

NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN AMERICAN MUSIC

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

Volume XVII, Number 2

May 1988

A TRIBUTE TO E.C. by David Schiff

David Schiff—a composer in his own right, known perhaps especially for his funny and poignant opera on Isaac Bashevis Singer's Gimpel the Fool—is also the author of the masterly study The Music of Elliott Carter (1983; now available from Da Capo Press in paperback). He is chairman of the music department at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

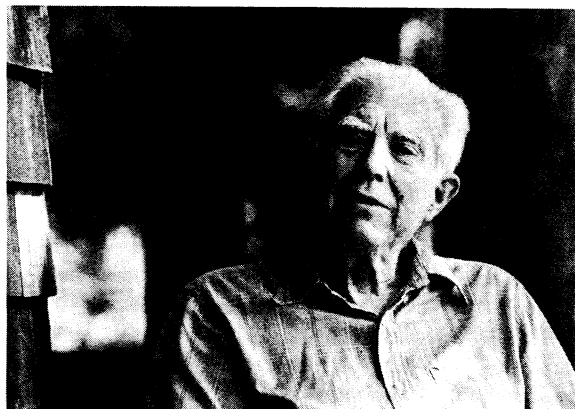
*I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill. . . .**

The musical world is already celebrating Elliott Carter's upcoming eightieth birthday. Festivities are taking place in London, Bath, Zurich, Amsterdam, Pontino, Tanglewood, Geneva, Donaueschingen, Badenweiler, Edinburgh, San Francisco, Houston, Washington, and Paris, with a double play of concertos in New York on December 4, a week before the actual birthday: Ursula Oppens and the American Composers Orchestra playing the Piano Concerto in the afternoon and Heinz Holliger and the San Francisco Symphony playing the new Oboe Concerto in the evening.

This manifest recognition of Carter's achievement isn't surprising—the reason for it is quite simply the music itself—and yet this fact *is* surprising, for Carter's widely acknowledged position in twentieth-century music belies many of the myths of the American music industry. His music, as is always pointed out, is not "accessible"; it's very hard to play and challenging to listen to, and it's not connected in any obvious way to the standard fare of the concert hall (the way "neo-Romantic" music is) or to popular music (as is much of what is called minimalism). It also isn't particularly American-sounding and won't get played on national holidays (except on WNYC) or as theme music for the nightly news. Carter has not sought a mass audience either in the concert hall or on the celebrity lecture circuit, but neither has he bolstered his career with the security and prestige of university teaching (the gulag of American music). He has belonged to no "school"; his music can't be fit into any passing "ism," and it isn't neo-anything. He has never been a performer or conductor of his music, a path to acceptance that almost every other American composer has pursued; and he has not propounded a theory of composition for the eager consumption of graduate students. Most remarkably, he has suffered years of bad press—particularly at the hands of the *New York Times*, which has greeted every Carter premiere of the last twenty-five years with incomprehension and scorn. So Carter has done everything "wrong" and it has turned out remarkably right, because his creative energies were not dis-

tracted from the task at hand—composing. (And isn't it interesting that so many of these wise notions of how to be a successful composer are based on doing everything and anything but compose.)

Carter has composed slowly but steadily, so that his oeuvre is now quite copious, and, to a degree rare in contemporary music, he has let the music speak for itself. (Typically, he declined to do the Norton lectures at Harvard because it would interfere with his composing.) He has often said that he writes music that will interest performers so that they will then bring it to an audience, and he has been remarkably fortunate in the talents of the performers who have taken up this challenge: Paul Jacobs, Gilbert Kalish, Aleck Karis, Ursula Oppens, and Charles Rosen among the pianists; the Arditti, Composers, Juilliard, and Kronos quartets; groups such as California E.A.R. Unit, the Ensemble InterContemporain, the Fires of London, the New York New Music Ensemble, and Speculum Musicae; and conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Oliver Knussen, and Dennis Russell Davies. Even so, I think we are just beginning to hear what the music has to say. Only slowly do performances and critical understanding take the measure



*Elliott Carter, November 1987
(photo by Roberta Hershenson)*

A TRIBUTE TO E.C. (continued)

of music like Carter's, and as yet we have only a partial idea of both the beauty of the music and its profound originality. I have heard performances of *A Symphony of Three Orchestras* by Boulez, Maazel, and Ozawa, each revealing some aspect of the score but none achieving a consistent solution to the challenges it poses expressively, formally, and acoustically. Far more vague, however, is the state of current critical reception and understanding. Because Carter, much like Bartók in his time, has pursued a thoroughly independent course, his music has resisted categorization and has either been placed among UFOs and other odd entities or has been unaccountably left out of the critical narrative altogether. Perhaps soon the critics will realize that this is *their* problem, not Carter's.

If I may propose one fertile area of critical exploration, it is the poetics of musical form in Carter's music. For Carter, very much as for Haydn, the form of a piece depends on its materials. This may sound like a modernist tautology, but both composers push the tensions and contradictions of this idea to extremes. They like to present the listener with what Stefan Wolpe called "material of no consequence" in what Carter calls an "unmotivated continuity," so that only the particular outcome of the work itself will reveal the "meaning" of the materials. Here Carter stands in relation to Haydn as Joyce may be said to relate to Sterne: the modern sense of disorder presumes (demands) both a greater degree of chaos and a more provisional and polyvalent notion of meaning than does the classical. Indeed, I think that it is precisely this awareness of the differences between what Roland Barthes termed the classical and modern texts, the first closed and determined, the second open and permeable, that informs the remarkable new classicism of Carter's latest works.

Penthode, that great luminous stream of sound (a quintet of quartets) written for Boulez's Ensemble InterContemporain, may serve as an example of how profoundly Carter reconstructs our notion of musical form.

The orchestra is disassembled into five apparently mismatched groups spread across the stage with no apparent logic, here a fiddle, there a harp. The music begins with a solo viola, seemingly in the middle of an interior monologue that has begun sometime before, just slightly expressive and yet purposeless in its melodic meanderings. Gradually, in no apparent order, each instrument of the ensemble enters with its own inward song. The music, though, remains slow, peaceful, directionless. After the tuba has its say, the texture changes to a double series of fragments, episodes for each of the five quartets, interspersed with passages for the four five-member "natural" families of instruments (woodwinds, brass, strings, and "instruments of short duration"). With a sudden burst the mood changes; we finally hear a fast, accelerating music with a strong sense of drive. We may recognize that the texture has returned to that of the opening, but with a greater sense of connection between the separate melodies, so that they seem to form a continuous line passing from instrument to instrument. There is also a second "Klangfarbenmelodie," a melody of rhythmic pulses which become increasingly fast (though not in a constant way.) The once-directionless music now seems to spin and whirl, toward a surprising joke, a cadenza arching

from the lowest notes on a contrabass clarinet to the upper reaches of a piccolo. But the joke resonates enormously. We realize that the piece has been—or might have been—not the improvisatory, entropy-haunted collage we took it for, but a very proper aria da capo. As if to confirm our suspicions the orchestra responds with a great tutti, which then, as in so many Carter works, quickly unravels and vanishes. So Carter gives us the pleasures of form and formlessness at the same time; he shows us that musical form is a mirage created by sleight of hand out of arbitrary patterns and connections, but that even such provisional proceedings can reveal a vision, however fugitive, of order and harmony. He reveals the chaos that underlies classical form and the formal repose inherent in modernist disorder. He takes away our older notion of the beautiful and gives us a new one which then restores and enriches the old.

No wonder the world is celebrating.

*It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.**

* "Anecdote of the Jar," from Wallace Stevens, *Poems* (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 21.

The guests go in to supper.

Interviews with each composer about her or his ideas on music, daily life, consciousness, the future, possibilities

Texts/scores/ideas of seven American composers who use words as an integral part of their compositions

A document of an important area of musical expression. Opera, song, and performance are undergoing a transformation, and these composers are vanguards. Valuable for its literary and philosophical aspects. Essential for anyone interested in music and art today, for music and art collections. Designed to last on the shelf, to be read over and over.

"...an extraordinary resource."
Lovely Music, New York

"The[se] artists represent a growing group of musicians, listeners, and academicians for whom the seemingly radical tenets that underlie their work are already accepted as realities. The excitement stems not only from the realities of today but also from potentials for tomorrow."
Nit & Wit: Chicago's Cultural Arts Magazine

"Both the interviews and the 'pieces' are at times moving, provocative, intriguing, trivial, and perplexing; in short, plenty to be grateful for... fascinating resonances, relations, and contradictions between ideas."
American Book Review

The guests go in to supper. \$32.00

384 pages, archival paper, sewn-in signatures. 8.5 x 10"

ISBN 0-936050-05-5 To order, postpaid, send U.S. funds to:

Burning Books, 3608 Lake Shore Avenue, Oakland, California 94610

B U R N I N G B O O K S

I.S.A.M. MATTERS

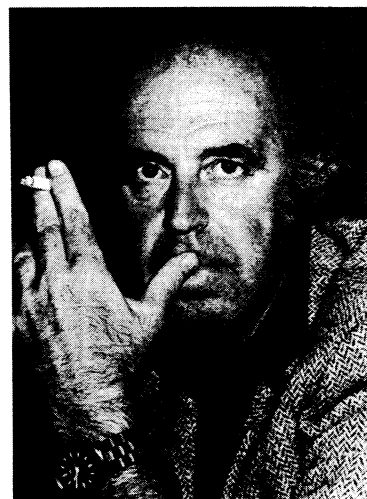
Off and On the Press. Recently published are two more I.S.A.M. monographs, Roger Reynolds's *A Searcher's Path: A Composer's Ways* (No. 25; with accompanying cassette) and Philip Carlsen's *The Player-Piano Music of Conlon Nancarrow: An Analysis of Selected Studies* (No. 26). In production are two other monographs, each developed out of I.S.A.M. lectures: **James Lincoln Collier's** *The Reception of Jazz in America: A New View*, which challenges the common notion that it was Europeans, not Americans, who first acknowledged the significance of jazz and dealt with it critically and historically, and **Charles Hamm's** *Afro-American Music, South Africa, and Apartheid*, which traces the uses of American popular music in South Africa from minstrel show to disco, and deals with the remarkable turnabout in such an album as Paul Simon's *Graceland*, shot through as it is with South African idioms and individuals.

AMBC (American Music at Brooklyn College), the institute's regular mini-series of lectures, had a distinctly British tinge during the Spring 1988 semester. Stephen Banfield, in New York on a brief leave from the University of Keele in Staffordshire to do research toward a book on Stephen Sondheim, spoke on "Sondheim and the Waltz" (23 March). Paul Oliver, blues specialist par excellence (though his academic appointment at Oxford Polytechnic—in the same city as the University—is in the Department of Architecture), spoke on "Blues into Jazz" (25 April). And Don Gillespie spoke on the American teacher of Britain's Frederick Delius, "Thomas F. Ward of Brooklyn" (3 May), who has been the recent focus of Gillespie's research.

Copasetic Kudos. Chalk up three, resulting from collaborations between I.S.A.M. and other outfits: two more for "AmeriGrove" (Macmillan Publishers) from the Music Library Association for best reference book of 1986 and a special commendation from the Sonneck Society, and one from American Women in Radio and Television for "American Music Makers," or at least one show in that NPR radio series (WGBH-Boston; Ev Grimes, producer)—the one on Ruth Crawford Seeger.

Good Fellows All. I.S.A.M. Senior Research Fellows have been named for next year. In the fall semester, composer and computer-music maven Jon Appleton, on leave from Dartmouth College, will direct a seminar on "Music and Technology." In the spring semester, choral conductor and organist William Osborne, on leave from Denison University (Granville, Ohio), will direct one on "American Choral Music, 1860-1930." . . . Continuing our survey of former institute fellows and what they've been up to since their fellowship terms: **Robert Ashley** (Senior Fellow in 1978-79) has mainly been busy composing and producing operas for television. *Perfect Lives* and *Atalanta (Acts of God)*—two in a trilogy about "the history of America from a mental point of view" (as Ashley describes it), the other being the nearly finished *Now Eleanor's Idea*—have both been shown in Europe and America. *Music with Roots in the Aether*, that set of seven generous "portraits" of contemporary American composers, has been edited for TV in seven two-hour programs, has been scheduled for cablecast in Rochester and Buffalo, and is distributed by Lovely Music, Ltd. . . . **John Rockwell** (1980-81)

Springtime special!! The redoubtable West Coast new-music patron Betty Freeman is also well known as a photographer, especially of composers and other artists. An exhibition of her portraits which opened in Italy last fall traveled to Los Angeles in February and will be shown at the Brooklyn Academy of Music next fall. *Music People & Others*, the show's exceptionally handsome catalogue, elegantly printed in Milan, includes almost one hundred full-page reproductions of Freeman's photographs, most of them composer studies (and as fresh and unhackneyed as spring), plus introductory essays by her and Daniela Palazzoli, director of the Brera Academy in Milan. **Copies are available from I.S.A.M. at \$15 per copy postpaid . . .** (Reproductions of several photos in the catalogue are spotted here and there in this issue of the Newsletter, with Ms. Freeman's permission.)



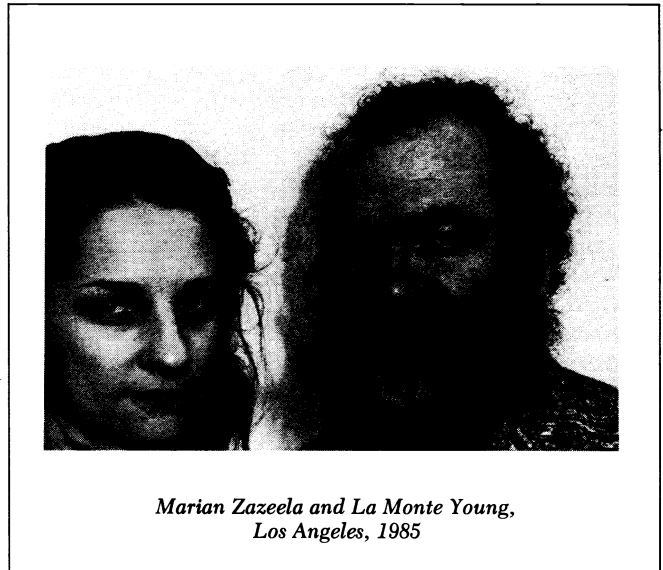
Earle Brown, Los Angeles, 1979

has written two books—*All American Music: Composition in the Late 20th Century* and *Sinatra: An American Classic*—along with full-time work as music critic of the *New York Times*. His reports therein on new opera productions here, there, and everywhere lead us to suspect another book in the making, on opera in this century. He was also a principal adviser, on twentieth-century experimental music, rock, and popular-music criticism, for "AmeriGrove," and contributed to it more than seventy articles. . . . **Stephen Spackman** (1981), so far our only British Senior Fellow, continues to teach in the Department of Modern History at the University of St. Andrews (Fife, Scotland); also to work at his book on Wallingford Riegger, a foretaste of which he published in the *Musical Quarterly*, LXXI (1985), as "Wallingford Riegger and the Modern Dance." His essay on "The American Musical Avant-Garde and Europe" is included in *Social Change and New Modes of Expression: The United States, 1910-1930*, ed. R. Kroes and A. Portelli (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1986).

BOOK NOOK

The Avant-Garde is Served. That may be an appropriate heading for a note about *The Guests Go In To Supper*, a handsome if enigmatically titled book with contributions by (and notes about) John Cage, Robert Ashley, Yoko Ono, Laurie Anderson, Charles Amirkhanian, Michael Peppe, and K. Atchley. Each of the "guests" is somewhat self-consciously introduced by Charles Shere (composer and former music critic of the *Oakland Tribune*), interviewed by the book's editors (Melody Sumner, Kathleen Burch, Michael Sumner) or someone else, then turned loose on his or her own to present a generous commentary, work of art, or both. The volume is distinctly West Coast in aura and somewhat reminiscent of those wonderful issues of *Source: Music of the Avant Garde*, published in California between 1969 and 1977, with their deliciously surprising non sequiturs from piece to piece. *The Guests*, though, does have some consistency, in that each artist is in some way concerned with *words* and the fashioning of a musical experience with words at the very core of it. John Cage here appears at his most mesostic (as it were), with the long text *Mushrooms et Variations*, consisting only of mesostics; Robert Ashley offers the libretto for a sub-opera, "Improvement," from one of his triptych *Atalanta*, *Perfect Lives*, and *Now Eleanor's Idea*; Yoko Ono presents various songs, stories, and essays; Laurie Anderson, a set of winsome, illustrated song texts; Charles Amirkhanian, texts of his own—for text-sound compositions, and almost irresistible in their invitation to be chanted as one reads them. Least well-known of all, at least in these parts, is the work of Peppe and Atchley, who really carry words into video (and their contributions here are mostly visual). *The Guests* is a beautifully designed book, with unconventional and varied typography and sympathetic use of space and light; it manages to project, accurately and invitingly, the plurality of its contributors and their risky teetering on the far edge of musical art. (Burning Books, 3608 Lake Shore Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610; \$30).

—H. W. H.



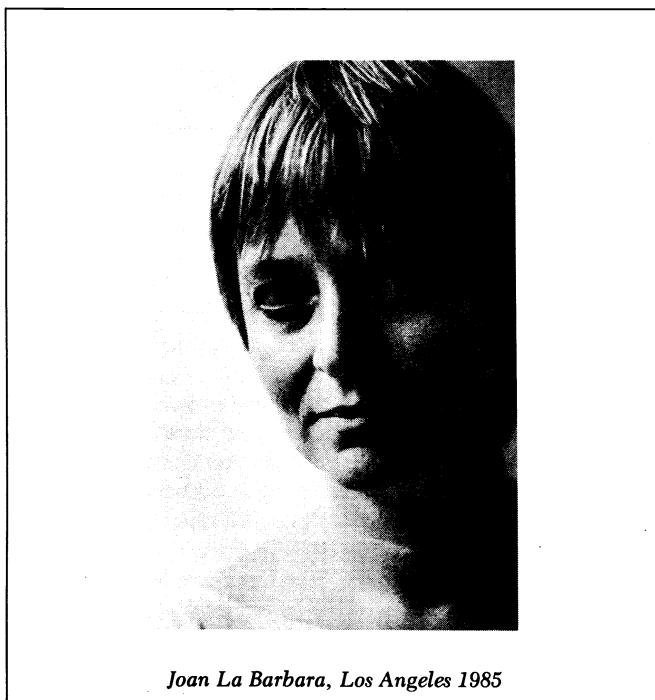
Marian Zazeela and La Monte Young,
Los Angeles, 1985

What's in a Title? *Musical Taste as a Religious Question in Nineteenth-Century America* by Jane Rasmussen (Edwin Mellen Press; \$49.95) has much to offer in its 600-odd pages, but it does not deliver the sweeping view that its title promises. Instead, it focuses only on the music of the Protestant Episcopal Church from 1804 to 1859 (as explained in the book's opening abstract). The author has combed numerous periodicals of that church for a detailed survey of issues confronting Episcopalians: poor congregational singing, the controversial role of the choir, revisions of metrical psalms, approval of hymns and tunes, and music education. Although her own observations are far from penetrating, she has given us a hefty and fascinating compilation of documents (among them, resolutions of the church's general conventions) and opinions of principally the clergy and laity. As the author admits with regret, her sources rarely give the musician's viewpoint on the eternal debate over what constitutes appropriate sacred music.

—R. Allen Lott
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Ragtime for Wordsleuths. The subject of the acrostic puzzle in the *New York Times Magazine* of 6 March 1988 was Ian Whitcomb's new book, *Irving Berlin and Ragtime America*. This is another unconventional book—following *After the Ball* (1972; rev. 1986) and *Rock Odyssey* (1983)—from the 1960s rock star who has turned his allegiance to early Tin Pan Alley. It is not really a biography, for "Ragtime America" is more central to it than Berlin; nor is it really history, since factual material is heavily embellished. It does, however, present an extraordinarily vivid sense of the period, raises new questions, and provides curious historical insights. Published in London by Century Hutchinson, it is available in the USA for \$12.50 from I.T.W. Industries, Box 451, Altadena, CA 91001.

—Edward A. Berlin
Queensborough Community College



Joan La Barbara, Los Angeles 1985

CONCERNING "THE AMERICAN FIVE" by Don C. Gillespie

Don Gillespie, current Senior Research Fellow of I.S.A.M., has been directing a seminar on the group of American composers whom he was the first to name "The American Five." In conjunction with the seminar, he organized a recital of music of The Five by Roger Zahab, violin, and Marcia Eckert, piano. Dr. Gillespie's introductory comments included a succinct and interesting account of the reasons behind his naming the group as he did, and of the gradual acceptance of the cognomen . . . and concept. We think you will find it well worth reading.

When I was invited last year to come to Brooklyn College and the Institute for Studies in American Music this spring, I pondered long, and with some misgivings, about how one could present in one semester so vast a topic as the music of the group I had some years ago named "The American Five": Charles Ives and his colleagues Carl Ruggles, Wallingford Riegger, Henry Cowell, and John Becker. Why, Ives alone was worth a couple of semesters, wasn't he? And how could I place John Joseph Becker in the illustrious company of these others and present my case for an "Ives Group—the American Five" based on a ten-year-old dissertation? (My own recent work has been in nineteenth-century American music, where I am, some say, too obsessively involved in a musical detective story—an attempt to discover the background and fate of Frederick Delius's profoundly influential American teacher, the mysterious orphan-Brooklynite, Thomas F. Ward.) But I could not resist the challenge, and here I am.

My proposal for an "American Five" is largely based upon my long research into the career of John Becker, a close friend of Charles Ives and a man who in his heyday (the 1920s and '30s) was the leading proponent in the Midwest for experimental music.

In my investigations, I discovered that whenever the pioneers of twentieth-century American music were listed, Becker's name usually surfaced, and always in the company of Ives, Ruggles, and the others of the older generation of the American avant-garde. Until recent years, when Becker's music has become more widely performed and published, the question was often asked: "Just who is the elusive 'Dr. Becker' and how does he fit into the so-called 'Ives group'?" To the average follower of modern music, Becker is perhaps best known as the orchestrator of Ives's famous song "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven," on which the two men collaborated during a two-year period in the mid-1930s. To the specialist familiar with the New York scene in that decade, he is the belligerent "ultra-modern" composer from Minnesota for whose music Henry Cowell constantly propagandized; the one who made quite a stir at the Pan American Association's concerts at the New School; the wild man from the West, an uncompromising and rather naive sort. It was during those heady years that Becker became fast friends with the other members of the Group—a group whose associations became so close that they seemed to constitute a unit.

Becker can best be described not only as an "ultra-modernist" (one who rather self-consciously took the side of the most dissonant musical language of his day) but as a crusader for the music of the other four composers. As far back as 1931 in St. Paul, he conducted the first performance of Ives's "In the Night" from the *Set for Theatre Orchestra*, and in his concerts, lectures, and writings, Becker presented new music to Midwestern audiences, which reacted with almost uniform hostility or, at best, indifference.

Becker's own compositions caused one Twin Cities reviewer to complain that "if you were to sit in the room with two musicians one of whom was singing 'Annie Laurie' in the key of E-flat while the other played a Chopin prelude in the key of D, you would have something approximating the aural confusion from which some of us suffer through the type of music under discussion." (True to form, Becker went straight home and tried the experiment, as can be seen in his own copy of the Chopin preludes, now in the New York Public Library's Music Division.)

Ives, on the other hand, described Becker's music (the Horn Concerto of 1933) as "high moving strong music and it has guts—in place of sap—which is the opposite to 95% of the ladybird programs today. It ought to be played by one of the big orchestras—and will when they get over the days of parlor entertainment." And, as a matter of fact, Becker's *Symphonia Brevis* of 1929—described by its composer as a "protest against a world civilization that starves its millions in peacetime and murders those same millions in wartime"—has indeed been played on a number of occasions in recent years, proving Ives at least partially correct.

As a graduate student at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, I attempted to develop the thesis that Becker was, in fact, one of the few iconoclastic composers of his day, and one who (with Henry Cowell) very early on recognized Ives as America's greatest composer. The rich Becker Collection of letters, papers, and memorabilia (to which I then had sole access) served to verify my proposal and reinforced it over a period of years. And I soon found that Ives, whose sympathy was not easy to come by, had backed the other members of the group, with moral, spiritual, and often financial support through those years.

Skeptical of European influences, all of these composers wrote complex music of rugged individualism, experimental in approach and distinctly American, though generally without surface Americanisms. As Ives wrote to Becker: ". . . Not music made in America, but American music."

As we now see in hindsight, with the group's rigorous "ultra-modern" stance most of its legacy was passed by in the late 1930s with the rise of "Americana"—a more accessible folk-based music, and more in tune with Depression times.

I will be the first to admit the limitations of such a phrase as "The American Five." Certainly there were other important innovative American-based composers active both at home and abroad at that time—George Antheil, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Dane Rudhyar, to name only a few. But it seemed to me that the key to the term "American Five" lay in the closeness of the group to Ives himself, and that his transcendental benediction and unwaivering support justified their being considered a "unit." It was these composers *only* that Becker always called

(continued on page 12)

AMPLE ANTHOLOGIES

Two books that have been very, very long in the making are finally out. They resonate as living history, for both are anthologies of essays and/or interviews, but many of the authors or interviewees are no longer alive. Reading them is a slightly eerie but poignant and intense experience. One of these books is *Richard S. Hill: Tributes from Friends*, overseen into print by Carol June Bradley and James B. Coover (Detroit: Information Coordinators, Inc., 1987; \$45). "Dick" Hill was head of reference in the music division of the Library of Congress for about two decades, and longtime editor of the Music Library Association's journal *Notes*, until his untimely death in 1961. He was a powerful influence among both scholars and music librarians, and he was beloved. The present volume is a mixed bag of solid research essays—most notably William Lichtenwanger's completion of Hill's own massive study of *The Star-Spangled Banner* and other articles, mainly bibliographical in orientation, by the late Irving Lowens, Dena J. Epstein, Coover, and D. W. Krummel—and briefer contributions. Americana (among Hill's fields of interest) are the principal subjects of discussion. Bradley (Coover's colleague in the music library of the State University of New York at Buffalo) introduces the book with a warm biographical essay on Hill and a comprehensive bibliography of writings by and about him.

The other anthology is *Edison, Musicians, and the Phonograph: A Century in Retrospect*, edited by John Harvith and Susan Edwards Harvith (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987;

\$49.95). This is a collection of forty-one interviews conducted by the Harviths over fifteen years. When they began interviewing, there were still surviving "Edison artists," such as Ernest L. Stevens, Edison's personal pianist-arranger, and the soprano Anna Case, and other musicians represented on early recordings (such as Lotte Lehmann, Rosa Ponselle, Abram Chasins, Eugene Ormandy, Jan Peerce). Thus one bonus of this book is to hear what such now-stilled voices have to say about the recording process. Additionally, there is fascinating material here, by current performers, on the actual laying-down of tracks: Joan Morris and Bill Bolcom ("Toward the end of a [recording] session, after you've done a song fifteen or sixteen times, it's hard to get that same intensity and that same sadness or that same joy.") or Gunther Schuller ("I was recording Paine's *Mass in D* with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, we were completing a perfect take of a movement, and the [union steward's] clock stopped us *three bars from the end*. That was it. We had to stop—unfinished.") or veteran producer Sam Parkins ("We budgeted Bill Bolcom's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*—it's a huge thing. . . . The technical costs alone will run about \$50,000. The musician's union wants scale for one session, which gets us around another \$20,000. The grand total budget is going to be at least \$250,000. You can see why a record company would quail before figures like that.") The book belongs on the shelf next to I.S.A.M.'s own commentary on a century's worth of recorded technology, *The Phonograph and Our Musical Life* (1980); it's a generous complement to that.

—H.W.H.

New video from Lovely Music!
Robert Ashley's video music classic

MUSIC WITH ROOTS IN THE AETHER

Video portraits of
composers and their music.

DAVID BEHRMAN

PHILIP GLASS

ALVIN LUCIER

GORDON MUMMA

PAULINE OLIVEROS

TERRY RILEY

ROBERT ASHLEY

Seven two-hour programs of ideas
and music. \$450 the set. VHS or Beta.

Lovely Music, Ltd.

"*Music with Roots in the Aether* is a video festival designed by Ashley not to replace the concert setting but to study in depth the making of music both in performance and in the conception and creation of the musical ideas themselves."

"The tapes represent an intimate study of these seminal figures in the American avant-garde, their major works and some insights into how these works developed."

Joan LaBarbara, *Musical America*

"An extraordinary set of color videotapes. With superb camera work by Philip Makanna, the tapes document the fine performances and revealing interviews with seven of our most important composers."

Tom Johnson, *The Village Voice*

"Imaginatively conceived and professionally executed, the interview material is lively and informative, and the music-making attractive."

John Rockwell, *The New York Times*

"Should be considered by all colleges and universities with music departments."

American Library Association *Booklist*

Ask for our contemporary music catalogue of
recordings on disk, CD and cassette.

BEHIND THE BEAT *with Mark Tucker*

Since the death of Thelonious Monk in 1982, at least two major compilations of his recordings have appeared in the U.S. Mosaic issued *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Thelonious Monk* in 1983, a four-LP set that covered seven sessions between 1947 and 1957. A more recent and much heftier collection—weighing in at nearly ten pounds, forty-four sides, and over fifteen hours of music—is *Thelonious Monk: The Complete Riverside Recordings* (Fantasy Records; \$200), for which we must thank not only producer-annotator Orrin Keepnews but manufacturer-distributor “Victor Musical Industries, Inc., Tokyo.”

Monk's Riverside recordings are simply stunning. Documenting the fertile years from 1955–1961, they reveal a musician with magical transforming powers. Whether playing his own compositions (*Crepuscule with Nellie*, *Epistrophy*, *'Round Midnight*) or resuscitating old pop songs (*I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*, *There's Danger in Your Eyes*, *Cherie*), Monk puts his personal stamp on every crunched chord and grace note. Even the rests are distinctive. Yet for all his sonic consistency, Monk is a multi-layered artist. Behind the fresh and often startling improvisations, a cool intelligence carefully steers each performance. And beneath the rugged surface of modernism—the percussive jabs, angular themes, and pungent dissonances—lies a rich vein of romanticism, especially in such ballads as *Ruby*, *My Dear* and *Reflections*. Like most massive reissue projects, this one includes unissued takes, false starts, and scraps of studio talk. Many notable musicians appear as sidemen, among them John Coltrane, Coleman Hawkins, Clark Terry, and Art Blakey. But even the staunchest individualists seem to have bent their style under the force of Monk's gravitational field.

* * *

Kansas City, Missouri, can count among its contributions to American culture Virgil Thomson, Calvin Trillin, Arthur Bryant's beef barbecue, an outstanding art museum, and lots of great jazz and blues. Remarkably, Nathan W. Pearson's *Goin' to Kansas City* (University of Illinois Press; \$24.95) is only the second book devoted to the city's black musical heritage (the first: Ross Russell's *Jazz Style in Kansas City and the Southwest*, published in 1971). Pearson has assembled a series of interviews he and Howard Litwak conducted during 1977–80 with such well-known figures as Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams, Buck Clayton, and Sammy Price, and many lesser-known sidemen. Like Ira Gitler's *Swing to Bop*, and Hentoff and Shapiro's pioneering *Hear Me Talkin' to Ya*, *Goin' to Kansas City* seeks to provide chronological narrative history through a series of stitched-together first-hand observations. It is a valuable resource, handsomely produced, and contains some lovely old photographs (including an interior shot of Dante's Inferno, a notorious nightclub that featured waitresses in devil costumes and, along the cave-like walls, “fire-breathing, smoke-spewing dragons”).

More discussion of the K.C. scene turns up in *Buck Clayton's Jazz World*, by Buck Clayton assisted by Nancy Miller Elliott

(Oxford University Press; \$19.95). Clayton, from Parsons, Kansas, was a prominent member of Count Basie's trumpet section from 1936 to 1943. Earlier he had gigged around Los Angeles and spent nearly two years leading bands in China. His book, in a way, tells both too much and too little. The anecdotes blur together after a while, and one has difficulty determining what Clayton considers truly important. We learn that he and guitarist Freddie Green, to relieve the boredom of one-nighters with Basie, took to collecting “all of the Mickey Mouses and Donald Ducks that we could find in different cities.” And when Clayton gets to Europe in the late '40s, we get wide-eyed reports about food, wine, and standard tourist attractions. At the same time, Clayton rarely focuses on musical issues. This should not surprise: by and large, jazz musicians don't like to talk shop. Without intending to, then, Clayton de-romanticizes the jazz life by showing that a gifted artist, once he puts down his horn and starts talking, may be as ordinary as the guy next door.

* * *

In 1981 the critic and lyricist Gene Lees launched the *Jazzletter* (P.O. Box 1305, Oak View, CA 93022), a spunky, irreverent publication devoted to writings mainly by Lees, occasionally by friends. Now from the pages of *Jazzletter* comes a gathering of pieces (all by Lees) called *Singers and the Song* (Oxford University Press; \$18.95); a companion volume on instrumentalists is to follow. Lee's subjects include stars often in the spotlight—Sinatra, Piaf, and Peggy Lee—as well as figures few have written about, such as Johnny Mercer, Jo Stafford, and Dick Haymes. There is an affectionate portrait of film-composer Hugo Friedhofer; a savvy discourse on the problems of writing songs in English (did you know that English has only five words that rhyme with love—above, dove, glove, of, and shove—whereas French, *naturellement*, has over fifty?); a wistful meditation on the Big Band Era (“Pavilion in the Rain”) that links its demise, in part, to the collapse of the American public transportation system; and, the longest piece in the book, Lee's account of adapting poems by Pope John Paul II for a Sarah Vaughan recording project. The prose is lean and lucid, but don't expect tight, finely honed essays à la Balliett: Lees likes to ramble and digress, and every now and then erupts with a blunt, unsparing opinion: “Goodman was notorious for his coldness and brutal rudeness to musicians.”

* * *

Finally, two corrections for my Alec Wilder piece that appeared in this Newsletter's November 1987 issue. Bea Friedland, of Da Capo Press, informs me that they have reprinted Whitney Balliett's *Alec Wilder and His Friends*. And Judy Bell, of The Richmond Organization, points out that the E-natural in measure 10 of *Blackberry Winter*—which I'd cited as contributing to the song's distinctive melodic contour—is in fact a typo, and should be E-flat (much more conventional, alas). The error is corrected in the new printing of *Songs Were Made to Sing*. (I'll continue to cherish that beautifully flawed first edition.)

COMPOSER AS PUBLISHER: AN INTERVIEW WITH GUNTHER SCHULLER by Carol J. Oja

Maybe it's the water. Whatever the reason, Newton Centre, Massachusetts—just west of downtown Boston on Route 9—has been the home of two do-it-yourself publishing enterprises in our century: Arthur Farwell's Wa-Wan Press, which lasted from 1901 to 1912, and Gunther Schuller's Margun Music Inc., which began in 1975 and is still going strong. Margun is a BMI affiliate, and its subsidiaries are GunMar (ASCAP) and GM Recordings—all named for Gunther and his wife Marjorie. Like Farwell and Henry Cowell before him, Schuller has stepped forward to help fellow-composers, and his foreword to the Margun catalogue reads like a manifesto for music without walls:

All musics are created equal . . . The segregation of music, as practised by the majority of our musical institutions, into arbitrary categories—to which are then attached various qualitative stigma—such divisions as 'serious' and 'light' (or 'popular') music, into 'classical' and 'contemporary,' or 'classical' and 'jazz,' 'classical' and 'pre-classical,' etc.—are at best not much more than convenient but meaningless labels. . . . Quality transcends all styles, concepts and forms of music.

Schuller is not only president of Margun but subsidizes it. He and his wife live with the company, quite literally, having given over one floor and most of the basement of their home to Margun's operations and storage. The staff is small and the firm has had three successive managers—William Routch, Bruce Creditor, and, since 1986, Jean Hasse.

Having heard in recent years about the problems of major American music publishers—ranging from corporate mergers to low sales and high staff turnover—we wondered how a small, cottage press like Margun is faring. Following are excerpts from an interview with Gunther Schuller in which he shares his hopes about the company and gives a sense of how much the aims of his manifesto have been realized.

MARGUN

Margun started with Alec Wilder's music. Through a series of circumstances resulting from my friendship with Alec and the tuba virtuoso Harvey Phillips, Wilder's music was offered to me—Harvey having previously tried in a modest way to make Wilder's instrumental scores available. So I not only acquired 250–300 of Alec's pieces in one fell swoop but decided to build a publishing house around them. That was the beginning, and I knew there were some works—particularly some of the tuba pieces he'd written for Harvey and John Barrows, and some of the euphonium concertos—that would be really good sellers. And they still are, to this day.

Once I realized I didn't want to be just Alec Wilder's publisher, my other impetus came through Tanglewood, where (by 1975) I had spent some twelve years working with young composers. By the time I started this company, two or three hundred young composers had gone through my fingers at Tanglewood, either

as students or through performances that I conducted or coached. And I saw how in many cases, regardless of their talent, nothing was happening publishing-wise for these young people. So I decided to try to do something about that.

Yet even publication doesn't guarantee that an exceptional piece will catch on. It mystifies me. For example, the "Serenade" from Wilder's *Jazz Suite for Four Horns* has probably the most beautiful, haunting melody written in the twentieth century—at least to my taste, and I'm putting it up next to Gershwin and everybody else. I wish pieces like that were known better, because I can't believe that people wouldn't take a lot of pleasure from hearing them. Or the music of Lucia Dlugoszewska: I could deliver a half-hour lecture on how special it is. Lucia's works are totally individualistic—crazy, wild. They're not related to anything else one can think of: they're unique, visionary, sui generis.

The image shows a musical score for solo trumpet, likely from Lucia Dlugoszewska's 'Space'. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It features several measures of music with various performance instructions and markings. Key markings include 'flap tongue' at the beginning, 'TK accel.' and 'TK accel.' with a dashed line indicating acceleration, 'TK ricochet gliss.' with a dotted line, and 'TK' markings throughout. Dynamics include 'p', 'f', 'ppp', and 'fff'. There are also markings for '(fast)' and '(slower)'. The score ends with 'TK' and 'attacca'.

This passage from Lucia Dlugoszewska's Space is a Diamond for solo trumpet, published by Margun Music, shows the work of the music engraver Salvatore Stragusa, of La musica moderna, a Milan firm often used by Margun. Schuller says, "I have insisted on maintaining the very highest printing standards, and I am one of the few publishers left who uses the old copperplate engraving. I still haven't given up on it, even though the prices are getting astronomical."

Or Gerald Levinson, a very talented composer. I did a beautiful publication of his *Light Dances/Stones Sing*, which was premiered at Tanglewood and had performances in New York, with excellent reviews. I thought, well, even though he's not super-famous, something will happen with that piece. But almost nothing has. Maybe the score is too expensive. [It costs \$40.] Then there's a terrific piece for wind ensemble, *Chromophonic Images* by Jere Hutcheson, who's at Michigan State. Now, wind ensembles are big in this country, but I can't get people to perform this piece. It's a very exciting work for wind ensemble, with all kinds of marvelous instrumental writing. Kids would love it.

I choose pieces to publish based on my sense of the quality of the music, with no ideological or stylistic preconceptions. Publishing

(continued on the next page)

COMPOSER AS PUBLISHER (continued)

is my one indulgence, so if I'm going to spend my money to the tune that I do, I've got to be very enthusiastic about what it is that I'm going to publish. I have to be very impressed by it—intellectually, emotionally, technically, conceptually. Our catalogue ranges from composers like Olly Wilson, the finest black classical composer in the country, to Nikos Skalkottas, the Ives of Greece. And we're surviving. The company has almost begun to break even, and it improves all the time. I think the quality of our product will eventually succeed, but it takes time.

Yet I'm a little disappointed that I have not been able to publish as wide-ranging a repertory as I had hoped. It's just for lack of time and person-power—and to some extent maybe money. But I'm not quitting yet. So give it another ten years. There are many things that I'm still really determined to do, like the publication of important ethnic musical traditions—those of Africans (Ivory horn ensembles, say) or the Pueblo Indians or Serbian shepherd brass bands or Japanese *gagaku*. It's endless. Also, in the realm of medieval and Renaissance music, there are many works I've not been able to get to. What we want are serious, scholarly editions that could be put to practical use. And, of course, jazz: there, my problem has to do with clearing rights. I alone have made many transcriptions of Duke Ellington, not to mention others, that should be published. But the big Broadway, Tin-Pan-Alley publishers who own the rights are basically uninterested in making this great music available to people who want to enjoy it, study it, play it. They're only interested if a show like *Sophisticated Lady* comes along, where they can see millions of dollars coming in.

Even if I were able to publish more jazz transcriptions, I could almost predict that they would not be commercially successful. Definitely not. Because the marketplace is now so saturated with commercially oriented junk music—even in the so-called jazz schools and the stage-band business. If a few more decades pass, no one will even know that there was great Ellington music to play.

I have this vision, this dream. I remember with what incredible excitement and joy I used to go as a teenager to the New York Public Library and take out scores of the most obscure composers, like Gesualdo, whose music was on the shelf because somebody in 1607 or so bothered to publish it. And I remember when I first came to Boston with the Metropolitan Opera in 1945: all day long, before performances, I practically ate and slept in the Boston Public Library. It was exciting to discover music that I had never heard of—that hardly anyone else had either—and to realize it was great. This is maybe the most important thing about publishing: to know that 150 years from now some kid somewhere will look at a piece that I've published and will discover a work that otherwise they could not have known. That is what makes music publishing worthwhile.

(A Margun Music catalogue can be obtained by writing to 167 Dudley Road, Newton Centre, MA 02159. Telephone: 617/332-6398)

GRENADILLA



Highly Acclaimed Catalog

New Releases

- GSC-1073 LONG ISLAND CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
HUSA: Moravian Songs
HOVHANNES: Oh Lady Moon
PISTON: Violin Sonata
- GSC-1069 ROCHBERG (Total Time 24:18)
Carnival Music (Suite for Piano Solo) (1971)
ALAN MANDEL, piano
HENDERSON (Total Time 20:34)
Six Easy Pieces (8:07)
Toujours Amoureux (5:30)
Juxtaposition (6:57)
ZITA CARNO, piano
- GSC-1054 HUSA: Fantasies (3) for Orchestra
HODKINSON: The Edge of the Olde One (1977) Chamber
Concerto for Electric English Horn
- *** ***
- GSC-1007 R.HARRIS: Concerto for Clarinet, Piano & Strg. Qrt.
D.DIAMOND: Quintet for Clarinet, Violas & Cellos
LAWRENCE SOBOL, clarinet
P. Basquin, piano; C.Webb & I. Weller, violins;
L.Schulman & L.Moss, violas; T.Eddy & F.Sherry, cellos
- GSC-1032 HUSA: Sonata for Violin & Piano (1972-3)
LAYMAN: Gravitation I (for Solo Violin)
ELMAR OLIVEIRA, violin David Oei, piano
- GSC-1056 U.KAY: Portraits for Violin & Piano
D.BAKER: Jazz Suite for Violin & Piano
RUGGIERO RICCI, violin & MICHAEL ANDREWS, piano
- GSC-1059 KERR: Trio for Clarinet, Cello & Piano
RUSSO: Sonata for Clarinet & Piano, No. 3
HEIDEN: Sonatina for Clarinet & Piano
RUSSO: Variations on a Kyrle
LUENING: Fantasia Brevis for Clarinet & Piano
- GSC-1064 Music of DAVID DIAMOND
Two Sonatas for Violin & Piano
Three Preludes & Fugues for Piano
ROBERT McDUFFIE, violin & WILLIAM BLACK, piano
- GSC-1065 C.DEBUSSY: Sonata for Cello & Piano
G.FAURE: Elegie for Cello & Piano
N.ROREM: After Reading Shakespeare for Solo Cello
SHARON ROBINSON, cello & MARGO GARRETT, piano
- GSC-1066 DAHL Duets (5) for Two Clarinets
Lurie & Lundquist
IVEY Prospero for Bass, Horn, Percussion
& Four Channel Tape
Robert Keefe, Melissa Coren & Daniel Druckman

KINGMAN String Quartet No. 2 "Joyful"
Kronos Quartet
David Harrington & John Sherba, violins
Hank Dutt, viola & Joan Jeanrenaud, cello

\$9.98 EA.

BUY DIRECT & SAVE!!!

Select One Cassette FREE when you buy any two for only \$19.96!
Do this before Dec. 15, 1988 and select a fourth cassette FREE!
(add \$1.00 for postage & handling on each order)

ALL ORDERS ARE PRE-PAID!!!

ALL CASSETTES: Send for Complete Catalogue
(Stamped Self Addressed Envelope)

*** COMPOSER, SOLOIST & ENSEMBLE INQUIRIES INVITED ***

Grenadilla Enterprises, Inc.

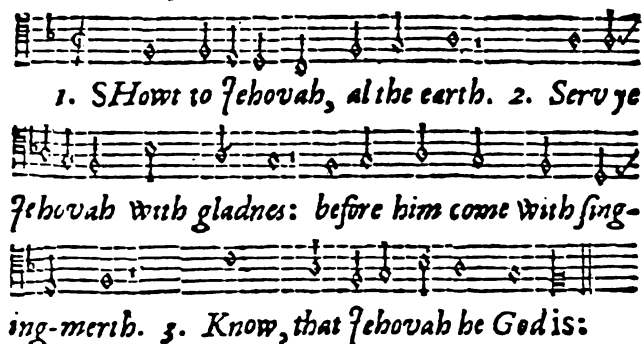
217 East 85 Street/Suite 263 New York, New York, 10028

ITTY BITTY BOOK REVIEWS

• Joseph Horowitz's rich but undertitled **Understanding Toscanini** (see our review in this Newsletter for May 1987)—characterized accurately by Thomas Willis in *Musical America* as “nothing less than a revisionist social history of the American concert scene from Theodore Thomas . . . to the present”—has been reprinted in a paperback edition (University of Minnesota Press; \$12.95). Essential reading!

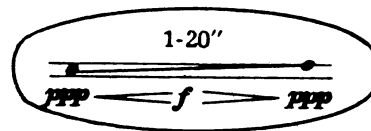


• Ellen Koskoff's well-edited collection of essays *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987; \$49.95) has several valuable inclusions of Americana: Esther Rothenbusch's "The Joyful Sound: Women in the Nineteenth-Century Hymnody Tradition," Jane Hassinger's "Close Harmony: Early Jazz Styles in the Music of the New Orleans Boswell Sisters," Karen E. Petersen's "Investigation into Women-Identified Music in the United States," and the editor's own "Sound of a Woman's Voice: Gender and Music in a New York Hasidic Community."

Psalms. 100.

• Andrew Porter's fourth book of musical criticism, mostly a gathering of *New Yorker* articles, is *Musical Events/A Chronicle: 1980-1983* (Summit Books; \$24.95), with 500-plus pages of elegant, sharp, responsible critical writing. Since, as he says in the preface, two of Porter's three "special interests" are contemporary music in general, contemporary music theater in particular, the book is rich in reports and views on new American music—and they are easy of access, thanks to a most helpful index.

• Volume I, "Resonances/1936-1850," of Vera Brodsky Lawrence's projected trilogy—**Strong on Music/The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong, 1836-1875**—arrived too late to get the proper review it merits. Obviously, however, it is a splendid achievement in a field (mid-nineteenth-century American music) that has been pretty barren in exhaustive scholarly treatments. And is Lawrence's exhaustive! Her primary source is Strong's elephantine diary (4.5 million words written in an almost illegibly minuscule hand), but she seems also to have combed every newspaper, magazine, concert program, playbill, memoir, music publisher's catalogue, and other potential source of the time, "to construct [her] own bibliography, so to speak" (lacking any adequate ones in print). An extraordinary new chapter of American music history is here presented, in no fewer than 686 pages! (Oxford University Press; \$85)



• William W. Austin's unique and provocative study of "the songs of Stephen Foster from his time to ours"—"*Susanna*," "*Jeanie*," and "*The Old Folks at Home*"—is back in print, now from the University of Illinois Press (\$29.95). It deserves the term "Second Edition" by virtue of an added introduction (somewhat puzzling in ruminative tone) and a useful (if brief) bibliography; otherwise, the 1975 original remains intact, having been reproduced photographically.

—H.W.H.



The Clay Neal Singing School. Old Center Church, Logan County, Kentucky (ca. 1890). Photographer unknown. Reproduced here from a postcard that can be ordered together with others of non-musical images—for fifteen cents from: The Museum Store, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101. Telephone: 502/745-2592.

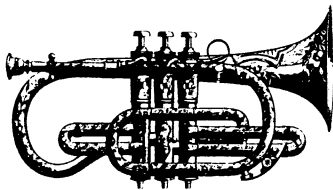
GLASS ON GLASS

"There are no virgin births in the realm of ideas. Everything is connected to something else"; or so editor Robert T. Jones maintains in an introduction to the autobiographical *Music by Philip Glass* (Harper & Row; \$22.95 hardbound). If *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) was a messianic event, it saved modern music by reuniting mass audiences with the music of a living composer after the schism caused by serialism. Glass accomplished this by rejecting the notion that such esoteric music is "actually better than it sounds." The activity of Glass's compositional youth—from studying scores at the old Metropolitan Opera to composing theater music in Paris, from lessons with Nadia Boulanger and Ravi Shankar to attending avant-garde productions in Europe—reveals that *Einstein*, the work with which Glass won his operatic spurs, was by no means a virgin birth.

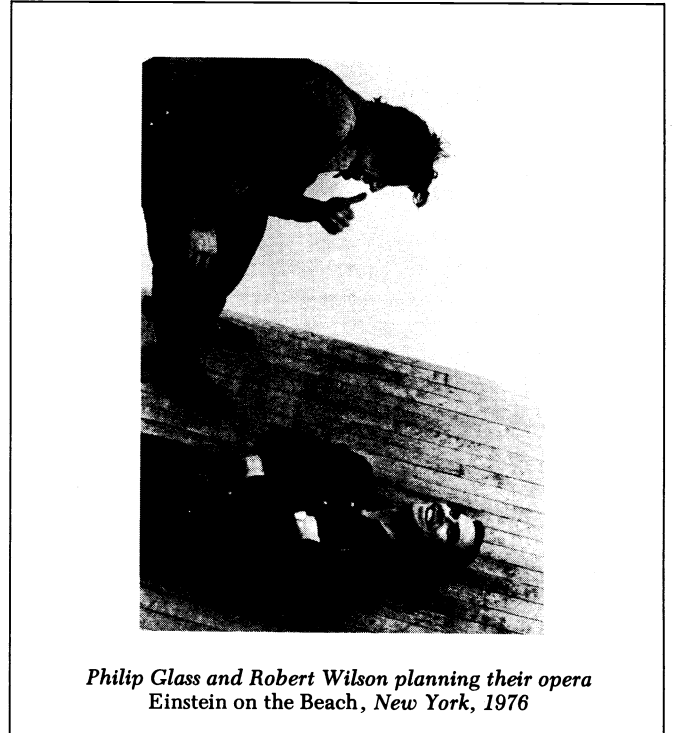
Like his personality, Glass's narrative is easygoing and tinged with humor. For each portrait opera—*Einstein on the Beach*, *Satyagraha* (1980, about M. K. Gandhi), and *Akhmaten* (1984)—Glass writes one full chapter. These include lengthy discussions about the collaborative efforts behind the works, concise musical comments (briefer than record liner notes), complete libretti, and photographs. Other operas by Glass, such as *A Madrigal Opera*, *The Juniper Tree*, and *the CIVIL warS*, find their way into a concluding chapter alongside the set of *Songs for Liquid Days* (which Glass considers a song cycle), the crossover hit album *Glassworks*, and the film scores. Finally, a music catalogue arranged chronologically (1965–87) by year of composition (not by date of premiere) accompanies a complete discography.

One slipup: the black-and-white photo in the *Satyagraha* chapter belongs in the chapter on *Akhmaten*, and vice versa.

—Leslie Lassetter
CUNY Graduate Center



1st Prize... for most attractive and luxuriously produced American-music book of the season: to *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800-1920* (Smithsonian; \$39.95 cloth; \$19.95 paper), by Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen. An end-opener, typeset in two columns per page. Fascinatingly illustrated with about 180 photographs and reproductions of programs, ads, and instrument designs. Well written, copiously documented, generously indexed. The Hazens (wife and husband) are not musicologists (though he is a professional trumpeter), but their research is faultless, their sense of the social and cultural context of brass bands in their golden era acute, their communication of the spirit of nineteenth-century through its bands warm and lively. Altogether admirable!



Philip Glass and Robert Wilson planning their opera *Einstein on the Beach*, New York, 1976

THE AMERICAN FIVE (continued)

"our Crowd," and that he saw in opposition to other currents of the day, principally the music of the members of the League of Composers, as reported on in their publication *Modern Music*.

My own use of the phrase goes back to a concert of May 25, 1933, in Minneapolis, when Becker and his St. Paul Chamber Orchestra conducted orchestral works by these five composers in what was a very controversial concert for that region. When in the mid-1970s Dennis Russell Davies, director of his own newly formed St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, learned of this concert and Becker's early struggles with local audiences (experiences then being undergone by Davies himself), he re-created this concert in St. Paul and in New York. Since then, the theme has been taken up by a number of organizations, such as the Cabrillo Festival, the Holland Festival, and the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles.

These concerts have thus called attention to another area of American music which with the exception of Charles Ives has been largely ignored in the fast-breaking developments of recent music; and they have, I believe, served to correct the musical perspective on the music of the 1930s. The basic premise of my idea has now been adopted by many scholars in American music, among them Gilbert Chase. I have discovered that, when you begin to see your own name and utterances in the footnotes of other people's dissertations, something serious must be going on. So I no longer apologize for my proposal, but just let it go its own way, defending itself from the musicological snipers that are always in the bushes.

WHAT'S THE SCORE? (Notes on Some New Ones)

The new **Historical Anthology of Music by Women** edited by James Briscoe (Indiana University Press; \$27.50) makes a statement about American music, whether or not intentionally. Works by no fewer than eight Americans—even if you count Rebecca Clarke, Violet Archer, and Thea Musgrave, all of whom resided here for part of their lives—are among the thirty-seven composers represented, who range in time from the ninth through the twentieth centuries. This is a better showing by far than women of other nationalities. Come to think of it, Briscoe's balance may not, in fact, be skewed: we do seem to have produced more competent composers on the distaff side than have other countries. The U.S. women in Briscoe's collection are Amy Cheney Beach, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Miriam Gideon, Louise Talma, Julia Perry, Vivian Fine, Pauline Oliveros, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. One or more scores by each are presented in facsimile reproductions, with a brief introduction by Briscoe or another specialist (Adrienne Fried Block on Beach, Judith Tick on Crawford Seeger, Barbara Petersen on Gideon, for example). Especially happy choices, in our view, include the third and fourth movements of Crawford Seeger's marvelous String Quartet, Talma's *La Corona* (*Seven Sonnets by John Donne*) for mixed chorus (in the composer's beautiful hand), and verbal instructions for several of Oliveros's provocative and deeply satisfying *Sonic Meditations*. The anthology is in 11 x 8½ format and is spiral-bound: it is thus user-friendly—but only to a degree, regretably, since a few works are printed sideways in double score-page spreads.

Recently published is an exceptionally handsome score of **Stefan Wolpe's** Chamber Piece No. 2 (1965–67) for thirteen players (Southern Music, distributed by Theodore Presser Company; \$13.50). Edited by the Wolpe scholar Austin Clarkson (of York University, Toronto) and Anthony Korf, director of the chamber ensemble Parnassus, the publication is the most recent in a series supported by, and given the approval of, the Stefan Wolpe Society. According to its imprimatur on the score, the society "supports the performance and the preparation of editions of the works of Stefan Wolpe," much as

the Charles Ives Society functions in relation to the music of Ives. Clarkson writes a lucid preface which incorporates critical commentary, and Korf—whose group has recorded the composition (on New World Records NW-306; rel. 1980)—contributes helpful if brief notes on performance. Performance materials are available on rental from the publisher.

Another handsome score, printed in a facsimile of the composer's characterful hand, which combines elegant clarity with forcefulness, is that of **Boston Common Brass** (1987) for eight trumpets, by the Boston-based composer Jean Hasse (Visible Music; \$22). (The title has nothing to do with commonplace brass in Boston, but the vision of a piece for brass that occurred to the composer during a stroll through Boston Common.) Alternating semi-aleatory "free" sections with completely notated ones, and climaxing toward the end of its six-minute span in "erratic bursts" of sonic fireworks, the work is both attractive and powerful; it reminds one a bit—not stylistically, but in spirit—of the fine Nonet for Brass of Wallingford Riegger, or his Music for Brass Choir. Score and parts are available from Visible Music, 68 Kittredge Street, Roslindale, MA 02139.

Published for the first time—after almost eighty years—is a startling piano work of 1909 by Percy Grainger, *In Dahomey*, subtitled "Cakewalk Smasher" (C. F. Peters; \$15). The editor is Ronald Stevenson, who includes an extensive if occasionally naive editorial note and a careful comparison of the two manuscript sources. The piece is startling as a very early example of a genuine concert rag—and a virtuoso one, full of swooping glissandos up, down, and up-and-down, looping the loop. As the title suggests, Grainger borrows one of Will Marion Cook's tunes from the black musical *In Dahomey* (1902); another one comes from Arthur Pryor's cakewalk *A Coon Band Contest* (1899). Both, however, are transmogrified in showers of pyrotechnical fallout. The publication gives a timing of "ca. 6 minutes" for the work; Joseph Smith brings it in, though, at a bit over 4:00 in his lighthearted premiere recording (Musical Heritage Society MHS-512134M).

—H. W. H.

WE'RE NOT QUITE STRAPPED YET, BUT . . .

Can you help?

We think of you as a "subscriber" (though we ask no subscription fee) and as a "friend" of I.S.A.M. Won't you *volunteer* as a subscriber? And won't you become a *better* friend of the Institute?

All contributions are of course tax-deductible.

I want to become a Volunteer Subscriber (\$5), Friend (\$10), Close Friend (\$25), Great Friend (\$50), Intimate Friend (\$100) Best Friend (Over \$100) of I.S.A.M. Enclosed is my check.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip Code _____

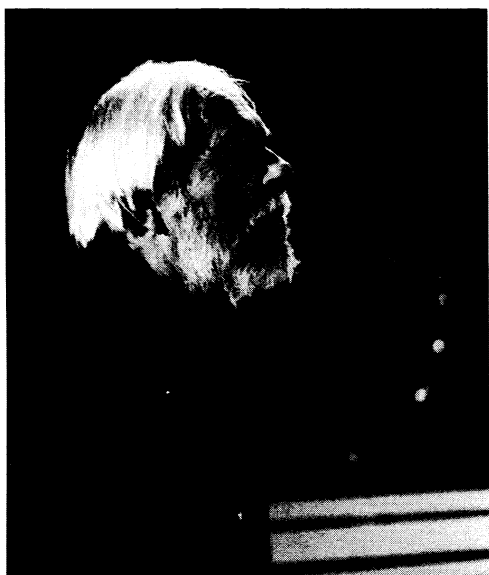
BOOK NOOK II

David P. DeVenney's *Nineteenth-Century American Choral Music: An Annotated Guide* (Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1987; \$19.95) is a remarkably useful reference tool for choral conductors, a breed universally unaware of the rich American repertory from the period between Billings and the early 1900s. I happen to be that rare animal who has enjoyed the delights of performing works such as Amy Beach's *Peter Pan*, a Bristow *Te Deum*, Loeffler's *L'Archet* (with viola d'amore), MacDowell's *Barcarole* (with piano, four hands), Horatio Parker's *Two Partsongs*, Op. 27, and excerpts from Root's *The Haymakers*; DeVenney's catalogue suggests other pleasures of which I had been only vaguely aware.

DeVenney's viewpoint is not all-encompassing, since he includes only pieces purely for chorus by composers "who wrote serious, 'art' music," thus excluding Stephen Foster entirely and limiting Henry Clay Work to a single entry. Furthermore, the 1,287 entries misrepresent the actual scope of the repertory: DeVenney refers separately to individual movements in a multi-movement opus and also gives separate listings for alternate voicings of the same piece (so that, for example, 21 of the 48 entries for Edward MacDowell are merely cross references). Nonetheless, whether you are interested in Bradbury or Mason, Foote or Henry Hadley—DeVenney offers a wealth of information.

The preface furnishes a cogent overview of the repertory in question. In the catalogue proper, annotations for each work give the performing forces required, source of the text, duration, publisher and date of issue (or location of manuscript), and citations from the 134 items in an annotated bibliography or writings on the subject. The volume concludes with a series of exhaustive indexes.

—William Osborne
Denison University



Harry Partch, in a scene from the film
The Dreamer that Remains, San Diego, 1972

Thanking You in Advance. . . . We've had from Summit Books advance uncorrected proofs of *The Selected Letters of Virgil Thomson* edited by Tim Page and Vanessa Weeks Page, to be published in June (@ \$24.95). Order a copy immediately! It just arrived; we ingested it in one long, gratifying gulp. It has about 520 of Thomson's letters, selected from some 25,000. They date from 1917 (youthful, expansive reportage from an enlisted man at Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma) to 1985 (terse but warm avuncular advice to Roy Harris's widow Johana, who'd just got remarried to a young composer). There are all kinds of riches here, as we follow Thomson through the army to Harvard to Paris; then, back in New York, the *Herald-Tribune* music critic's post and finally full-time work as a composer and free-lancer. The Pages have made their selection with intelligence, even-handedness, and a sure eye for significant detail. Some of the letters are long and hard-working (notably those to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas); most are brief and salty, as if just fished out of the ocean of strong opinion and acute feeling that has always buoyed up Thomson's prose. (To one irate reader of a *Trib* piece went this one-liner: "You should really not use such language in front of my secretary, who is a lady, and who opens my mail." To another, a three-liner: "I did not notice the misprint 'Angus Dei.' Theologically the cow might as well have been adopted by the deity as the lamb. Both are peaceful beasts.") The Pages have lightly annotated the letters and provided some entr'acte passages between the main acts of Virgil's life, with its lively, variegated cast of characters—he being, of course, the male lead.

* * *

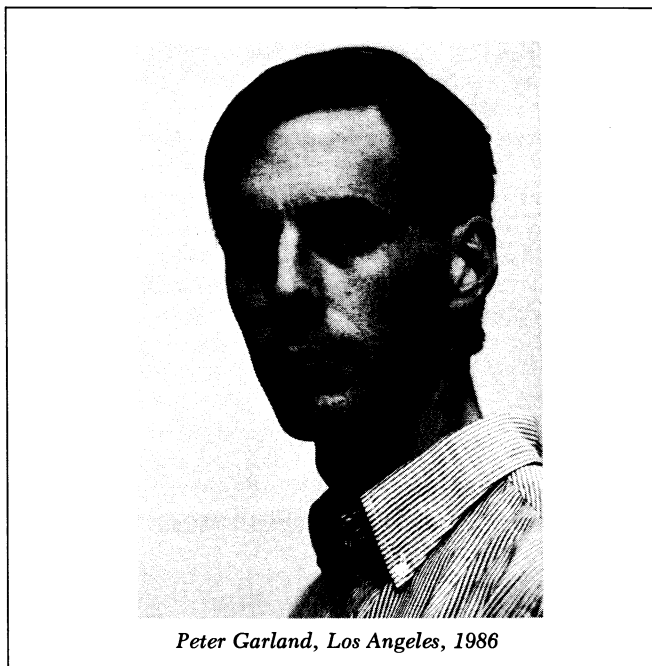
Ludus tonalis!! It's a wonder Nicolas Slonimsky didn't retitle his autobiography—initially planned as *Failed Wunderkind: A Rueful Autopsy*—with that Latin phrase (and without translating it, as is true of many others, in about six languages, that pepper his book). Instead, it's called *Perfect Pitch: A Life Story* (Oxford University Press; \$21.95). With the very first sentence ("When I was six years old my mother told me I was a genius"), the irrepressible pianist-composer-conductor-musicologist-historian-lexicographer is off and running, through a thoroughly checkered life that has brought him to his mid-nineties. (The book ends: "To exorcise the ghostly digits of my age, I have now adopted a personal countdown, modulo 100. I am now 7. Next year, *diabolo volante*, I will be 6. In 1994 I will be zero. On this hopeful note, I conclude. . .") Slonimsky is famous as a waggish raconteur. A whole book full of his waggery, however—even this fairly brief book of about 250 pages—might be too much. But there is more than jesting here, most especially in such illuminating first-hand accounts as those of Koussevitzky's incompetence as a young conductor in Paris in the 1920s, Ives's delight over Slonimsky's conducting his music with the Chamber Orchestra of Boston early in the 1930s, and Cowell's fortitude during his years of imprisonment later in that decade. And Slonimsky ultimately reveals poignantly why he really does consider himself a "failed Wunderkind," one who went (as one chapter-title puts it) "From lofty baton to lowly pen." Surely, though, we are the richer for the switch.

—H. W. H.

REGARDING RECORDINGS

Pride of Pittsburgh. From the University of Pittsburgh come the fruits of two local recording projects. The more elaborate is a three-disc boxed set with thirty-two-page accompanying booklet, titled *Proud Traditions: A Musical Tribute to Pitt*, produced by Doris Dyen and Jean Thomas in commemoration of the university's bicentennial year of 1987. The performers in this genial gallimaufry consist of just about every group on campus and a few from off-campus, ranging from the all-male close-harmony group Class Act and the folksinging/playing quartet Homeworks through The Dear Friends (a vocal chamber group specializing in nineteenth-century Americana), the African Drum Ensemble, the Afro-American Music Institute Choir, the Commonwealth Ancients Band of Musick (a fife-and-drum ensemble), the Men's Glee Club, the Heinz Chapel Choir, the university's Jazz Ensemble, Women's Chorale, and Marching Band to the University Choral Society and the University Orchestra. They don't all play, sing, yodel, blow, and bang at the same time: each performs works from its own American repertory in a glorious hodgepodge of musics that might have been heard at the university over two centuries. Thus there are glees and fraternity songs, Foster melodies and Emmett walkarounds, *Yankee Doodle* with and without variations, the Hutchinson Family's *Get Off the Track* (for Emancipation) and Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind* (for Peace), the university's "alma mater" in both choral and organ-fantasy performances, and . . . well, you name it and it just may be there. It's a real buy: mail orders are \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping & handling to The Book Center, 4000 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. . . . The slighter project is *The Blues and the Greys*, a cassette with music of the Civil War, produced by Jean Thomas, who directs The Dear Friends. Side One, which finds The Dear Friends collaborating with the Commonwealth Ancients Band, is borrowed from the *Proud Traditions* album, with songs by the Hutchinsons, George F. Root, Henry Clay Work, and others. Side Two, which seems to have been recorded in concert by The Dear Friends alone, is more informal and friendly, with anonymous songs as well as some by Foster, Root, Walter Kittredge, Henry Tucker, et al. Crisp, stylish performances prevail. Mail orders are \$10 each plus \$1.75 for postage & handling to Foster Memorial, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

Singers and Soloists of the Swing Bands is the self-explanatory title of a spectacularly successful recent addition to the



Peter Garland, Los Angeles, 1986

Smithsonian Collection of Recordings. **Martin Williams**, of the Smithsonian Press, selected this cornucopia—ninety-four tracks!—and **Mark Tucker**, of Columbia University, wrote the text of the generous booklet—seventy-eight pages!—that accompanies the set. Williams's memory, ear, and critical acumen guarantee that the choices of the pop songs, blues, and concerto-like showpieces are the *crème de la crème* of the swing era, nothing less. Tucker's sensitive, authoritative historical and analytic annotations—which won him a Grammy Award nomination for "Best Liner Notes"—invite the listener to take more than just a trip down Memory Lane or up Nostalgia Notch—instead, to listen carefully to the artistry along with the virtuosity, the gleam along with the sheen, the flame along with the flair of these gems, which, as he says, although "created for dancing or romancing, [show] standards of achievement beyond what might be expected of merely functional art." The time-span covered is from 1929 (Bing Crosby singing *After You've Gone* with Paul Whiteman's orchestra) to 1956 (Dizzy Gillespie's big-band version of *I Can't Get Started With You*). In between, there are all the great soloists' vehicles you might expect. To name a few: Bunny Berigan's version of *I Can't Get Started* (1937); Billie Holiday singing Gershwin's *They Can't Take That Away from Me* with Count Basie's band (1937); Ella Fitzgerald on *Undecided*, backed up by Chick Webb's orchestra (1939); Sy Oliver's arrangements for Jimmie Lunceford of *Tain't What You Do and Well, All Right, Then* (1939); Ivie Anderson's *I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good*, with Duke Ellington behind her (1941); Charlie Mingus with Lionel Hampton's band in *Mingus Fingers* (1947). The recording transfer quality is excellent, and some off-speed 78-rpm recordings have even been repitched. (That's quality control!) The set is available, in four-cassette or six-disc formats, for \$47.96 plus \$3.49 postage & handling; by mail from Smithsonian Recordings, Box 10230, Des Moines, IA 50381; by phone from 1-800/247-5072.

—H.W.H.

I.S.A.M. Newsletter, Vol. XVII, No. 2/ISSN: 0145-8396

Editor: H. Wiley Hitchcock

Assistant editor: Emily Good

Contributing editor: Carol J. Oja

Typesetter: Laraine Goodman

Production assistants: Kathleen Mason Krotman, Nancy Pardo, and Jason Stanyek

The I.S.A.M. Newsletter is published in November and May. Copyright © by the Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210. 718/780-5655.

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

Address Correction Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Permit No. 671

