

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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I.S.A.M. MATTERS by H.W.H.

This time around, the editor of the I.S.A.M. Newsletter is exercising some prerogatives: moving the regular "I.S.A.M. Matters" column to page 1 from page 3, signing it with a byline instead of leaving it anonymous, and making sure that the double meaning of the column's title is clearly understood. There's a reason: this will be the last Newsletter issue published under his editorship; he's going on retirement leave from the City University of New York as of 1 February 1993.

I.S.A.M. matters. You bet it matters. It's mattered for a long time. And it will go on mattering, I'm happy to say, having suffered the equivalent of Hamlet's "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," not to mention his "sea of troubles." With a lot of help from our friends—among them many of our *Newsletter* readers, Brooklyn College's brand-new president Vernon Lattin, and the director of its Conservatory of Music Nancy Hager—the continued existence of the Institute has recently been reassured. In view of the longevity of the Institute and its newly secured future life at a watershed moment, perhaps some recollections of its founding director are in order.

Many of our younger readers may not be too clear about the beginnings and the early years of I.S.A.M., so first I'll provide a bit of history.

I.S.A.M. was the brainchild, not of me, but of Sherman Van Solkema, who back then (about 1970) was chair of Brooklyn College's music department. It's true that he was sparked by a somewhat smart-alecky article of mine in the November 1968 issue of *Notes*; its title asked, "A Monumenta Americana?" It came down on the negative in answer to that query, but it urged other kinds of action by individuals and institutions to combat the neglect of American-music studies, not to say disdain for them, by the musicological establishment. A notorious expression of such disdain had been Joseph Kerman's sneer, at the 1964 meetings of the American Musicological Society: "The

student of Beethoven [or] Marenzio or Louis Couperin is concerned with music that can be brought to life; but Francis Hopkinson or Lowell Mason or Theodore Chanler [and here Kerman pointedly chose composers from all three centuries of American music]—surely they would defy all efforts at resuscitation. Man, they are dead."

Van Solkema, an old friend from our overlapping graduate-school days together at the University of Michigan, had a characteristically bold, visionary reaction to my article: he persuaded his college president that a research and information center focused on American music was needed; he then crossed the East River to persuade me to leave my position at Hunter College and move sideways within the CUNY system to join the Brooklyn College faculty and become director of the new center.

Thus was I.S.A.M. born in 1971, with a firm commitment from the college and initial extra support from The Rockefeller Foundation.

Its goals were expressed, in rather lofty language, in an announcement brochure:

The basic function of the Institute is to provide a suitable academic framework in which to encourage, support, propagate, and evaluate research in music of the United States—past and present, cultivated and vernacular, classical and pop, jazz and rock, white and black, inner-American and inter-American.

Those multiple goals of I.S.A.M., in a context of affection and respect for all American musics have



On a recent afternoon in the I.S.A.M. offices: (from left) K. Robert Schwarz (Research Assistant, 1988-92), H. Wiley Hitchcock (Director, 1971-93), Kathleen Mason Krotman (Publications Assistant, 1973-). Photo: Janice Gerthoth.

I.S.A.M. MATTERS (continued)

been energetically pursued for more than two decades. There is not the space here to give a full account of the many ways in which the pursuit has been carried on. A couple of years ago, needing a fundraising document that would tell the whole story but in a summary way, I prepared a *curriculum vitae* of the Institute. (You can imagine the headings: Name; Address; Date of Birth; Field of Specialization; Staff; Academic and Professional Recognition; Publications; Conferences; Concerts, Colloquia, and Colloquia-with-Concerts; Lecture Series and Single Lectures; Research Fellowships, Senior and Junior; Bibliography.) The I.S.A.M. *c.v.* runs to twenty pages, much too long to print here. But I can't resist glossing a few items in it—moments and memorabilia in the Institute's past:

¶ I.S.A.M.'s first public event (spring '72), all about ragtime. (Those were the early days of the ragtime revival.) An afternoon colloquium with panelists Rudi Blesh, William Bolcom, David Jasen, and Eileen Southern was followed by an evening jamboree with six pianists: one by one, Bolcom, Jasen, Bob Seeley, Trebor Tichenor, and Dick Wellstood led up to a climactic appearance by Eubie Blake. (What an evening!)

¶ During the 1972-73 academic year, Gilbert Chase's sometimes prickly but always stimulating and provocative presence, in seminars and out, as I.S.A.M.'s first Senior Research Fellow. (Rockefeller Foundation support enabled us to bring him, and others, during our first three years; thereafter, the college provided the support, and Chase was followed by a remarkable parade of Fellows, both male and female—not only scholarly stars but composers of distinction, our conviction being that, as Milton Babbitt has suggested, composers are often among the most profound musical researchers in our culture.)

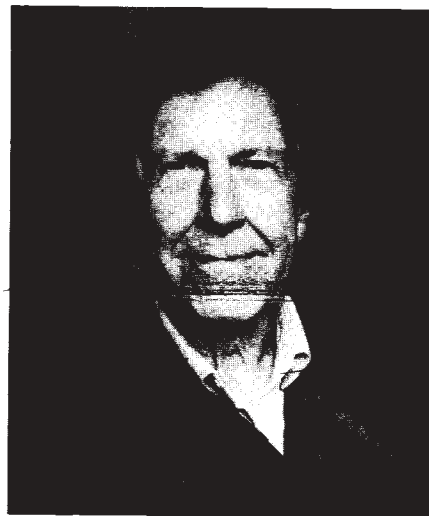
¶ During five beautiful October days in 1974, the Charles Ives Centennial Festival-Conference, the first international conference ever centered on an American composer. Co-chaired by Vivian Perlis and co-sponsored by the Yale University School of Music, with more than sixty participants and thirty "discussants," the Ives F-C was a melange of six symposia and eight all-Ives concerts. For me, the most magical moments were the performances—on the same concert!—of Ives's First Piano Sonata by William Masselos (its premiere performer, in 1949) and the Second "Concord" Sonata by John Kirkpatrick (its premiere performer, in 1939). Kirkpatrick said afterwards that he felt he had been more successful than ever at "letting the music play me, instead of my playing the music."

¶ Our first few I.S.A.M. monographs, published on a shoestring (and priced accordingly) but selling well enough to provide income with which to publish *more* monographs (they now number thirty-three). With No. 1 (Richard Jackson's *United States Music: Sources of Bibliography and Collective Biography*), I.S.A.M. led off with a clear message of intent to help provide scholarly support for American-music researchers. No. 2 (Gilbert Chase's *Two Lectures in the form of a Pair: [1] Music, Culture, History! [2] Structuralism and Music*) established a precedent: bringing into print Senior Fellows' public lectures. No. 3 (Bruce Saylor's *The Writings of Henry Cowell*) was the Institute's first monograph to

derive from a graduate-student essay (and the first in a series of I.S.A.M.'s documentary studies about Cowell—the others so far, Martha Manion's *Writings About Henry Cowell: An Annotated Bibliography* and William Lichtenwanger's *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog*, being the biggest monographs I.S.A.M. has published, with more than 400 pages each).

¶ The I.S.A.M. *Newsletter's* first issues (Vol. I, No. 1, appearing in November [more or less] of 1971): miniscule, poorly designed, typographically of dubious distinction . . . but mission-conscious, news-filled, proud, and also breezy. (About ten years later, the review journal *Come All-Ye* pleased us by characterizing the *Newsletter* as "one of the best . . . witty, irreverent, eclectic, and inventive" and as having "a winning style and thoroughness." Right on! was the cry around the office.)

¶ In 1977, an N.E.H.-supported festival-conference on "The Phonograph and Our Musical Life," the excuse being that a hundred years earlier Edison had invented phonorecording technology, and our lives had never been the same since. The affair went on for several days, with conference sessions, concerts, panel discussions, and other events. We invited John Cage to be the keynote speaker. He declined, saying he would be in Germany at the time of our affair—"but I'll do a piece for you!" And so he did. He came out to the college to choose a space in which the piece might take place. We looked at Gershwin Theater and Whitman Auditorium; Cage commented admiringly on their names and noted especially the huge stage and backstage area of the auditorium. "Let's do it here!" he said, gesturing expansively. . . .



John Cage (Los Angeles, 23 May 1991). Unpublished photograph by Betty Freeman. Reproduced by permission.

A few days later Cage sent a handwritten set of instructions and a sort of scenario for his new piece, which he had titled *33-1/3*. In the backstage area we were to assemble a group of about ten tables in a kind of crescent. On each table were to be a long-playing record player (hooked up to loudspeakers), a turntable, and a bunch of long-playing records begged or borrowed from the Brooklyn College Music Library—any records at all, chosen at random and piled at random on the tables. Downstage, in front of this set of tables, was to be another, long one, with microphones for five or six of the scholar-conferees; they were to be seated behind this table, facing

the auditorium, before its rear doors were opened to the audience members. The latter were to be ushered in a circuitous route through the empty auditorium, to the stage, up some stairs onto it, through a group of musicians at one corner playing some music by Erik Satie (a favorite of Cage's), back past the silent, seated conference panelists, and to the tables with the records and record-players. There each audience member was to approach a table, choose any record she or he wished, put it on the turntable, lower the tonearm, and adjust the volume of the record player ad lib., move on to another table and play another record, etc., etc., and finally walk back down into the auditorium and sit down.

When all of the "audience" had gone through this business and were seated, the "panelists" were to comment on what they had just experienced, in any way they wished. (I put "audience" in quotation marks, since of course they had been the *performers* of the first part of Cage's piece—which also included, appropriately enough in an academic-conference context, the discussion that followed among the "panelists"—who had been the "audience" during the first part!)

... 33-1/3 had only that single performance, as far as I know, and it was never published. But it was a quintessentially Cagey piece, conceived for particular circumstances, totally relevant to those circumstances yet spontaneous, unpredictable to some degree, and above all *invitational*—to experience sounds and activities, in a sort of musical-theater environment, and to reflect on and think about it all. Cage honored I.S.A.M., and its centennial festival on the phonograph, and the the phonograph itself, with 33-1/3.

¶ Several challenging commissions that came I.S.A.M.'s way: in 1979, one from the National Endowment for the Arts, for an evaluative study of the NEA's Composer/Librettist program; in 1981, one to provide research and editorial assistance to Macmillan (London) in the preparation of the encyclopedia that was published in 1986, in four volumes, as *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*; in 1980, one from the Koussevitzky Foundation for a comprehensive discography of 20th-century American concert music, realized in I.S.A.M.'s book *American Music Recordings*, edited by Carol J. Oja, who had overseen the project from the beginning.

Mention of Carol Oja leads directly to my conclusion, after these few ruminations and reflections. As a CUNY doctoral student (working on a dissertation that was to become her prize-winning critical biography of Colin McPhee), Carol succeeded Rita Mead in 1980 as I.S.A.M.'s research assistant. Four years later, she decided to turn to teaching, and was succeeded at the Institute by a chain of dedicated and indefatigable assistants: R. Allen Lott, Emily Good, and K. Robert Schwarz. But Brooklyn College had had the wit (and the good fortune) to appoint Carol Oja to its faculty, and she is now Associate Professor of Music, teaching both at the college and, as a member of the doctoral faculty, in the C.U.N.Y. Graduate School. Thus she has stayed close to I.S.A.M., and as Contributing Editor of this *Newsletter* she is well known to its readers. Moreover, as of February she becomes Interim Director of I.S.A.M., to serve as such until my official retirement at the end of August. To the post she brings verve and vitality, imagination and resourcefulness, powerful motivation and profound knowledge of American music. I wish her well in the position, certain that she will find it, as I have, one of the most exciting and gratifying imaginable—and that in her care I.S.A.M. will continue to matter.



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BOOK NOOK I

PATRIMONY

Lives unfold in mysterious ways—sometimes running with the grain of history, sometimes against it. The careers of Charles Seeger (1886-1979) and Arthur Farwell (1872-1952), as charted in two recent biographies, show how each can happen. Standing perhaps a rung below Ives in the pantheon of Great Father Figures in twentieth-century music, Seeger and Farwell are among that small group of Americans to whom young composers today can trace their roots. Both had a kind of do-it-yourself spunk, especially in challenging cultural obeisance to Western Europe. And both strove to embrace the diversity of this country's musical idioms—Seeger as collector, editor, and scholar of traditional repertoires, Farwell as an "Indianist" composer. Yet while Seeger's career continually played out in the eye of major historical developments—from the modernist movement of the 1910s and 1920s to the social activism of the 1930s and on to government service in the late Roosevelt administration—Farwell remained less well-known and somewhat out of step with his time. Whether starting the Wa Wan Press in 1901 to publish contemporary music before any broad-based composer movement was underway or decrying modernism several decades later for its "hollowness and shallowness," Farwell often found himself apart from major trends, waiting decades for his work to be recognized.

Ann Pescatello's *Charles Seeger: A Life in American Music* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 346 pp., \$34.95) grew out of a personal friendship with the composer and provides a much-needed study of his achievements. Describing herself as "an historian not a musicologist," the author uses this expertise to shape the book's strengths. Especially compelling sections include those about Seeger's tenure in the 1910s at the University of California at Berkeley and about his government work, first for the Resettlement Administration, later for the Federal Music Project and finally the Pan American Union. Pescatello illuminates the family background of Constance Edson (Seeger's first wife and mother of the folksinger Pete) and gives cogent summaries of Seeger's erudite musicological tracts. In one particularly delightful section she traces the 1921 odyssey of Charles, Constance, and their children in a homemade trailer. Although planning a cross-country excursion, the family ended up spending the winter in a log cabin next to an active still in MacKenzie's Mill, North Carolina. There the Seegers gained their first extensive exposure to southern folk traditions. Pescatello reveals less new material, however, about Seeger's second, more famous marriage to the composer Ruth Crawford (mother of the folksingers Peggy and Mike). The book concludes with a useful bibliography of Seeger's publications, including a separate list of his criticism under the name "Carl Sands" for the Communist Party's newspaper *The Daily Worker*. Unfortunately, Pescatello virtually ignores Seeger's compositions, which deserve close scrutiny; and her discussion of the various musical worlds in which he functioned contains many errors. On the whole, then, she succeeds when treating Seeger's life as cultural history, presenting a chronicle of his hydra-headed role as architect and catalyst of American musicology, experimental composition, and folksong studies.

While Pescatello quotes primary sources generously, Evelyn Davis Culbertson revels in them, leaning more toward a documentary biography than an interpretive study. In *He Heard America Singing: Arthur Farwell, Composer and Crusading Music Educator* (Composers of North America, No. 9; Scarecrow Press, 852 pp., \$89.50), she makes public her own private, and evidently extensive, collection of Farwell's papers, purchased for her by a friend at a warehouse sale in 1961. She also quotes freely from Farwell's published writings on music as well as interviews with family members and testimony from students. Sixty-four photographs and other illustrations enliven the text (including one of Farwell's six children, briskly moving in step as though on the set of *The Sound of Music*). Seventy-one musical examples also appear, many reproducing entire compositions.

There is enough material here to launch dozens of studies, whether of Farwell's work as music publisher, first through the Wa Wan Press and later through a press in his basement used to issue his own scores; his role as critic, especially beginning in 1909 for *Musical America*; his impact as teacher, both at the University of California at Berkeley during 1918-19 (he must have replaced Seeger there, although neither Pescatello nor Davis connects the two appointments) and at Michigan Agricultural College in East Lansing (now Michigan State); his long involvement with Native North American music; or the many lives he intersected, from Edward MacDowell to Roy Harris, from the pianist and mystic Katherine Ruth Heyman to Carl Sandburg.

According to Pescatello, Seeger used to tell his son Pete a bedtime story about a cowboy whose grave marker read, "He done his damndest." She applies those words to Charles Seeger, but they could also be extended to Arthur Farwell. Men of energy and imagination, they have in many ways remained shadows on the historical vista. Now, both personally and professionally, they are emerging more clearly.

—C.J.O.



To dream of playing yourself, of hearing some other person play upon some wind instrument, such as a flageolet, cornet, piston, bag-pipe, trumpet, bassoon, post-horn and others, signifies wrangles and disastrous litigation in consequence.

To dream of hearing the birds sing signifies love and happiness.

To dream of hearing hens cackle or geese hiss, indicates a certainty of profit and of security in business matters.

IVESIANA

IVES ANALYZED

Two new books on Ives offer contrasting perspectives, methods, and objectives, though their authors share an interest in "analysis." Stuart Feder, in *Charles Ives: "My Father's Song" / A Psychoanalytic Biography* (Yale University Press, 396 pages; \$35), uses techniques of classic psychoanalysis to explore Ives's life and work, with particular emphasis on biographical and musical ramifications of Ives's relationship with his father. Larry Starr, in *A Union of Diversities: Style in the Music of Charles Ives* (Schirmer Books, 192 pages; \$35), shines an analytic light on Ives's music, convinced that "Ives's style must be the core issue addressed by any basic study of his music." The paths taken by these analytic approaches are diverse but substantial and revealing.

Feder is a practicing psychoanalyst with musicological training, and he offers an eclectic blend of psychoanalytic theory, musical insight, and scholarly rigor. Indeed, psychoanalysis aside, *My Father's Song* is an invaluable work of biography, adducing copious information on Ives's life and relationships from documents and other archival materials, and also reaching back to the life of George Ives and even the history of the Ives family. Such source studies, as well as information gleaned from Ives's music and writings, fuel an absorbing psychoanalytic narrative that brings fresh insight to many matters. Feder has much to say, for example, about Ives's apparent depressive episodes and deteriorating mental health in later years. And Feder's core argument—that virtually any aspect of Ives's personality, life choices, or musical activities is due to an extraordinary psychic connection with his father—leads to fascinating revelations about musical representations of psychological phenomena. Feder asserts that for Ives the creation of music became a fantasy of "collaboration" with his deceased father, a recollection and idealization of actual collaborations from his childhood.

Feder also adds a welcome voice to the ongoing debate about the chronology of Ives's music that was sparked by a 1987 article of Maynard Solomon in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. In a brief but significant appendix, Feder responds directly to Solomon's "questions of veracity," posing penetrating questions about the psychological aspects of Solomon's hypothesis.

Starr's study is not as ambitious as Feder's but is every bit as stimulating. *A Union of Diversities* explores the musical structures that result from the shifting styles often encountered in Ives's works. Using Ives's songs as a laboratory, Starr shows that the identification, characterization, and comparison of different styles within a single work are the keys to its substance. The frequently shifting styles in "Ann Street," for example, may at first seem disorderly but are actually associated within an overall "stylistic arch." Starr explains that the arch is both formally closed and open, to project a dual message of return and progress. Readers may at first wonder whether style analysis provides a sufficiently deep perspective, since the description of style can involve relatively pedestrian observations. But the author elevates the discussion with generous applications of musical insight and sensitivity: *A Union of Diversities* is a very musical book.



To dream of singing denotes mishaps and affliction, and foretells that the dreamer will give vent to tears.

It is also not without its idiosyncracies. Starr is writing not for specialists but for "any interested music lover who has the curiosity to approach Ives's music." Readers more accustomed to rigorous scholarly writing (as seen in Feder) will be struck by the book's unconventional organization and spare bibliographic citations. End notes follow the text, but they refer only to text pages, not to specific passages. Starr explains that he has written an unorthodox book to reflect its unorthodox subject matter; indeed, one gets the impression that the parallels extend to the author himself, who seems to prefer a kind of Ivesian detachment from the scholarly community.

It is not difficult to imagine criticisms both Starr and Feder might invite. The reader familiar with Ives's technical experimentation, for example, may be disappointed by Starr's apparent disdain for this aspect of Ives's music, and may wish that Feder, too, had given it more consideration. (Experimental techniques would have been grist for both authors' mills—for Starr's as another source of style, for Feder's as additional illustration of George Ives's influence.) And some may find Feder uncomfortably speculative or Starr too narrowly focused.

But both scholars sharpen *our* focus and encourage an important reorientation of our analyses and interpretations of Ives's life and thought. Consider, for example, a piece discussed by both authors: "The Things Our Fathers Loved" is illuminated by Starr's pointing to harmonic shifts and stylistic cross-references as expressive of the elusive quality of memory and the song's ultimate depiction of hope and loss, and also by Feder's observing the song's representation of deep mental phenomena associated with memory and nostalgia.

—Philip Lambert
(Baruch College and the Graduate Center, C.U.N.Y.)

BOOK NOOK II

A BULLY BARBER BIO

Barberians, rejoice! Barbara Heyman's critical biography *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music* (Oxford University Press; \$45) is so striking and sound in its discussion of his works that it gives a hefty boost to Barber scholarship and suggests a model for other such studies. Heyman's integration of stylistic and contextual discussion with painstaking detail and documentation produces a clear, rich, and accessible pool of indispensable information. Yet her work finally begs the question of the significance of Barber's style and success in the wider cultural picture.

Progressing chronologically, the book takes Barber's works as its points of focus. Heyman surrounds each with exhaustive discussion: of influences on the work; performers that Barber collaborated with or consulted during the compositional process; the unfolding of the work through ideas, sketches, advice from friends, reworkings and revisions; analysis of its style and shape; information on its manuscripts and editions; and contemporary critical reaction. And there is still more icing on this cake: extraordinarily generous graphics, ranging from score fascimiles to photographs, and an analytic index unique in its thorough detail and painstaking precision. In this assemblage of primary documentation and secondary discussion, the book emerges as an outstanding contribution to studies in American music.

Samuel Barber is not all that easy to read. Heyman's text is so filled with detail that, thirty-four pages of endnotes falling short of documenting it all, the text pages are also heavy with footnotes. And, due to the extensive quotation from letters and reviews, her

prose occasionally functions primarily as a link between quoted passages. The quotations provide, however, a lively sense of how Barber and those close to him regarded his music and his career moves.

Different treatment of contextual details—interpretation of the ways during Barber's life that various styles of art music were placed on a cultural continuum by composers, critics, and audiences—would have been relevant and refreshing. Stylistically, Barber's music lies in a space too easily ignored by musicologists and criticized by other composers: that of a non-modernist, non-serial language which found and retained huge popularity in American culture. His music, with its genuine inspiration, complex conception, and excellent compositional technique, throws into interesting relief the occasional rejections of him by contemporaneous academic composers and the critics associated with them. Why did Barber meet with such success? Why were his critics so threatened by it? What did Barber's opinions of other composers say about himself in this picture? (Of Stravinsky: "With all Stravinsky's talent and imagination, his lack of lyricism and utter inability to work in more than small periods weigh heavily against him.") Such questions linger tantalizingly in the wake of Heyman's book.

Thankfully, however, it contains information aplenty, to inspire and ground further study. The book, like the composer, emerges as a boon and a triumph. Barber's is a story that needed desperately to be told and, with Heyman's effort, the telling has truly begun.

—Susan Richardson
(Indiana University)

Film Biographies of American Composers

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JOHN CAGE

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Documentary films on American composers Eubie Blake, Aaron Copland and John Cage are now available from Vintage Productions, Inc. through co-producer Vivian Perlis, oral historian. The unique films include interviews with the subject, performances and archival footage which give an in-depth portrait of three major figures in the world of American Music. The documentaries are suitable for music courses at the college and secondary school level, as well as for acquisition by libraries, oral history collections and music archives.

One hour in length and in color, the films are available on 1/2" VHS format. For descriptive brochure and order form, please write to Vintage Productions, Inc., 139 Goodhill Road, Weston, CT 06883 or telephone (203) 227-1719.

BOOK NOOK II (continued)

LYRIC THEATER IN EARLY AMERICA

The recent explosion of research in American music has not always produced works of quality. Fortunately, Susan Porter's *With an Air Debonair: Musical Theatre in America 1785-1815* (Smithsonian Institution Press, \$55) sets the highest standards. It may be read and consulted with profit by those interested in late Georgian drama on our stages, including scholars from the old country (whence the Federal-period repertory derived). Porter brings together in one place a dazzling array of information gathered from authentic sources. Key chapters give specifics of the size and nature of theater orchestras, vocal and instrumental performance practices, buildings and stage architecture, and even discussions of costumes, makeup, and hair styling. Most valuable are Porter's suggestions for modern revivals, as are her meticulously researched appendices, a "Checklist of Musical Entertainments" and "Musical Theatre Performances in Five American Cities," which are alone worth the price of the volume. They amplify, extend, and complete similar lists first presented by Oscar Sonneck in his seminal studies of early opera in America. Porter's debonair air also helps subtly to give balance to the purblind view of a burgeoning American culture engrossed only in homespun and hominy.

It is not so much what the book does as what it doesn't say that may raise some eyebrows. In its preoccupation with problems of authentic modern performance, this history of early musical theater in the United States practically eliminates all consideration of "American" works simply because they do not meet a test for revival. Apparently, only those works that were most popular during their heyday deserve attention, even though they are all English, since "the probable success of a revised work" is indicated by "its popularity and longevity when it was originally performed." I certainly support the implied thesis. Our theater at the cusp of the nineteenth century was a part of the London stage. But why should such reasoning and periodization (1785-1815), driven by the criterion of modern stageworthiness, result in the eclipse of those pieces conceived on this side of the water? *The Indian Princess* (Philadelphia, 1808), the first original American musical produced in London, is barely mentioned. Just as puzzling is the disregard of Rayner Taylor's music for *The Aethiop* (Philadelphia, 1814). While it did not achieve enough performances to make Porter's "Top Eleven," this is due merely to her arbitrary *terminus ad quem* of 1815. Actually, with a more logical date—say the end of the Federal Period (1825)—and a consideration of box-office receipts, *The Aethiop* would have come out a clear winner. But shouldn't a serious history of the theater also include judgement based upon aesthetics? By such a standard Taylor's imaginative score, composed and published in the City of Brotherly Love, far surpasses the pedestrian music of Arnold's English opera, *The Children in the Wood* (London, 1793), the only work Porter discusses in any great detail.

Such omissions reflect the necessarily narrow focus of Porter's splendid University of Colorado dissertation: *Performance Practice in American Opera at the turn of the Nineteenth Century . . .* (1977). The promise of the more comprehensive scope indicated by the subtitle of *With An Air Debonair* remains to be realized.

—Victor Fell Yellin
(New York University)



To dream that you are playing, or hearing any other person play the violin, flute or other musical instrument, signifies good news, harmony and a good understanding between man and wife, mistress and lover, master and servants, and between the employer and his subordinates.

A SCHOLARLY FEAST

Few scholars of American music are more deserving of homage than Eileen Southern, who forged a path that many have followed. *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern*, edited by Josephine Wright with Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. (Harmonie Park Press, 561 pages; \$55), pays tribute to Southern's varied fields of interest, from early music, where she paid her dues in traditional musicology, to her emphasis on the music of African-Americans in its diverse and glorious manifestations.

All the articles in this *feast-schrift* are worthy offerings, but some are meatier than others, with several of them weighing in at around 40 pages. Two substantial articles (one by Josephine Wright, the other by Doris Evans McGinty) document the significant but largely ignored role of black women in the musical life of Boston and Washington, DC, around the turn of the century. Horace Clarence Boyer supplies an account, with numerous examples, of the seemingly oxymoronic "gospel blues," and Thomas L. Riis recreates the history of black vaudeville in Athens, Georgia. Meticulous bibliographical treatment and historical context are featured in J. Roland Braithwaite's examination of Richard Allen's pioneering hymnals of 1801 for black Christians; in Dena Epstein's discussion of the published music associated with the Fisk Jubilee Singers; and in Richard Crawford's survey of jazz standards by black authors and composers.

Other articles are more concerned with concepts, such as Olly Wilson's "The Heterogeneous Sound Ideal in African-American Music" and Anne Dhu Shapiro's "Black Sacred Song and the Tune-Family Concept." Contemporary music is also represented, in interviews with composers Leslie Adams and Thea Musgrave, the latter speaking about her opera based on the life of Harriet Tubman. The book closes with a valuable bibliography on recent research (1968-88) in African-American music and an impressive list of Southern's voluminous writings. In a loving portrait of the dedicatee, Samuel Floyd describes her as a "quiet revolutionary." Quiet, maybe, but her pen has been heard loud and clear.

—R. Allen Lott
(Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

“CAGE MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO ME . . .”:

AN IMPROVISATORY REACTION TO THE DEATH OF JOHN CAGE *by Ingram Marshall*

John Cage died in New York on August 12th. This editor was in Florence. Cage's reputation is great in Europe, and all the Italian papers reported his death, most of them in front-page stories. Corriere della Sera (published in Milan, and probably Italy's best newspaper) and La Nazione (Florence's major daily) had lengthy reports, with headlines that were particularly striking. La Nazione: John Cage, il re dei suoni ("the king of sounds"); Corriere della Sera: Cage, l'astronauta dei suoni (even more worthy of him, almost poetic). . . .

The American composer Ingram Marshall also reacted in writing to Cage's demise. Though Marshall now lives and works in Connecticut, he is linked, perhaps irrevocably, to the area where he used to live and work. As the critic Alan Rich has put it, most of Marshall's music has "a particular stylistic leaning which, for better (mostly) or worse (occasionally), has come to represent the composers on this country's West Coast." You can hear some of that music on New Albion discs (the live/electronic works Fog Tropes and Gradual Requiem, and Alcatraz, a forty-six-minute work in sound and images, with photos by Jim Bengston); and on Elektra/Nonesuch (Three Penitential Visions and Hidden Voices). Marshall was Senior Research Fellow at I.S.A.M. in 1990-91. He has kindly allowed us to print his "improvisation" inspired by John Cage's death. —H.W.H.

When John Cage died, I was on vacation in Maine. I heard about it on the radio. It seemed like a good idea to go out for a bike ride and look for mushrooms. I might have done that anyhow, but under the circumstances it seemed particularly appropriate.

As I pedaled along, keeping an eye on the road's woodsy edge for flashes of pale yellow and orange (chanterelles were out), I reflected on the irony of a man who elevated chance to an exalted aesthetic status but was also a devotee of mushroom identification. In the realm of mycophagy, chance as a principal could be deadly. Yet I think that this apparent contradiction shows that accident itself wasn't Cage's God. It was his acceptance of the seemingly random nature of things that led him to the use of chance in his composing.

In mushroom hunting, at a given time of year one knows generally where to look and what to look for, but the hunt itself is always subject to the vagaries of nature. Perhaps this is reflected in Cage's chance music. There are always general directions about how to proceed, but the results are unknown. Yet we are often not surprised or shocked, simply amused or intrigued. Occasionally, some remarkable combination of sounds strikes us as memorable, like the lovely troops of *Dentinum repandum* I found growing in a lushly verdant moss bog.

Cage meant a great deal to me thirty years ago, when I first discovered him; his writings and ideas seemed liberating. If, in more recent years, my interest in his music has tapered off, I was still happy to know that he was continuing his work.

His renunciation of the foundations of Western music, his refusal to consciously create would-be masterpieces, seemed needed in the postwar era of the fifties and sixties, that period when the profundity, the *scope* of the Holocaust began to register and when we also came to live with a symbolic nuclear cloud over our heads. His decision to abandon the construction of music in favor of allowing it simply to occur seems like a great signifier of our times. It was a sort of sacrifice. Paradoxically, it gave some of us the freedom to do what he refused to do—create music based on the models of our ancestors. He seemed to give permission to all our tendencies, including those he himself forsook.

Now there is a great lacuna. Who will take Cage's place as our good old reliable gadfly, trickster, challenger? No one, of course. This

most influential of artists was one of a kind. No epigones or disciples could fill his shoes. (He took them with him.)



John Cage cooks for Louise Nevelson (New York City, January 1977). Unpublished photograph by Betty Freeman. Reproduced by permission.

Cage said once (many times, I suppose) that he didn't want to *force* people (i.e. musicians) to do anything, but to allow for a situation in which they would be free to create. This has given rise to a significant paradox. As Cage's fame grew and interest in his work increased, his pieces were "performed" more and more often by ensembles whose members had little if any sympathy for his ideas. They found themselves "forced" into a situation over which they had little control, and in which they felt embarrassed or ridiculous; they may well have felt unable to express themselves—to be "creative"—at all. I suspect Cage was aware of this but chose not to worry about it, figuring it would all come out in the wash over time.

Besides, if professional musicians often joked around, sabotaged his work, or otherwise didn't take him seriously, the aural results were probably no less interesting than those produced by the most devoted admirers. That John could, and would, tolerate almost anything (except, as was noted in the *New York Times* obituary,

“sounds which frighten us or make us aware of pain”) is testimony to his all-inclusive personality.

For most composers, elimination and exclusion comprise the heart of the compositional process. For Cage, it was the opposite, and that is why he was perhaps not a great composer but a great human, a musician even.

* * *

A final thought on the great division in Cage’s body of work:

His contribution to new American music before his leap into indeterminacy, about 1950, was enough to gain him a place in the pantheon. All the percussion music, the music for prepared piano, and works such as *The Seasons* and the String Quartet comprise a very impressive and original collection. Even though he turned his back on that way of composing, the works still exist and he did not disown them. Indeed, he seemed very glad to hear them performed and recorded.

Perhaps those works represent a forcing, pushing principle. (Look, here I have composed these notes to be played by these instruments in this manner; please play them now.) Perhaps they are the *Yang* part of his life, whereas the later work is a more yielding acceptance of the way things are—the *Yin* side.

So there seems to be a great harmony in Cage’s life, even if our ears don’t always, at the moment, hear it.

* * *

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Garlands from Garland. Peter Garland, founding father of SOUNDINGS Press (as well as its executive editor, acquisitions editor, copy editor, proofreader, business manager, and what else?), claims to be bowing out of the publishing business with his collection *in search of SILVESTRE REVUELTAS: Essays 1978-90* (available from Frog Peak Press, Box A36, Hanover, NH 03755; \$20). We’ll see: Garland has threatened to self-destruct before but has never been able to resist doing what many people think he does best—publish others’ writings and music, and write himself. But if he carries out his intention, he will have gone out with a bang.

His book is one long crescendo. Its *pianissimo* beginning is a weak attempt to rewrite the history of U.S. music in terms of a group of composers of the “real” music of our country as opposed to one of “official” music. The official American music, “dry and lifeless,” is that of Copland et al.—the *alia* being Sessions and other “villians in this story” like Schuman, Persichetti, Babbitt, Carter, Wuorinen, Druckman, Harbison, Del Tredici, Zwilich, Picker. The real American music “begins, of course, with one composer: Henry Cowell” and includes Ives, Ruggles, Varèse, Rudhyar, Cage, Harrison, Partch, Nancarrow, and the early minimalists (Riley, Budd, Young, Reich, Glass). But of course this is not history; it’s criticism. . . .

Then there follow (*mezzo forte*) essays on some of Garland’s heroes (Nancarrow, Rudhyar, Harrison, Tenney). Even more interesting,

because fresher (*forte*), are some journal-like accounts of festivals in small Mexican towns (and their music and dance). These give way to a climactic finale (*fortissimo*): a sixty-page account of Revueltas and his music. Garland makes us want, very badly, to hear it; he makes it sound very important, in an essay based on the conviction that, in his “corrected” view of American-music history, “Revueltas will figure as one of this century’s great composers.” (Bang!)

“Views and Reviews 1978-1992.” That’s the subtitle of a collection of criticism by Tim Page, *Music from the Road* (Oxford University Press; \$24.95). Persons outside New York City may not know Page all that well: after some years as a stringer on the *New York Times*, he became music critic for New York and Long Island *Newsday*; and beginning in 1981, when New York’s NPR station was programming a lot of twentieth-century music, Page hosted a lively, loose-jointed show as a regular feature (only recently dropped). Most of his book’s articles and reviews are about contemporary music, Page’s principal interest. (“I believe that a classical critic must be seriously involved with the music of his time: The premiere of a new symphony is at least as important as the latest professional runthrough of Beethoven’s Fifth.”)

So here we have Page’s choice of sixty-five pieces, mostly on American music and musicians, from some dozen years of critical writing. His “Views”—feature pieces—are arranged in alphabetical order, from “Marin Alsop” to “Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.” His “Reviews” proceed chronologically from one of 1979 (“The Complete Works of Anton Webern conducted by Pierre Boulez”) through one of 1992 (“Who is Schubert?”—on the 1992 edition of the 92nd Street Y’s annual Schubertiade). . . . Page is a friendly critic and a reader-friendly writer; his enthusiasm for the new music he considers well-crafted and the composers he considers worth paying attention to is infectious. An easy and stimulating read!

A recent acquisition. Recently arrived, a gift from the author, is a book we can’t read: it’s in Chinese. But a Taiwanese friend has translated for us the title—*An Outline History of American Art Music*—and the table of contents (from 17th-century psalmody to Third Stream and the New Romanticism). The author is Cai Liang-yu, a.k.a. Dorothy Cai, with whom we have been having pleasant correspondence for a number of years on American-music matters. She is one of a growing number of Chinese scholars knowledgeable about the subject, and must be the one most passionately involved with it. The modest title of her book is belied by its length—and its wealth of music examples. It also can claim priority as the first book on American art music to be published in China. (Charles Hamm, in his lead article for the May 1989 I.S.A.M. Newsletter, “Way Down Upon the Yangtse River . . .,” mentioned it along with one or two others on popular American music.) Illiterate in Chinese though we may be, we are pleased to add Cai’s book to the I.S.A.M. library.

--H.W.H.

REGARDING RECORDINGS I

TWO NEW CDs (i.e. Chamber Discs)

Stefan Wolpe has long enjoyed special status among devotees of contemporary music. Many have sung his praises, but his work has remained almost unknown to the listening public, in part because of the dearth of recordings. Now Anthony Korf and Parnassus have given us an excellent new CD (Koch International Classics 3-7141-2H1) that offers a broad cross-section of Wolpe's chamber music, spanning a period of more than forty years.

The earliest pieces here are vocal works, designed to be functional, both in harmonic language and in purpose. There are protest songs against fascism to poems of Bertolt Brecht, incidental music for *Hamlet*, and an early klezmer-inspired setting of a Hebrew text (unfortunately unattributed in the notes). The postwar pieces are non-tonal, but with a lightness and nimble good humor that makes them stand out from the more austere works of the composer's younger contemporaries. The performances throughout are clear and convincing. Mezzo-soprano Joyce Castle give the songs an appropriately dramatic flair; she is ably accompanied by Edmund Niemann. Trumpeter Raymond Mase turns in some fine playing on the Quartet No. 1 of 1950 as well as the later works, in which the trumpet often plays a leading role.

Also new is a disc featuring Speculum Musicae, playing a quartet of works by four composers born in the 1950s (CRI CD 617). The most successful is David Rakowski's *Imaginary Dances*, a spirited work with much felicitous counterpoint and great rhythmic vitality in the outer movements. Sheree Clement's *Chamber Concerto* begins beautifully, with a long line built up slowly in a wash of instrumental color. While some of the central variations may not quite live up to the opening, the work develops with great formal clarity and a sure sense of direction. The other pieces fare less well. Susan Blaustein's *Commedia* contains many imaginative passages, but overall its development is somewhat ponderous: except for the fine opening music, everything seems to happen at about the same rate. A similar problem affects Allen Anderson's *Charrette*, which never really accumulates enough momentum to dramatize fully the moments of arrival toward which each section leads.

The performances, though, are outstanding. The instrumental virtuosity of the Speculum Musicae players and their passionate involvement with the music make them ideal interpreters. However time may judge these works, they have been given an excellent introduction.

—John F. Link
(C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center)

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC

Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern

edited by Josephine Wright with Samuel A. Floyd, Jr.

As editor of *The Black Perspective in Music*, Eileen Southern brought to her endeavors a rich musical background, a mind open to a wide range of social and cultural influences, and an impressive grounding in the varied facets of academic rigor. This festschrift pays tribute to a scholar's scholar with its selection of essays covering traditions in early music, Afro-American religious music, popular music and jazz, the blues, folk music, women in music, and Afro-American bibliographical studies.

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BEHIND THE BEAT *with Mark Tucker*

MINGUSOLOGY

"How is one to judge the contributions of Charles Mingus?" The question, posed by the late Martin Williams at the beginning of his essay on Mingus in *The Jazz Tradition* (new, revised edition), still carries a mighty echo. Although many count Mingus (1922-1979) among the most important jazz composers, bassists, and bandleaders, few have delved deeply into his work. Now's the time, with more sources available for exploring Mingus's life and art than ever before.

A good starting point is the 1982 study *Mingus: A Critical Biography* by the British writer and pianist Brian Priestley (Da Capo; \$11.95). Lucid and fair-minded, Priestley brings Mingus into focus and delivers astute musical commentary throughout. The transcriptions (mostly bass solos) and formal diagrams at the end of the volume are a welcome bonus.

Mingus's own *Beneath the Underdog*, published in 1971 and recently reprinted (Random House/Vintage Books; \$10), is one of the strangest memoirs in jazz. It reads like a Beat novel with Mingus as protagonist, moving in a series of dreamlike episodes from childhood scenes in the Watts section of Los Angeles to arrival in New York in the early fifties. Along the way there's plenty of raw sex and street talk, also a huge cast of shadowy characters who keep floating in and out of the story. Yet Mingus's distinctive voice somehow holds everything together, as he rails against racism, celebrates friends and lovers, and embraces life with near-crushing intensity. Like much of Mingus's music, the book has a rough-and-tumble quality, achieving a visceral impact from its author's outsized personality and fertile imagination. And always, even in the most comic scenes, undercurrents of pain and rage lie close to the surface.

While revealing much of his inner life in *Beneath the Underdog*, Mingus has surprisingly little to say about music. There are sketches of musician friends from Los Angeles days and several scenes with Theodore "Fats" Navarro, the brilliant bebop trumpeter who died at the age of twenty-six. Apparently, though, Mingus began another memoir devoted to musical topics—according to Ted Gioia, who in *West Coast Jazz* (Oxford University Press; \$24.95) quotes from the unpublished work (extracts of which first appeared in 1989). Gioia devotes a section of his study of postwar jazz in California to "Baron" Mingus, as the composer-bassist then called himself, exposing his roots in LA's black jazz community and discussing the Stars of Swing, a short-lived ensemble that anticipated Mingus's later experiments with his Jazz Workshops in the fifties.

To view Mingus through the eyes of those who knew him—or who crossed his path, at least—pick up Janet Coleman and Al Young's *Mingus/Mingus: Two Memoirs* (Limelight Editions, \$8.95). While neither author provides revelations, Young captures the powerful impression made by Mingus's music on a black teenager growing up in Detroit in the early fifties. Coleman's memoir consists of a fan's random notes: musings on Mingus's genius, fumbling interview attempts (typical question: "What did Charlie Parker eat?"), and a lethal-sounding recipe for Mingus's "holiday eggnog." The wide-eyed enthusiasm of Coleman and Young for Mingus often

exceeds their ability to give it literary expression. Their memoirs resemble snapshots in an old photo album—a jumble of candid moments that evoke yearning for time past.

Quite a different portrait emerges in the documentary *Mingus* by director Tom Reichman (Rhapsody Films, P.O. Box 179, New York, NY 10014; \$19.95 + \$4 shipping). Incorporating footage from November 1966, when, according to biographer Priestley, Mingus "approached one of the lowest points of his life," the film shows at least two distinct sides of its main subject. Clips from a performance at Lennie's on the Turnpike in Peabody, Massachusetts, show the dynamic bandleader in action, driving his musicians forward with propulsive basslines and shouts of encouragement. But in a meandering monologue filmed in his New York loft, Mingus appears near despair as he awaits eviction for alleged non-payment of rent. His comments keep taking a sinister turn toward such subjects as J. Edgar Hoover, Nazis, and the assassination of JFK. His behavior follows suit, as he shows off a shotgun (even firing it into the ceiling for the filmmaker) and plays with a noose around his neck. The final scenes are painful to behold, as Mingus is led away by police officers and his belongings removed from the building.

* * *

One frustrating aspect of Reichman's documentary is that it doesn't tell what happened to all the Mingus compositions and arrangements carted off at the end of the film. The news is good: they survived. Not only that, over three hundred items from Mingus's library have been catalogued by the husband-and-wife team of Andrew Homzy and Francine Dupuy, and microfilmed. (The originals, still in the possession of Sue Mingus, the composer's widow, will eventually go to the Library of Congress.) The nine reels of the Homzy-Dupuy project, "*The Music of Charles Mingus*," can be ordered from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023-7498). The rich collection includes full scores, lead sheets, and sketches, mostly in manuscript. Mingus's best-known compositions are represented—*Goodbye Porkpie Hat*, *Better Get It In Your Soul*, *Fables of Faubus*, *Pithecanthropus erectus*—together with such rarities as *Big Jim Whitey's Mule* and *Dry Cleaner from Des Moines*. (Anyone looking for dissertation topics?)

A healthy sampling of this output appears in *Charles Mingus: More than a Fake Book*, the first published anthology of the composer's works (Hal Leonard; \$19.95 + \$2.50 shipping from the The Jazz Workshop, 484 W. 43rd St., Suite 43s, New York, NY 10036). This folio, edited by Sue Mingus, contains over fifty compositions transcribed (some as short scores, others as lead sheets) by Homzy, Don Sickler, and Bill Mobley. Homzy has also supplied historical and analytic comments for each piece. The volume benefits from many photographs and several samples of Mingus's writing—including a provocative essay on jazz composition and a proven instructional method for toilet-training cats.

In the process of cataloguing Mingus's music, Homzy unearthed a set of roughly twenty pieces scored for large ensemble and identified by the title "Epitaph." Apparently Mingus had planned to unveil

COUNTRY AND GOSPEL NOTES by Charles Wolfe (Middle Tennessee State University)

The death of country singer Roy Acuff in November was hardly unexpected; he was eighty-nine years old and for the last two decades had become a patriarch of Nashville's long-running radio show "The Grand Ole Opry." When his health began to fail earlier in the year, journalists and fans openly speculated about what his passing would mean to country music. For many of them, Acuff had become a figurehead, a symbol of country music's roots back in the Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee, an icon linking the old pre-war music of early-morning radio, medicine shows, and hotel-room recording sessions with the slick new multi-million-dollar Opry house, the Nashville Network, and Farm Aid.

Indeed, he was all of these. He brought his string band to the stage of the Opry in February 1938 and remained there until weeks before his death. In between, he helped found the first modern music-publishing company in Nashville, pioneered southern music in Hollywood films, made dozens of hit records and introduced more than a few country standards, ran for governor of Tennessee, raised a family, encouraged good fiddle players, supported U.S. efforts in Vietnam, laid down the law to the long-haired Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and accepted honors and awards from no fewer than four presidents.

Yet, important as he was in the rise of commercial country music, Acuff had a more immediate and visceral impact on the younger singers who followed in his footsteps. He was known best for two songs, *The Great Speckle* [sic] *Bird*, a gospel song, and *The Wabash Cannonball*, a train piece. Both are cryptic, somewhat confusing songs with ragged and twisting pedigrees, and neither has the textual integrity of, say, a good Child ballad. But, for many singers, the songs were far less important than the way Acuff delivered them. He was a supreme stylist, rivaled in country-music history only by Jimmie Rodgers. On the day of his death, this was borne out by an odd and unplanned event that occurred on WSM radio, the flagship station of the Opry. Early in the morning, as listeners phoned to express their sadness over Acuff's passing, the veteran singer George Jones, arguably the best traditional country singer alive today, called in. In a long, off-the-cuff statement, Jones recalled how much of his own singing style came from Acuff, and how he had sat in bed as a child, nestled between his parents, listening to Acuff on the radio. After Jones had set the tone, singer after singer began calling the station to give their tributes to Acuff, each telling a favorite story. "He taught us how a soloist should sing country music," recalled one Opry veteran. For eight hours the calls continued—an electronic eulogy, delivered on the medium that had made Acuff's reputation.

Nobody has really talked much in print about his style, nor had many asked Acuff himself about it. Every country comedian could do Acuff imitations—the best sign of a potent style—and in the last few months fellow Opry singer Del Reeves had been delighting audiences with his imitation of Acuff singing *Achy Breaky Heart*. Singers intuitively knew the elements of the Acuff style, and were fond of saying things like "I hear Acuff in the way you phrase that." Most noticeable to a modern listener is the force and power with which Acuff sang; he always delivered a song at the very top of his range, punching it with short, intense phrases somewhat like a Louis

Armstrong trumpet lead. He sang loud; he grew up listening to old ballad singers whose voices carried down through a hollow, and he got his first performing experience singing for Dr. Hauer's medicine show, to draw crowds in the days before P.A. systems. He liked to sing back of the beat and was fond of over-enunciated, deliberate phrasing. His voice was dry and pliant, capable of spine-chilling slurs and glides—about as far as you could get from the mellow baritones of Addy Arnold or Jim Reeves. Acuff's was Appalachian soul music, and he used his style best when delivering a sentimental ballad like *Wreck on the Highway* (where "whiskey and blood ran together" and "I didn't hear nobody pray").

This style, and this particular song, are showcased on a CD recently issued on Columbia/Legacy, *The Essential Roy Acuff* (CK 48956). By coincidence, the set was released just a week before Acuff's death, and it functions as a fitting tribute to him. (Acuff has not fared well on CD reissues: until this set only two CDs had been made from his hundreds of recordings.) Working from the original metal parts for the old 78s, Columbia engineers and album producer Michael Brooks give the performances their best sound ever. The compilation focuses on Acuff at the absolute peak of his powers, the early 1940s, when he dominated the best-seller charts and took country music to network radio, Hollywood, and hundreds of USO bases. Here is *The Precious Jewel*, with its famous opening line, "Way back in the hills. . ."; *Night Train to Memphis*, co-authored by Nashville bandleader Beasley Smith; *Prodigal Son*, by Acuff's longtime music-publishing partner Fred Rose; and *This World Can't Stand Long*, a fervent apocalyptic plea that summed up the personal, intense style of Acuff's gospel music. Twenty songs are here, some famous, some representative, all showing what classic, acoustic country music was all about.

Acuff's career has been documented in print as well, with varying success. The standard biography is Elizabeth Schlappi's *Roy Acuff, The Smoky Mountain Boy* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1978; paperback available). It is wonderfully packed with details and data about Acuff's career up to the mid-1970s but is essentially a fan's book; there is too little perspective on Acuff's accomplishments and too little context about the larger country-music scene he was a part of. Even more eclectic is a volume Acuff himself co-authored with William Neely, *Roy Acuff's Nashville: The Life and Good Times of Country Music* (New York: Putnam/Perigree, 1983). Here are dozens of good anecdotes and inside accounts by Acuff, with occasional revealing comments. (About his style, he says, "I just tried to sing out, and with as much feelin as I could.") The book focuses on the earlier parts of the Acuff career, and the tone is not exactly candid. (Some of the stories Acuff told so often they became like performances.) The only full-blown scholarly attempt to make sense of the Acuff-Rose phenomenon is a splendid dissertation about the formation and success of the Acuff-Rose publishing company. This is John Rumble's "Fred Rose and the Development of the Nashville Music Industry, 1942-1954" (Vanderbilt University, 1980; available from University Microfilms, no. 8018899). Based on dozens of interviews with songwriters and singers associated with Acuff-Rose, and on careful examination of company correspondence and files, the study is the best detailed account of Acuff's middle years and a model for the eventual work on Acuff's overall career that we need.

BOOK NOOK III

"ALOUETTE, GENTILE ALOUETTE"

Just about anything you'd care to look up about that best-known of all Canadian folksongs—or about some 3,800 other topics and some 300 "see" references—appears in a trailblazing new volume, *The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (University of Toronto Press), edited by Helmut Kallman and Gilles Potvin with Mark Miller and Robin Elliott. With about 1500 three-column pages (on well-lead paper, so that the quality of the more than five hundred illustrations is high), and slightly larger than the *New 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 Croatia-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 usefully and unusually, a more than 15,000-item index of "persons, organizations, companies, radio stations, churches, periodicals, schools, etc. that do *not* have their own entries in *EMC*," as well as all those that *do*. This index supplements the numerous "See . . ." entries and cross-references (an asterisk before a work indicating that it has its own entry in the encyclopedia).

EMC costs only \$95, 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 to be an edition in that language, titled *Encyclopedie de la musique au Canada*.

* * *

Does that sound at all familiar? It may, to longtime readers of this Newsletter: it is basically the same review of *EMC* that appeared more than ten years ago, in our issue Vol. XI, No. 1 (November 1981). The only changes, except for the omission of the name of Kenneth Winters (who was an editor of the first edition but not of the second), are indicated in boldface Roman type; they suggest the expansion of the new edition over the earlier one—including, modestly, its price.

—H.W.H.

MINGUSOLOGY (*continued*)

the entire massive work at a 1962 live recording session at New York's Town Hall. The project proved too ambitious. But thanks to Homzy's rediscovery, Gunther Schuller was able to reconstruct, edit, and record *Epitaph* (Columbia C2K 45428), a work in eighteen movements lasting more than two hours.

Schuller's rendition of *Epitaph* provides a breathtaking, panoramic view of Mingus's creative output, incorporating early experiments (*Chill of Death, Moods in Mambo*), inventive recompositions of jazz standards (*I Can't Get Started, Body and Soul*), affectionate tributes to musicians (Thelonious Monk, Oscar Pettiford), earthy blues (*Better Get It In Your Soul*), and searing political commentary (*Freedom*). If the players—all drawn from the top ranks of the jazz profession—occasionally seem overwhelmed by their responsibilities, it's understandable, given the work's immensity and formidable technical challenges. (This was, after all, the 1989 world premiere; later Schuller and an orchestra took *Epitaph* on tour in Europe, apparently reaching an even higher level of performance.) Overall, though, the *Epitaph* recording represents a stunning achievement—for Mingus the realization of a dream deferred, for Schuller a project ideally suited to his unique talents as musicologist, editor, and conductor.

Nat Hentoff once observed that all Mingus's music seemed to be "fused from the parts of his life, like a book." Does one read the life through the music, or vice versa? Either way, for those who would judge his multi-faceted contributions, the book of Charles Mingus remains wide open.

COME ON ALONG!**COME ON ALONG!!**

Join us on Sunday afternoon 28 March, for a gala recital and reception celebrating twenty years of duo recitals by soprano Joan Morris and pianist William Bolcom (and singer-pianist Max Morath may join them)!

Yes! Two decades ago (5 January 1973), the Morris-Bolcom team made their first public appearance. Where? On the stage of Gershwin Theater at Brooklyn College, in a concert billed as "All the Things They Were: American Popular Songs of the 1920s and 1930s." I.S.A.M. was the sponsor.

Joan and Bill wish to honor the anniversary—and the Institute for Studies in American Music and its retiring director H. Wiley Hitchcock—with a twentieth-anniversary retrospective: a gala benefit concert on behalf of I.S.A.M. followed by a champagne reception.

You'll be hearing more, later, about this terrific event. Now: **SAVE THE DATE!! Then: COME ON ALONG!!!**

REGARDING RECORDINGS II

CHAMBER . . . BUT NOT OF HORRORS

Three recent CDs—two of them, as it happens, from New World Records—comprise very special additions to American chamber music on records:

Two quintets by Ned Rorem occupy New World 80146-2—*Winter Pages* (1981), a thirty-minute-long suite in twelve movements for clarinet, bassoon, violin, cello, and piano, and *Bright Music* (1987), for flute, two violins, cello, and piano and in five movements that last about twenty minutes. Genial, beguiling, smiling music, here performed by some of New York City's best players (most of them identified with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center).

On New World 80422-2 are four works from the mid-1980s and later by Barbara Kolb—*Millefoglie*, a nineteen-minute piece in one movement for chamber orchestra and computer-generated tape, brilliantly negotiated by the Montreal Group Nouvel Ensemble Moderne under its founding conductor Lorraine Vaillancourt; *Extremes*, a perfectly titled duo for cello and flute; *Chromatic Fantasy*, for narrator (given witty variants of a poem by Howard Stern) and six instruments (a chamber group, Music Today, sponsored by the 92nd Street YMHA in New York and led by Gerard Schwarz); and *Solitaire*, for piano and two-channel tape with vibraphone, which toys with bits and snatches of real and imagined eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *moments musicaux* in a dizzying array of varied superimpositions—"a musical mobile created from the flotsam and jetsam of Western art music of the past," in the words of Peter M. Wolrich, who contributes attractive and lucid liner notes.

The third disc, Neuma 450-78, includes three twenty-minute compositions by Roger Reynolds. One is *The Vanity of Words* (1986), fifth in Reynolds's virtuosic "Voicespace" series; another is *Variation* (1988), for solo piano; the third is *Personae* (1990), for violin, chamber ensemble, and computer-processed sound. All are strong, complex, demanding works; all are also spectacularly rewarding examples of Reynolds's incomparably imaginative and finely tuned ear. The performers, the computer-processing of musical materials, and the recording itself all derive from the extraordinary resources of the music department of the University of California, San Diego.

AND NOW, FROM THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY:

A well-known early-music group singing white spirituals and folkish revival hymns? An operatic superstar singing Stephen Foster songs? Yes, indeed. Read on:

On two recent CDs, *The Boston Camerata*, under Joel Cohen's direction, offers twenty-five eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hymns (Erato 2292-45818-2), and baritone Thomas Hampson, joined by from one to about a dozen other musicians, is the mainstay of *American Dreamer* (Angel CDC 7546212), a collection of some twenty pieces by Foster.

The vocal component of the Boston group varies from a single singer to a sextet, with accompaniments varying from solo guitar to

small ensemble. Their music consists of pieces taken mostly from the *American Vocalist* (1849) and *The Revivalist* (1868), with a few works by such eighteenth-century composers as Daniel Read (*WINDHAM, GREENWICH*) but mostly anonymous folk hymns from the camp-meeting repertory and early gospel hymns such as Robert Lowry's familiar *Shall we gather at the river?* (1865). The performances are devout and intense; they very subtly draw a fine line between the cosmetically arty and the falsely folkish. Like the same group's earlier album *The Roots of American Folksong* (Erato 2292-45474-2), this one is treasurable. (Try if possible to obtain also, from Elektra International Classics [212/399-6960], the non-commercial brief videotape produced as promotion for the recording; Cohen has some good, heartfelt things to say about the music.)

Hampson offers mainly "household" songs by Foster (rather than minstrel-show songs)—blessedly unhackneyed ones, for the most part. (How many know *The voice of bygone days* or *Molly! Do you love me?* or *Comrades, fill no glass for me?*—or, for that matter, Foster's very first song, *Open thy lattice, love of 1844?*) Hampson's is a creamy voice, and it traces Foster's melodies in loving contours—tending, though, to turn the poignant into the plaintive, the tender into the treacly. All the songs are "arranged"—by Jay Ungar and Molly Mason—but lightly so, with support for Hampson provided by a few other singers (including a cameo appearance by Garrison Keillor as "vocal harmony" on *Hard times come again no more*) and a small, varying chamber choir playing appropriate instruments. The players have their innings in three rollicking, made-up medleys interspersed among the thirteen songs.

—H.W.H.

* * *

DREAMILY WE ROLL ALONG . . .

Ye olde-fashioned illustrations of musical activity found here and there in this issue come from a section on "dreams concerning singing, musical instruments and comedy" in an 1872 publication of the New York firm of Robert M. De Witt: *NAPOLEON'S COMPLETE DREAMBOOK: containing Full, Plain, and Accurate Explanations of Fortune-Telling by Dreams, Visions, and Reveries . . . together with A General Dictionary of the Signification of Dreams and Reveries . . . arranged and explained in the most familiar and intelligible manner . . . By MADAME CAMILLE LE NORMAND, the Modern Sibyl. . . .* Paul Charosh, our colleague in Brooklyn College's Department of Sociology (and a scholar of American popular music) called the little book to our attention and loaned us a copy for reproduction. Good Night . . . and Sweet Dreams!

BOOK NOOK IV

ON MUSIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR PRACTITIONERS AND PATRONS

Most readers of this newsletter are patrons of music libraries. All will find stimulation and sustenance in *Music Librarianship in America*, edited by Michael Ochs, originally printed in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* (Spring 1991) and now reprinted as a book (available only from Music Library Association, P.O. Box 487, Canton, MA 02021; \$22; \$19.80 for MLA members).

Michael Ochs was Harvard's music librarian (now he is Claire Brook's successor as music editor at W. W. Norton & Co.); he chaired a committee that organized a symposium, titled as is the book, at Harvard in 1989. The symposium honored the establishment at Harvard of this country's first endowed music-library chair, named for Richard F. French, professor of music *emeritus* at the School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University. The book of proceedings edited out of the symposium is, intellectually, an uncommonly rich array of essays on music librarianship—a bit on the past, more on the present, and, excitingly if also frighteningly, on the future. It is also a stunning example of the bookmaker's art.

Like the symposium, the book is organized in four sections, each about thirty pages long. One is devoted to "Music Librarians and American Music," with provocative papers by Americanist-musicologists Rich Crawford and Steve Ledbetter, music librarians Don Krummel and Don Roberts. "Music Librarians as Custodians of Cultural History" includes a predictably challenging paper by Charles Hamm and a witty but terrifying one (on the implications of technology) by James Coover, along with another by Dena Epstein. "Music Librarians and Music Scholarship" includes an exemplary essay by H. Colin Slim, others by Leo Balk, Bruno Netti, and James Pruett. Something of a grab-bag is a trio of papers, lumped together a bit uncomfortably as "Music Librarians and Performance," by elder-statesman violist Raphael Hillyer, recordings-critic David Hamilton, and super-articulate composer Milton Babbitt. Ochs has edited the discussions following the papers skillfully into readable, thought-provoking dialogues.

—H.W.H.

FURTHER WORD UP ON RAP

We seldom print letters to the editor, but here is one, reacting to the lead article in the last I.S.A.M. Newsletter (David Sanjek's "Word Up On Rap"), that we cannot resist—not that we agree with it (we don't, on many counts). If the "Toops" in stanza 5 puzzles you, see that Newsletter issue, page 2, column 1, paragraph 4. The plain brown envelope enclosing the poem by "JLP" was postmarked Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Rap is crap
and that's the truth.
It dulls the mind
and is uncouth.

Got no use
for elevation.
It leads the young
to degradation.

It stirs up hate.
Its ring's falsetto.
It keeps black youth
down in the ghetto.

"Writers and scholars
have traced [its] roots . . .":
All such pedantry
gives me hoots.

High culture's been bludgeoned;
Great music is bloody.
The Toops of the world
need something to study.

You predictably fall
like nuts from a tree,
I. S. A. M.
is PC!

Write what you want;
You can't make me agree.
Yours most sincerely,
JLP

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The image shows a musical score for a rap piece, consisting of two staves. The notation is complex, featuring various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. Key markings include 'r. h.' (right hand), 'i. h.' (left hand), 'ppp' (pianissimo), 'ff' (fortissimo), 'very slowly', and 'piu ten.' (pianissimo). The score is written in a style that suggests a specific rhythmic feel, likely related to the 'rap' mentioned in the text above. The bottom of the score has 'forte' and 'Piano' markings with asterisks.

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