englishman, Joseph Stephenson, and the American, Jacob French, and even these I find somewhat wanting.

His second charge, that I arrive at conclusions without supporting evidence, is more serious. Regarding the ten British psalm-

tunes arranged by Billings in *Music in Miniature*, simple deductive reasoning leaves little doubt that Billings was the arranger. I have looked diligently for these settings in dozens of tunebooks, both British and American, without success. I feel certain that they are Billings's work and offer no apologies for including them in the edition.

Nym may truly believe that it serves no valid purpose to stake out a composer's stylistic periods. However, I feel that it is incumbent upon the researcher to point out stylistic developments when clear evidence of this occurs. What I am trying to show is exactly the opposite of Nym's view of Billings as "a tradition- and idiom-bound figure." He was not this at all, but a composer who continued to grow and expand his aesthetic and technical means. If my introductions can establish Billings as a composer of intelligence and ability, who mastered a compositional style and wrote in it works of enduring musical value, I will feel that my efforts will have been worthwhile.

FROM RADIO TO READERSHIP

John Schaefer's recent book *New Sounds* (Harper & Row; \$10.95 paperbound) is based on his radio program of the same title, which he has hosted since 1982; it originates on New York's WNYC and goes elsewhere over National Public Radio. The book explores post-Difficult music, as Laurie Anderson might say, chronicling much that usually falls between the cracks of Eastern and Western, classical and popular, jazz and ethnic, acoustic and electronic. It even includes "A Tale of Two Labels" (Windham Hill and ECM) and the impact of their "new age" products.

New Sounds is not a scholarly study in the stuffy sense; it is not a theoretical treatise, "not a textbook, [nor] a record catalog, [nor] a survey of twentieth-century classical, jazz, folk, or rock music." But it takes a historical approach to some of the more approachable music in recorded form, from Bali's *Monkey Chant* to Michael Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* (which you may know better as the theme music of *The Exorcist*). Annotated discographies (worth the price of the book) follow each chapter and include all the music aired on Schaefer's show. The final discography—"Musicellaneous"—juxtaposes recordings by such figures as John Adams, David Bowie, and the twelfth-century abbess Hildegarde von Bingen, suggesting Schaefer's wide range of inclusion and his idea of "new" as meaning not heard before, not just recently composed.



Among major vanguard trends of the past two decades, Schaefer distinguishes between process music—"any sort of piece where the technology is as much responsible for the final product as the performer"—and minimal music, of which he writes one of the best accounts in print. Chapter 1, "The Electronic Age," also effectively encapsulates an important and growing domain of new music.

SACRED HARP (continued)

Sacred Harp is democratic music. Men and women sing all four parts, and anybody, even a child, can lead a song. The reward in leading is the quadraphonic sound you hear in the middle of the square. "If you ain't never been up in this hollow square, it's the prettiest sound in the world," says Hugh McGraw of Bremen, Ga.

Mr. McGraw is worried, however. "Sacred Harp is diminishing," says the president and lifeblood of Sacred Harp Singers of America, a big man with a voice to match. "When I was a kid, I remember the church was full and people were standing outside, looking in the windows. Now, you go to singings, and there'll be two people on the alto part, and two on treble. What's it going to be a hundred years from now?"

In the South, Sacred Harp has traditionally been kept alive by huge singing families like the Woottens of Sand Mountain, Ala. The seven Wootten children and their children make a complete chorus, and can be heard on a fine recording. As these families die out, Mr. McGraw and other singers wonder what will happen to their beloved musical tradition.

The answer may lie north of the Mason-Dixon line. In the past five years or so, pockets of singers in their 20s to 40s have sprouted in cities including Denver, Chicago, Madison, Wis., Boston, and Middletown, Conn.

Jan Ketelle, of Black Earth, Wis., first heard the music in college in Iowa, on a recording played during an American music appreciation class. "I kept that sound in my head for 20 years, until I heard some people singing Sacred Harp in Minnesota. I knew I wanted to sing this music."

Bob Parr is part of a Boston group called Norumbega Harmony that performs Sacred Harp occasionally. While performances are not part of the Southern Sacred Harp tradition, some Northern singers think they may help to keep the music alive. After the concerts, Mr. Parr says, "Half the audience gets up and leaves, and looks relieved that it's over, and the rest hang around and want to talk about it. Either you connect or you don't."

For those who connect, however, the rewards are apparently boundless. Mr. Williams, for one, is certain that if anybody's going to heaven, it's Sacred Harp singers.

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"Gilbert Chase's *America's Music* set new standards of scope, scholarship, and writing style against which every subsequent history of American music has had to be measured; every student and scholar of the subject is indebted to this landmark book, in countless ways." — Charles Hamm, introduction to his *Music in the New World*. \$29.95.

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ACA (continued)

Even more important were ACA's ventures to make scores and recordings of music by its members available. In 1952, Roger Goeb established the Composers Facsimile Edition (CFE), a printing operation in which blueprint scores, produced from composers' onionskin masters on demand, were offered for sale at cost. Small subsidies made possible recordings on such labels as Remington, Mercury, Victor, Vanguard, and New Editions. In 1954, Composers Recordings, Inc., founded by Daniel, Luenig, Avery Claffin, and Douglas Moore, became the primary recipient of these subsidies. Composers, whether or not they belonged to ACA, were also invited to sponsor recordings of their own works, an idea many still find attractive, since CRI does not allow its releases to go out of print.

* * *

In recent years the music scene has changed dramatically. ACA has maintained its affiliation with BMI (BMI now distributes royalties to ACA members), but like many arts organizations it is operating on a more modest scale. In 1972, its role as a publisher expanded, with the establishment of American Composers Edition; composers retain the copyrights to works published by ACE, and receive royalties from them at a rate higher than that paid by most publishers. Both ACE and CFE serve to make works available during the period between completion and discovery by the public, i.e. a recording, or frequent performances, which lead to publication by a commercial publisher. Through its recording award, ACA also continues to finance releases on the CRI label; since 1976, works to be recorded have been chosen after a general call for scores from the ACE files.

ACA has also continued to provide encouragement and support for new ventures. Its youngest offspring, now independent, is the American Composers Orchestra, founded in 1977 by Francis Thorne and Nicolas Roussakis (executive director and president, respectively, of ACA at the time) and conductors Dennis Russell Davies and Paul Dunkel. The ACO's programs have featured an eclectic range of composers from Aaron Copland to Philip Glass, from Duke Ellington to Milton Babbitt . . . and everyone in between. The ACO regularly commissions new works, and its concerts are broadcast over National Public Radio.

But ACA also serves its composers (now numbering 323) on a more personal level, particularly those embarking on their

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Editor: H. Wiley Hitchcock

Assistant editor: Emily Good

Contributing editor: Carol J. Oja

Typesetter: Laraine Goodman

Production assistants: Kathleen Mason Krotman, Nancy Pardo, and Claude Masear

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More from Ned Rorem's *Nantucket Diary* (see above p. 12): "Replaying *Sgt. Pepper* provided such relief that I had an orgy of old Beatles records. Their way with their own tunes, their ingenuity, energy, wit, and contagiously magic charm, present the best gauge for judgment: the music holds up . . . The Beatles will have bequeathed us about as many first-rate songs as did Poulenc . . ."

Preposterous ass, that never read so far
To know the cause why music was ordain'd!
Was it not to refresh the mind of man,
After his studies or his usual pain?

—Shakespeare, *The Taming of
the Shrew*, III, 1594

Music is love in search of a word.

—Sidney Lanier, *The Symphony*, 1875

The Americans are almost ignorant of music,
one of the most elevating, innocent and
refining of human tastes.

—J. Fenimore Cooper,
The American Democrat,
XXXVI, 1838

careers. From Executive Director Rosalie Calabrese, they can obtain information concerning copyright, contracts, licenses, and royalties; they can locate a copyist; they can contact managers, lawyers, and other music-industry professionals, who in these times are indispensable.

There are many more opportunities for American composers than there were fifty years ago, but despite the progress that has been made, many of ACA's original aims are still valid. Some of our most august concert and operatic institutions still overlook the merits of native composers. And in the face of rapidly advancing technology and slowly changing copyright laws, composers, whose numbers have increased astronomically, are confronting brutal assaults on their ability to control access to their work and to share in the profits from it. So long as these conditions persist, an organization such as ACA is still very much needed.

We express our appreciation to Carl Malouf, for allowing us to reproduce several of his many drawings that appeared in the ACA Bulletin: the Laurel Leaf Award, Otto Luening, Wallingford Riegger, and Leopold Stokowski. Copyright © Carl Malouf. Used by permission. Our thanks also to ACA for permission to reproduce the portrait of Henry Cowell by Andrée Ruellan and the drawing on page five by Les Hackett, which also appeared in the ACA Bulletin.

Institute for Studies in American Music
Conservatory of Music
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York 11210

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