

# NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN AMERICAN MUSIC

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

Volume XX, Number 1: November 1990

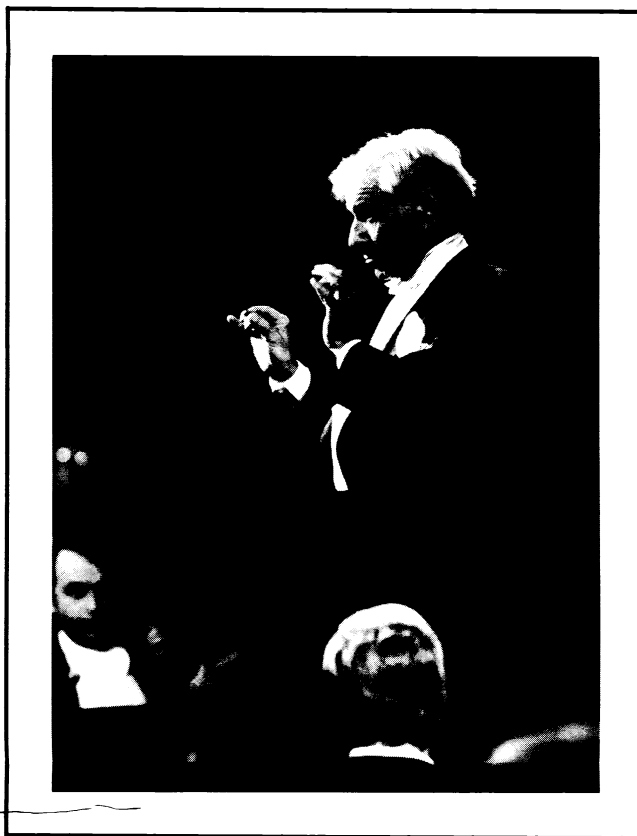
## LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990) by Vivian Perlis

The world stands still for no one, yet it seemed to do so on Sunday evening, October 14th, when the news of Leonard Bernstein's death sent shock waves around the globe. Our great American conductor, composer, educator, superstar—the man who lived as though he was immortal—dead at the age of seventy-two? Impossible! In American music, only the untimely death of George Gershwin had evoked this kind of reaction. What John O'Hara said then applies to Bernstein now: "I heard that Gershwin died, but I don't have to believe it if I don't want to."

The response to Bernstein's death has been extraordinary: Orchestras have changed programs precipitously to include compositions by him, and virtually all musical organizations are paying tribute; even the University of Michigan precision marching band, 225 strong, focused on Bernstein for their homecoming game spectacular between the halves. The press and media coverage has been remarkable.

Ironically, Bernstein himself would have enjoyed this outpouring more than anyone else. The impact has been even more astounding on a personal level. Millions who never saw the maestro in person "knew" him: from the early Omnibus shows and the Young People's Concerts, through years of later productions with Bernstein as conductor, television has made his every gesture part of the collective consciousness, and inside and outside the music world, experiences with "Lenny" are remembered and recounted, like a gigantic polyphonic oral history. Storytelling keeps the past alive a while longer—a gentle first step in moving Leonard Bernstein into history.

My most direct contacts with Bernstein occurred during the last ten years or so, as a result of working with Aaron Copland on his autobiography. (Copland was Bernstein's mentor, colleague, and close friend.) An earlier connection, however, was related



to Charles Ives. In 1973, in response to a query of mine, Bernstein wrote that he intended to conduct the *Second Symphony* during the Ives Centenary, and he described a visit he had had with Mrs. Ives about 1960: "It was an unforgettable half-hour of sweetness." Now, with a sense of loss of the might-have-been, among them Bernstein's memoirs, must be added what he said (with characteristic enthusiasm) the last time I saw him: "Let's talk about Ives soon!" With sharp regret comes the realization that this will not happen, nor will his conducting and recording Ives's *Fourth Symphony*, as he had intended.

Bernstein's commitment to American music began early. In one of his first letters to Copland (19 November 1938), he wrote from Harvard:

In the midst of ten million other things I'm writing a thesis for honors. . . . The subject is Nationalism in American Music—presumably

a nonentity, but on the whole a vital problem. We've talked about it once or twice. You said, 'Don't worry—just write it—it will come out American.' The thesis tries to show how the stuff that the old boys turned out (Chadwick-Converse-Shepherd-Gilbert-MacD.-Cadman, etc.) failed utterly to develop an American style or school of music at all, because their material (Negro, American Indian, etc.) was not common—the old problem of America the melting pot. Having ruthlessly revealed the invalidity of an Indian tune surrounded by Teutonic development, I will try to show that there is something American in the newer music, which relies not on folk material, but on a native spirit (like your music and maybe Harris' and Sessions'), or which relies on a new American form, like Blitzstein's. Whether this is tenable or not, it is my thesis, and I'm sticking to it. . . . I know and hear so little American stuff. This is my great opportunity

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (*continued*)

to get to know it well. I feel more and more that there's something to all this. . . .

He "[got] to know it well" indeed, and almost forty years later, for the U.S. Bicentennial, he composed *Songfest*, an orchestral song cycle intended as a panorama of America's artistic past and present, for which he selected verses from thirteen poets spanning 300 years of American life and history.

Bernstein's Harvard thesis is included in his book *Findings* (Simon & Schuster, 1982). His unpublished writings and correspondence will undoubtedly be searched out by scholars. Collecting and preserving such documentation is now an urgent matter: from it, a more comprehensive picture of Bernstein will evolve. While working on Copland's autobiography, I turned frequently to Bernstein's letters: they were not only a constant source of information and illumination but a view of the younger Bernstein. Lenny's pen, like his speech, flowed easily—even overflowed sometimes—with passion, enthusiasm, frustration, criticism, erudition. One could not help being struck with his confidence and boldness. (Agnes de Mille said, in an interview with me, that the young unidentified "kid" who came with Copland to play *Rodeo* for her for the first time was "downright nervy!") Bernstein's letters also demonstrate a breadth of interests and a continuous quest for knowledge in and out of music. That worked the other way, too. When I arranged to interview Bernstein for Copland's book, I was told to come for one hour. I did. Six hours later, even as I was leaving Lenny was still talking, expounding, teaching.

Bernstein was frequently concerned with social or political issues. When he had a cause, nothing was impossible, and nobody was out of reach. One example: Copland's eightieth birthday celebration took place at the Kennedy Center in Washington. President Jimmy Carter had recently been defeated for re-election. The Carters were not planning to attend the Copland concert, but Lenny thought they should. Somehow he did his thing—and the Carters were in the presidential box, listening to Bernstein conduct *A Lincoln Portrait*, with Copland narrating, "We cannot escape history. . . ."

After a video interview with Bernstein and Copland in 1979 for the Kennedy Center Honors, we all three climbed into a car to go to a filming at the Lincoln Memorial. Copland rested, but as we drove by the White House Bernstein spoke eloquently and wistfully about the lost dreams of the Kennedys and what they had planned for the arts.

While working through the Marc Blitzstein papers in Madison, Wisconsin, I came across a note by Blitzstein attached to a manuscript. The note, dated 1963, reads: "The pencilled music-holograph is by Leonard Bernstein, who together with M.B. made a joke out of the American folk-tune found in Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*. We used to sing it as 'Bernstein & Blitzstein & Blitzstein & Bernstein & Blitzstein & Bernstein AND BLITZSTEIN!' (LB would of course reverse the order of the names in the last line.)" When I showed this to Lenny later, he laughingly sang it through both ways, commenting, "Well, *that* says something about a tangle of egos, doesn't it!"

On November 14th, exactly one month following Bernstein's death, "A Concert Remembering Lenny" was presented at

Carnegie Hall to an invited audience including friends, colleagues, and family. The emotional impact of this extraordinary tribute was increased by the date: November 14th was the 47th anniversary of Bernstein's debut with the New York Philharmonic, when he substituted at the last moment for Bruno Walter; it was also Aaron Copland's 90th birthday. The event included spoken tributes by Bernstein's children and others, which were a perfect blend of warmth and laughter. The memorial concert was beautifully presented, with such ardor and sensitivity that it has already become part of the Bernstein legend. The heart of it was music by Bernstein and a few composers especially close to him: Copland and Mahler, Schumann and Haydn. The performers included members of a number of orchestras: the New York Philharmonic, the Israel Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the London Symphony, the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Santa Cecilia orchestra. Conductors included Michael Tilson Thomas, Michael Barrett, Christoph Eschenbach and James Levine. Among the memorable performances by soloists were Thomas Hampson's beautiful "Simple Song" (from Bernstein's *Mass*), Rostropovich's glorious Sarabande (from Bach's Suite No. 5 for solo cello), and Christa Ludwig's transcendental "I Have Withdrawn from the World" (from Mahler's *Rückert Songs*). A highlight of the two-and-a-half-hour tribute was Bernstein's *Candide* overture, performed without conductor. The empty podium, at first a poignant and lonely sight, became an energized space, and Leonard Bernstein was *there*, his presence so vivid that it was very much alive in our hearts and imaginations.

These few brief anecdotes can only touch on Leonard Bernstein. His conducting, his music and writings, and his life are subjects for larger studies. Writing here, in the newsletter of I.S.A.M., I would emphasize how apt Bernstein's writings are today: I recommend especially going back to his *Joy of Music* (1954) and *The Infinite Variety of Music* (1962). Virgil Thomson said of these books: "As musical mind-openers they are first class; as pedagogy they are matchless."

For articles (but not for those looking for juicy tidbits about his personal life), see especially *Sennets & Tuckets*, a book of essays edited by Steven Ledbetter in honor of Bernstein's seventieth birthday (Boston: Boston Symphony Orchestra and David R. Godine, 1988). This includes a memorable address by Bernstein to the young musicians entering the 1970 Tanglewood season, on the likes of whom he lavished his greatest affection and most brilliant and erudite teaching. The address is entitled "The Principle of Hope," and in it, he said:

Nothing comes instantly except death, and every generation has to learn that anew, including yours. Nobody is going to dream on Sunday of becoming a great oboe player and wake up on Monday being one, or a great composer, or a world-saving statesman. . . . [I]t's the artists of the world, the feelers and thinkers, who will ultimately save us: who can articulate, educate, defy, insist, sing and shout about the big dreams.

Leonard Bernstein had the big dreams. His mercurial life took him very high, with an exaltation not experienced by ordinary mortals, and sometimes very low, with intense despair about causes and people he cared for deeply. He wanted to share his dreams with everyone, and he never lost the Principle of Hope that he could do so.

## I.S.A.M. MATTERS

**On the Fellowship Front.** Currently completing a semester as Senior Research Fellow of the institute is **Ingram Marshall**, a longtime West Coast composer but now living in Connecticut. He has directed a seminar on "A History of Minimalism—More or Less" and has delivered a pair of public lectures, jointly titled "California: The Great Permission-Giver." A recent CD with Marshall's *Three Penitential Visions* and *Hidden Voices* (Nonesuch 9 79227-2) was lauded by Edward Strickland in the current issue of *Fanfare* as "one of the most moving and distinctive albums in any idiom to appear in recent memory". . . . Marshall may be our finest exponent of electronic tone-poems." High praise, indeed!

On deck to occupy an I.S.A.M. Senior Fellowship in the spring semester is critic and historian **Joseph Horowitz**, who will direct a seminar titled "The Symphony Orchestra—An American Specialty." Following his much-praised books *Conversations with Arrau* and *Understanding Toscanini*, he has recently published *The Ivory Trade* (reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter); of it, Claudio Arrau, who ought to know, wrote, "Piano competitions as practiced in today's highly materialistic society are anti-art. Here Mr. Horowitz gives us all the misery and some of the glory of the Cliburn competition . . . with great compassion and understanding."

**On Tap and On the Way.** I.S.A.M.'s most recent monograph acquisition is *Elliott Carter/In Conversation with Enzo Restagno* (for *Settembre Musica* 1989), a group of autobiographical discussions with a leading north Italian music critic, originally published to accompany the 1989 "Carter edition" of the Torinese music festival *Settembre Musica*. I.S.A.M. will publish the discussions in an English translation by Katherine Silberblatt Wolfthal, with illustrations provided by Mr. Carter. . . . Meanwhile, production continues on Thomas McGeary's catalogue of the music of Harry Partch, forthcoming early in 1991.

**On Time.** I.S.A.M. director H. Wiley Hitchcock has been honored with a festschrift pegged to his sixty-fifth birthday. Edited by Richard Crawford, R. Allen Lott, and Carol J. Oja (all associated at one time or another with I.S.A.M.), the book is titled *A Celebration of American Music: Words and Music in Honor of H. Wiley Hitchcock* (University of Michigan Press; \$39.50). The forty-one contributors include not only scholars and memoirists but also composers, most of whom wrote pieces specifically for the volume. At a party during which Hitchcock was presented with the first copy, he feigned sangfroid but mentioned, in his acceptance remarks, the "Sanctus" of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and "Nola, the Xavier Cugat orchestra's theme song" . . . and wondered why people seemed embarrassed.

## IVESIANA

**New critical editions.** Off the presses recently—or nearly off the presses—are some important new critical/performance editions of music by Ives, their preparation supported by the Charles Ives Society. G. Schirmer, Inc., has brought out a new edition, by Kenneth Singleton, of the *Third Symphony*. Peer-Southern has published for the first time the *Set of Four Ragtime Dances* for chamber orchestra, in James B. Sinclair's edition, and is nearing publication of John Kirkpatrick's edition of the piano pieces he titled *Five Take-Offs* ("The Seen & Unseen," "Rough & Ready

## IVESIANA (continued)

et al and/or the Jumping Frog," "Song Without (good) Words," "Scene Episode," and "Bad Resolutions, Good Wan"). And Theodore Presser is almost ready to roll with Kirkpatrick's edition of *Piano Study No. 23*.

**New recordings.** The *Four Ragtime Dances* are among the premiere recordings included on a brand-new all-Ives CD of orchestral music (Koch International Classics 3-7025-2). James Sinclair directs **Orchestra New England**, a New Haven-based group 52 players strong (plus several dozen enthusiastic friends on kazoos). Other works here recorded for the first time are *Yale-Princeton Football Game* (with the kazoos) and the gentle early *Postlude in F*. The disc is rounded out with first recordings of critical editions of *Calcium Light Night, Set for Theatre Orchestra, Largo Cantabile: Hymn*, and *Three Places in New England* (in its version for small orchestra), having started with a bang with the hilarious "Country Band" March.

**New writings.** In connection with his preparation of a critical edition of the *Complete Organ Works*, **William Osborne** has published "Charles Ives the Organist," in *The American Organist*, 24/7 (July 1990), 58–64. Other important recent articles are those of Wayne D. Shirley, "The Second of July: A Charles Ives Draft Considered as an Independent Work," in *A Celebration of American Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); **Carol K. Baron**, "Dating Charles Ives's Music: Facts and Fictions," in *Perspectives of New Music*, 28/1 (1990); **J. Philip Lambert**, "Interval Cycles as Compositional Resources in the Music of Charles Ives," in *Music Theory Spectrum*, 12/1 (Spring 1990); and **Thomas Brodhead**, "The Celestial Railroad of Charles Ives" (as yet unpublished).


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## REGARDING RECORDINGS I

### A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS PORTRAITIST

Virgil Thomson composed 147 musical portraits. The first, a portrait of Juanita de Medina, was written in 1928; the last, a portrait of H. Wiley Hitchcock (1988) is Thomson's final completed composition. Forty-four of these portraits may be "viewed" on a generous (78-minute) new recording from Northeastern (NR-240-CD).

Couperin, Schumann, Anton Rubinstein, and Elgar all composed musical portraits, but Thomson devised an original method: inspired by his painter friends' routine practice of working in the model's presence, and by Gertrude Stein's free-association literary portraits, he worked "from life" by placing the subject before him and composing the portrait in a single session. Sitters could distract themselves by reading or sleeping—by anything but talking. After sketching the portrait, Thomson would "let it refrigerate over night." The following day he would polish and edit it and give it a title. Thomson used the immediacy and intimacy of artist-and-subject portraiture to encourage in himself a "ready-for-anything passivity." He called his method "letting my mind alone," giving it up to "the discipline of spontaneity."

Anthony Tommasini, not only a pianist but also a writer, is the author of *Virgil Thomson's Musical Portraits* (1986) and is currently at work on a biography of Thomson. Under an NEA grant, Tommasini produced the present disc in association with composer Scott Wheeler and the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble. It includes portraits for solo piano; solo flute, violin, and piano; oboe, bassoon, and piano; flute and violin; cello and piano; and chamber ensemble—the last used for Wheeler's arrangements of five solo-piano portraits. These are true to Thomson's feel for orchestration: Wheeler studied orchestration with Thomson and arranged a number of his works under the composer's supervision. Also represented as arranger is violinist Samuel Dushkin (who commissioned and premiered the Stravinsky Violin Concerto), with transcriptions for violin and piano of three piano portraits.

Thomson's eloquence as a writer, friendship with the celebrated, and outsized personality assured him fame throughout his life and, so far as one can tell, in perpetuity. His music is far less well-known. Indeed, many of these portraits have never been recorded before. But each is worth hearing, even worth knowing, and certainly worth learning and performing. They are Thomson at his most characteristic, providing a convincing likeness of the composer and one that he would probably deem the most consequential.

This disc is special not merely for its archival value but because these sensitive and accomplished performances, by players who have taken Thomson's music seriously, reveal the quality which is really there all the time. Tommasini's performances are particularly beautiful—technically solid and perfectly attuned to the composer's sensibilities. And the engineering and production values are first-rate.

Music such as Thomson's that plays with the banality of common elements—everyday scales, triads, the ditty-like and imbecilic—often perplexes listeners who don't realize that their ears need modification, not the music. Here is the ideal disc to set the adjustment in motion.

—Noah Creshevsky  
(Brooklyn College)

## BEHIND THE BEAT *with Mark Tucker*

Certain jazz musicians have inspired massive research projects of near-fanatical devotion, among them King Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman. The latest to receive such treatment is saxophonist Lester Young in two fact-packed volumes by the Danish librarian and musician Frank Büchmann-Møller—one a biography, *You Just Fight for Your Life: The Story of Lester Young* (Praeger; \$24.95), the other an annotated guide to recorded solos (a "solography"), *You Got to Be Original, Man! The Music of Lester Young* (Greenwood Press, \$49.95).

Like a hunter stalking his quarry, Büchmann-Møller tracks the elusive Young's career with patience and persistence. Quoting liberally from contemporary reviews and interviews with musicians and family members, he flushes out many fascinating details, especially about the saxophonist's early years, that were hidden in obscure places. The solography describes, in the author's words, "every solo played by Young, published or unpublished," comprising 251 recording sessions between 1936 and 1959 and including eighty-five transcriptions.

While Büchmann-Møller's dogged approach and dry prose style don't always make for compelling reading, his two volumes establish a solid framework for evaluating Young's life and art, joining a distinguished scholarly literature that includes Lawrence Gushee's article "Lester Young's 'Shoeshine Boy,'" Jan Evensmo's solography *The Tenor Saxophone & Clarinet of Lester Young, 1936-1949*, Lewis Porter's monograph *Lester Young*, and Gunther Schuller's commentary in *The Swing Era*.

\* \* \*

Bassist Bill Crow has a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, as readers of *The Jazz Review* and Gene Lees's *Jazzletter* already know. Those same qualities pervade *Jazz Anecdotes* (Oxford University Press; \$19.95), Crow's collection of tales about the jazz world's vivid personalities, combative encounters, occupational hazards, and irreverent humor. Some of the anecdotes have appeared elsewhere, but combining them makes for a neat package—especially for teachers of jazz courses who seek items to spice up a lecture.

More stories and recollections turn up in Chip Deffaa's *Voices of the Jazz Age* (University of Illinois Press; \$25.95), devoted to an older generation of musicians who came of age during the 1920s. All the chapters save for one on Bix Beiderbecke are based on interviews conducted by Deffaa and published in *Mississippi Rag*, the magazine of traditional jazz. Deffaa is a skilled practitioner of the interview-profile genre, weaving in biographical background with the subject's own words. The results depend on the speaker at hand: trumpeter Jabbo Smith, for example, weakened by illness and buffeted by professional hardships, is painfully inarticulate, while saxophonist Bud Freeman displays a vitality and verbal adroitness undiminished by time.

\* \* \*

Where have all the editors gone? That question has come to mind often in the last few years, most recently while reading Will Friedwald's *Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond* (C. Scribner's; \$29.95). Nobody seemed to notice when Friedwald quoted "classical music critic Joseph Kierman" [sic] on the book's first page or

mused about the meaning of "sympatico" [sic] at the beginning of a chapter. No blue pencil stopped him from using "canary" as a verb, addressing his readers as "folks," and indulging, on page after page, a sophomore sense of humor (e.g., stating that Abbey Lincoln's adopted African name—Aminata Moseka—"sounds like something you order at a Greek coffee shop"). And no one told him that free association is a poor substitute for description, as when he calls Bob Eberle "Mighty Mouse in a tuxedo," Al Hibbler "Boris Karloff of the blues," and Dianne Schurr the "Stephen Spielberg of singing" (that's a put-down, folks).

Friedwald's stated aim—to write a critical history of jazz singing—is a worthy one. His book, however, turns out to be a hash of biographical trivia, brash opinions, and tips on recordings, served up with loads of journalistic clichés and juvenile gags. True, the author is still young (born in 1961). But that fact neither excuses his mass of messy prose nor explains why his editors at Scribner's, Robert Stewart and Erika Goldman, let him get away with it.

\* \* \*

If any of you, like me, have managed to sleep through developments in Brazilian popular music over the past twenty years, two recent anthologies will provide a rousing wake-up call. A dozen singers appear on *Canta Brasil: The Great Brazilian Songbook* (Verve 843 1152), each with a voice and musical personality utterly distinctive, from Maria Bethânia's smoldering sensuality to Milton Nascimento's otherworldly falsetto. Buoyant Afro-Brazilian rhythms propel performances by Gal Costa and Gilberto Gil, both from the northeastern state of Bahia, while the late Elis Regina brings a world-weary pathos to everything she sings. The level of songwriting is consistently high; an outstanding example is João Bosco's and Aldir Blanc's "O Mestre Sala Dos Mares" ("Flag-Bearer of the Seas"), a through-composed meditation on themes from Brazilian history. The booklet accompanying *Canta Brasil* includes biographical notes on the artists and song texts in both English and Portuguese.

David Byrne, formerly of the Talking Heads, selected the program for *Brazil Classics I: Beleza Tropical* (Fly/Sire 9 25805-4). The set opens with Jorge Ben's "Ponta de Lanca Africano," a hard-driving dance number, and closes with Caetano Veloso's "Terra," a ballad with a modal melody and subtly shifting orchestration throughout (including tabla and sitar in the final verse). Like *Canta Brasil*, this compilation presents a rich spectrum of styles and offers an excellent introduction to the vast and verdant territory of Brazilian pop.

\* \* \*

And this just in . . . Karlheinz, make way for Earl Hines! That's right, Darmstadt, Germany, long associated with Stockhausen and his followers, now boasts the largest jazz archive in Europe. Opened this past September, the Jazz-Institut Darmstadt contains books, recordings, periodicals, photographs, and memorabilia. It also plans to sponsor regular conferences and workshops aimed at bringing musicians and researchers together. For more information, contact Dr. Wolfram Knauer, Director, Jazz-Institut Darmstadt, Kasinostrasse 3, D-6100 Darmstadt, Germany.



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## REGARDING RECORDINGS II

### ROMANTIC RESURGENCES

Attitudes toward American concert music of the 1940s are on the upswing. Next to the iconoclastic experimentalism of the twenties, the social activism of the thirties, and the renewed modernism of the fifties, music from the forties has often seemed embarrassingly jingoistic and conservative—the musical equivalent of peanut butter and jelly on Taystee bread. Recent recordings and performances of works by David Diamond and Walter Piston, among others, are changing all that. Gerard Schwarz, conductor of the Seattle Symphony, has been spearheading this movement, and he's produced some impressive results, reintroducing pieces that had long and undeservedly been forgotten.

Perhaps most compelling is his recording of music by **David Diamond**, including the Concerto for Small Orchestra (1940), Symphony No. 2 (1942–43), and Symphony No. 4 (1945) (all on Delos DE-3093). The liner notes promise a release next year of Diamond's *Kaddish for Cello and Orchestra*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Symphony No. 3. Virgil Thomson once contrasted “the elegant neo-Romanticism of Samuel Barber” with “the sentimental neo-Romanticism” of Diamond, a judgment that today seems a bit unfair. Yes, Diamond's heart hangs close to his sleeve, but his work has such sumptuously long-breathed themes, such rhythmic vitality, and such crystalline orchestration that it communicates profound feeling rather than saccharine excesses. The pieces on this new recording—especially the two symphonies—could happily become standard fare for orchestras across the country. They speak a language familiar to most audiences and do so with imaginative new inflections.

Another revival by Schwarz has been the music of **Walter Piston**, specifically a recording of the *Sinfonietta* (1941), Symphony No. 2 (1943), and Symphony No. 6 (1955) (Delos DE-3074). While much better known than Diamond, Piston too has suffered from neglect. Here, as with the works of Diamond, Schwarz gives readings that are conscientious and communicative. If Diamond's symphonies show more originality, Piston's are splendidly crafted, accessible, and also deserving of a place in American symphony repertoires.

\* \* \*

Yet another tribute to the forties can be found on *Twenty Fanfares for the Common Man*, with Jorge Mester conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra in twelve of the nineteen fanfares commissioned by Eugene Goossens for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra between 1942 and 1946. Eight additional fanfares are also included (Koch International Classics 3-7012-2H1). It's a curious idea for a disc—hardly a program to curl up with in one sitting. Mester takes Copland's famous *Fanfare for the Common Man* at a lugubriously slow tempo, and the liner notes by Tom Null are haphazard and often misleading. But there are a few appealing pieces, especially Morton Gould's *Columbian Fanfares*, Walter Piston's *Fanfare for the Fighting French*, and Virgil Thomson's *Fanfare for France*.

— C.J.O.

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*Schwarz's recordings of the Diamond and Piston symphonies are part of an ongoing project for Delos that will include all nine Diamond symphonies and all eight of Piston's.*

## BOOK NOOK I

## COPLAND'S SECOND FORTY YEARS

"Aaron is the most circumspect famous person I have ever known, considering how much he encouraged others to let down their hair," Ned Rorem is quoted as saying in *Copland Since 1943* (St. Martin's Press, \$29.95, paperback, \$14.95), by Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis. Here, Rorem tellingly touches on the personal reticence that has become one of the most commented-on traits of the "dean of American composers." And indeed, this second volume of Aaron Copland's autobiography manifests the same sense of propriety as the first. Critical opinions of his colleagues, intimate relationships, the pain or grief resulting from personal trauma—all are formally represented rather than subjectively engaged. Accounts of Copland's travels, his professional activities, and his compositions are voiced with the same restraint, the same precise and delicate self-consciousness, that characterized the first volume.

This restraint was a dominant theme in the reviews that greeted the first volume. For all that the book had to offer, many reviewers felt that it failed to reveal a part of the composer—some 'inner' Copland—that had been hidden throughout his life. It is true that more insight into Copland's feelings about himself would have been helpful. A more forthcoming account of Copland's psychological or emotional self in relation to his career would have been profoundly significant in our struggle to comprehend music as part of life and culture.

Yet we cannot criticize the book for not doing well what it does, for it is a wonderful example of what its authors intended. The new volume is structured like the first: Copland's text, based on interviews with Perlis, is interspersed with "Interludes" by her and punctuated by excerpts from interviews with people who have known and worked with the composer. In the introduction to the earlier volume, Copland wrote (and, in the preface to this one, Perlis quoted him): "My idea was not to present a personal memoir so much as to tell the story of American music as I experienced it in my lifetime." And this is precisely what he does.

Like Chuck Berry's autobiography, Copland's offers a particular slant on the rich mosaic that the American music scene really is. The book is engaging precisely because it draws us into his place in that complex. For example, Copland's longtime friendships with Martha Graham and Leonard Bernstein, and their creative lives together, are threads that run through the book. Copland's role as a political and cultural figure changed through the Depression, World War II, and the McCarthy hearings, as Americans grappled with notions of art in society. His accounts of writing for films are invaluable for the musical and human insight they give into a creative arena that few 'serious' composers have explored.

The book is full of such insights into the experience of a composer in this society and this century. It is not the story of a composer in isolation. Rather, it is the genuine story of the social and cultural being that Copland is, and of the mixture of levels that comprise both life and music.

What Aaron Copland has offered us with his life, he now offers us with his account of that life.

—Susan Richardson  
(Indiana University)

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## YANKEE LIEDER by Paul Sperry

*Paul Sperry, the well-known tenor who enjoys contemporary songs in general and American songs in particular, was honored not long ago by being named president of the American Music Center, and was I.S.A.M. Senior Research Fellow last year. Besides directing a seminar on American song (reflecting his research toward a book on the subject), Professor Sperry delivered public lecture-recitals on American song and singing. The following essay is adapted from one of those, with his kind cooperation.*

In a recent issue of *Keynote* magazine, it is said that I have a love affair with American songs. There is no doubt that this is true. And maybe, if I tell you how I got involved with our song repertoire and how it grew on me, I can make a case for all our singers to perform it.

When I started, I wanted to be a Lieder singer, and I was especially drawn to Schubert and Poulenc—two passions, incidentally, that have never abated for me. However, I always loved making as much as possible out of the words of a song, and the words I understood best were always the most fun. Obviously, that suggested English, so from the beginning I was on the lookout for good songs in English.

Now, a lot of singers will tell you that English is a terrible language to sing. That's ridiculous. English has some specific problems, but so do all languages. We have lengthy consonant clusters, as does German. To be intelligible, we simply need to realize that our consonants take more time to utter. As for vowels: English has vowel sounds that don't exist in Italian, the language in which most singers are trained. But I find our vowels every bit as beautiful. The "a" in *after* is not intrinsically less lovely than the "a" in *ah!* just because Bellini didn't write for it.

I was fascinated by an article by David Hamilton, in an issue of *Opera News* in the summer of 1989, on the matter of producing opera in translation. Usually, discussion of this revolves around the audience and what it can comprehend: should we alter some of what the composer wrote—namely, words and music precisely joined to each other—in order to make sure that the audience knows what is happening? Hamilton takes a different tack: he argues that, in fact, opera in translation may be closer to the composer's wishes than opera in the original language, if the vitality of the performance is enhanced because the singers are more at ease with the words. He cites Lauritz Melchior's recordings, in German, of Verdi's *Otello* as being much more exciting than those in Italian. And he concludes that many of today's performances are pallid because the singers are too far removed from the language they are singing in.

I think there is a different problem in song. I don't believe that song texts translate well: to make a worthy translation of a poem that will fit the original melodic line is too much to ask. But I agree with Hamilton that our singers should get close to their material. So I think they should begin by singing songs with texts in the language that they speak: English, American English.

But I've gotten ahead of my story. As I said, early on I wanted to sing songs with English texts, simply because I enjoyed singing in English. I started with Dowland (my favorite among the lutenists), Purcell, and Arne. But I was chauvinistic enough to want to sing American songs, too. I didn't know many American song composers' names other than Stephen Foster and Charles Ives; but in those days I was elitist enough to think that Foster

didn't belong on serious concert programs, and Ives's music was hard to sight-read and intimidated me. Eventually, though, I put together a group of American songs for recitals, which I usually sang at the end of a program and which usually included songs by Theodore Chanler and Richard Hundley, who were not well known but whose songs I loved.

Then, in 1975, I was invited to do a series of three recitals at Hunter College here in New York, and I decided to organize them around my three best languages—German, French, and of course English. The first recital was an all-German one, the second an all-French one. For the third, I decided on an all-American program, but with songs in the other two languages as well as English. The American program would hardly seem adventurous today: the first half was all Charles Ives; the second included songs by Edward MacDowell in English, John Alden Carpenter in French, Charles Griffes in German, and Chanler (in English again) to close. Though Chanler's name was not familiar, those of the other composers would at least have been recognized by any music lover, but to combine songs by all of them in single recital was then quite out of the ordinary.

\* \* \*

The next year was the U.S. Bicentennial, and I proposed to the 92nd Street YMHA a series of three concerts of unknown American songs. They were enthusiastic about the idea. It only remained for me to come up with the material.

That turned out to be a hard task. For German lieder, you can pick little-known Schumann songs, or almost any by Liszt, and be fairly certain you are choosing great pieces, even if the public doesn't know them. For French songs, you can look in Pierre Bernac's wonderful book on French repertoire and performance, and discover many neglected masterworks. But for American songs there is no established canon, and there is not much written about American song in general. The only book I could find was William Treat Upton's *Art-Song in America*. I was thrilled by all the names he gave me to follow up on, even though, published back in 1930, the book was way out of date (and by no means *up to date*), and I didn't share Upton's taste. (The song he thought was Ethelbert Nevin's worst was the one with which I chose to begin my series.) I listened to all the recordings I could find, but there weren't a great many available. I soon realized that I would have to search by sight-reading. But I didn't even know what composers' music I should look at! I started asking anyone and everyone for suggestions.

My manager suggested I contact Neely Bruce at Wesleyan University, who knows and performs more American music than almost anyone. He gave me numerous suggestions, saying (among other things) that I would end up loving, more than any others, the songs of Arthur Farwell (true) and John Philip Sousa (not true). He played through with me a huge number of Farwell's songs from the manuscripts, and a group of eleven of



## YANKEE LIEDER (continued)



Paul Sperry

Farwell's settings of Emily Dickinson became the centerpiece of my first program.

Other friends helped. Adele Addison had sung a lot of American music and Oren Brown had taught a lot of it; both let me browse through their substantial collections. Mason Martens, a scholar of the arcane, introduced me to many American song composers whose names have all but disappeared, such as Emerson Whit-horne and Blair Fairchild.

I was singing in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* with the Washington Opera that season and had lots of spare time. I spent it in the stacks at the Library of Congress. One day, when I was looking through boxes of music by Louis Moreau Gottschalk, a woman happened by, looked over my shoulder, and said, "The Gottschalk songs aren't any good. Try Chadwick, Foote, and Beach." True serendipity! Her name was Mary Winters, and she was doing a project on classical American songs written between the Civil War and World War I—reading through them, selecting the ones she liked, and, singing and playing herself, taping them for the library's archives. I found her tastes not far from mine, so her help was invaluable.

Whenever I ran into a composer that year, I asked if he or she had any songs. I found some wonderful things that way—a long ballad by Lester Trimble unsung by anyone, some Hundley I hadn't known before, terrific pieces by Louise Talma and Ben Weber. One composer referred me to another.

I found a lot in the library at Harvard, and in the Harvard Music Society library in downtown Boston. I scoured music stores in every city I visited. I checked with publishers to see what they had.

Finally I had amassed an enormous number of American songs and needed to start reading through them and making choices. The reading was a marvelous experience. I spent most of the summer at it; I must have read something like 2,000 songs. Some I could reject after the first few measures, but many demanded hard work and more than one attempt. Often I read many songs by a single composer but found only one or two I really liked, and I began to worry that I wouldn't be able to program any large one-composer groups. But by the time I had finished my sight-reading I had allayed that fear, and I had far too many songs for the three recitals, so I had to make choices among them and then organize them into effective programs.

Beyond constructing effective song groups within the recitals, I wanted each recital to be organized differently from the other two: I wanted my audiences to have three distinct and different experiences. I finally settled on a five-group first program, each a single-composer group (Nevin, Trimble, Farwell, Chanler) except for the last, with three composers (Hundley, MacDowell, Dudley Buck). The second program was organized by poetry: the first half was all Shakespeare; the second half was all settings of American poems, each read before I sang by an actor friend, who also declaimed Longfellow's "Sandolphon the Angel" in Harvey Worthington Loomis's setting of it as melodrama (in the original sense of recitation over a musical background). The third program consisted of three single-composer groups in the first half (Dominick Argento, Charles Griffes, Leonard Bernstein) and, in the second, ten songs by ten different composers, five twelve-tone or atonal and five decidedly tonal.

I was proud of the programs, and still am. And that series marked a turning point for me. My love affair with American songs had begun. It soon became public knowledge: composers began sending me their songs; I started being asked to give all-American recitals, and to feature American songs in mixed recitals; when I taught master classes, I was often asked to focus on American songs.

Then I got involved in publishing projects. This started with my passion for Farwell's songs, and the fact that most of them were languishing unpublished. I was particularly unhappy that Farwell's Dickinson settings—thirty-four of them—were consigned to manuscript oblivion, and I was able to persuade Boosey & Hawkes to publish them, in two volumes. I also urged Boosey & Hawkes to use Hundley's gorgeous "Astronomers" (which they had already published) as the start of a Hundley volume—which led to the collection *8 Songs* and, more recently, another book of four.

Efforts to get the Peer-Southern and C. F. Peters firms to collaborate on a collection of songs by William Flanagan didn't succeed. It was a kind of Catch-22 situation: they still had inventories of single songs by him which didn't sell, and they didn't want to spend money putting out a whole volume until all the singles were sold. Peer-Southern agreed with me in general that single songs weren't selling well any more, so they gave me the task of compiling an album from their catalogue, hoping in that way to put a lot of moribund single songs back in circulation.

(continued on page 15)

## BOOK NOOK II

## KEYBOARDS IN COWTOWN

The themes of Joseph Horowitz's two earlier books—piano artistry in *Conversations with Arrau* and the popularization of high culture in *Understanding Toscanini*—converge in his latest opus, *The Ivory Trade* (Summit Books; \$21.95). Horowitz's primary subject is "music and the business of music at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition." Held quadrennially in Fort Worth, the Cliburn competition, like the state in which it is held, wants desperately to be the biggest and best at what it does—and wants everyone to like it, too. With its substantial financial resources, it has succeeded to a large extent. Horowitz takes a critical look at the competition, acknowledging its strengths and making cogent suggestions about its weaknesses (being opposed, for instance, to ranking the winners and assigning the repertoire).

The Cliburn, however, is only the starting point in this fascinating and thought-provoking book, which surveys an array of topics that range from a history of music competitions and their pros and cons to the social behavior of pianists and the role of management in today's music world. Through interviews with six former Cliburn contestants, including three gold medalists (André-Michel Schub, José Feghali, and the late Steven De Groote), we learn of the dreams and ambitions that persist despite the struggles of pursuing a solo performing career. Alexander Toradze's tale of Soviet intrigue and defection is especially moving.

Horowitz's pervading theme is how the Cliburn and other competitions reflect as well as contribute to the democratization of classical music. He sharply contrasts the elitist, subdued, and mysterious Leventritt, formerly the premier music competition in the United States, with the populist, brash, and media-conscious Cliburn. It's a fine line between popularization and debasement, however, and Horowitz hopes that the Cliburn "can achieve truer artistic responsibility without falsifying its surest current truth: its popular appeal."

We Texans are notoriously sensitive about our cultural institutions (we know that everything *else* about Texas is the best, whether our culture is or not), and we believe that New Yorkers have their minds made up about us before they cross the Hudson. Horowitz's account is admirably evenhanded. He is able to relish the spirit of Texas and at the same time detect the flaws, but without typical Yankee glee.

— R. Allen Lott  
(Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

## REGARDING RECORDINGS III

A little fife usually goes a long way, but in *Marching Out of Time* (Colonial Williamsburg WSCD-118) John Moon has come up with such a varied and diverse program that even the dubious should be impressed and delighted. This third recording by the Fifes and Drums of Colonial Williamsburg includes sequences of music that could have served for military ceremonies during the American Revolution, such as quick and common marches for passing in review, trooping the colors (complete with the "Three Cheers"), retreat parades, tattoos (even a Prussian *Zapfenstreich*), inspection music, and a funeral procession (dirge/lament to the gravesite, quick step back). Nor are the off-duty hours of the fifers neglected: there are hornpipes, reels, ballads, and even a couple of gavottes. The music, taken from original British, French, and German sources, is performed with zest and, for fifes, surprisingly good intonation. In some selections a harmony fife part has been added, as have the drum accompaniments. *Marching Out of Time* effectively recaptures the spirit and sound of early America, and refutes those who think this repertoire and medium are unworthy of serious consideration. (Now if the players would only get rid of those bass drums, appropriate for the Civil War period but not the Revolution, and let the fine fifing and drumming come through without obtrusive thumps. . . .)

— Raoul Camus  
(Queensborough Community College, CUNY)

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## REGARDING RECORDINGS III (continued)

## MACHOVER ON BRIDGE

In 1986, when Bridge Records released a disc (BCD 9002) containing two works by **Tod Machover**, *Nature's Breath* for chamber ensemble and *Spectres Parisiens* for chamber orchestra and computer sound, the mature voice of a major young composer was recognizable. (The previously available recordings of music by Machover, who is now 37, had been one from CRI [SD 506], with *Light* [1979] and *Soft Morning, City!* [1980], and another from New World [NW 333], with *Hidden Sparks* [1984] for solo violin.) The two early works on the CRI recording did not begin to achieve the masterly synthesis of timbre, harmony, and melody that surfaced in *Nature's Breath* and *Spectres Parisiens*. In the latter, despite Machover's near-obsession with timbre, there was no disdain for melody or harmony or structure. Instead, balancing all these parameters, Machover carved out an intriguing personal language which, coupled with his predilection for computer-generated sound (he was director of musical research at IRCAM in Paris in 1980-84) and his undeniable skill as a composer, seemed to open up infinite possibilities for future compositions.

Machover's largest work to date, the opera *Valis* (1985-87), based on the Philip K. Dick novel of the same title and recorded by Bridge in 1988 (BCD 9007), pointed in other new directions. He began to incorporate diverse styles, from rock to neo-Renaissance, from pop to *Parsifal*. In some instances, this diversity led to inspired and daring music (although these moments were counterbalanced with others that seemed awkward and trite). And in technical sophistication, Machover reached new heights. He incorporated real-time computer techniques mainly through the use of "hyperinstruments" allowing computers to react to the nuances inherent in live performance. And his "orchestra" consisted of but two musicians, a keyboardist and a percussionist, who created a complex world of sound using acoustic instruments, conventional MIDI instruments, and the intelligent "hyperinstruments."

When a new Machover disc was released this year (Bridge BCD 9020), I approached it with anticipation, hoping for a glorious fusion of the musical strengths hinted at in *Nature's Breath* and *Spectres Parisiens* and the technological mastery of *Valis*. But after successive listenings to the four works on the disc, my expectations turned to trepidation and finally to disappointment. *Flora* (1989), a computer-generated manipulation of a prerecorded female voice, sounds suspiciously like one of the motet/rock sections from *Valis*. Both *Flora* and *Famine* (1985-86), a Berio-like speech-song composition, are less than inspired musically and sonically, although both reveal Machover's talent for writing for the human voice.

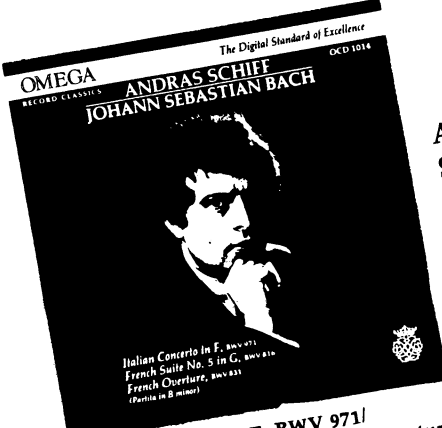
*Towards the Center* (1988-89), for six instruments and live computer electronics, and *Bug-Mudra* (1989-90), for two guitars, percussion, and live computer electronics, reach a level of banality astonishing from someone with such musical gifts. The computer-generated sounds triggered by the "hyperinstruments" are so dull and one-dimensional that one has to question why Machover went through all this real-time sophistication at all. This is especially apparent in *Bug-Mudra*, a pathetic attempt at a work in the idiom of 1970s jazz-rock fusion and one

that could easily have been written for two keyboardists (playing commercially available synthesizers).

Perhaps Machover is doing a great service in developing and testing these interactive real-time computer systems. But we await a composer who will take full advantage of this technology. With the potential Machover revealed in his first two Bridge releases, he could still be the very one.

— Jason Stanyek  
(Brooklyn College)

**Genial Idea . . . Near-Perfect Realization.** Joel Cohen, director of the Boston Camerata, had a most genial, fresh idea: to search for European musical ancestors of American folksongs (and folkish songs, such as shape-note hymns and popular early dances), then to record side by side not only the roots but the branches, so to speak. In fact, the new CD in which he does just that is titled *Les Racines du folksong américain/The Roots of American Folksong* (Erato 2292-45474-2). The disc is divided into four sections. In a "Prologue," Cohen shows brilliantly what he is up to, with a 10th-century chant melody demonstrably related to the next piece, the air of "The Great Day" from *The Sacred Harp*; and the well-known Provençal Troubadour song "Calenda Maia" prefiguring astonishingly a Hispanic Christmas carol, "Cuando por el oriente," used in a modern New Mexican Nativity play. Erato being a French label, "American" folksong is interpreted as pan-American folksong, and seven tracks—each with pairings similar to those of the Prologue—are understandably devoted to "Vieille France et Nouvelle  
(continued on page 15)



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

The "last frontier" in discography is American ethnic recordings—that huge body of material produced by or for the dozens of ethnic subcultures in our melting pot. Such recordings have been a significant part of the phonograph industry since its very beginning and continue to be so today. For the first five decades, they were produced by the major commercial companies like Victor and Columbia; since World War II, they have become the province of the many independent grassroots companies located in or near the ethnic communities they serve. For scholars curious about how these recordings fit into our popular, folk, and even classical music, this body of material has seemed a giant, uncharted Sargasso Sea into which the voyager blunders with trepidation. Now, after some ten or twelve years' work, a guide to many of these uncharted waters has emerged—a mammoth seven-volume discography by Richard K. Spottswood, *Ethnic Music On Records: A Discography of Ethnic Recordings Produced in the United States, 1893 to 1942* (University of Illinois Press; \$300).

Discographers, like bibliographers, are a special breed—scholars who have a passion for the thousands of facts, dates, master numbers, and release patterns that make up a discography. It's thus hard to evaluate such a work as Spottswood's, which presents in 4,347 type-filled pages more new factual information about American music than any work of the last decade. To quote James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, in his foreword, "Collectors, scholars, libraries, and archives not only lacked collections [of ethnic recordings] for research, but lacked even a knowledge of what they lacked. The universe of ethnic recordings was undefined, and its stars and constellations unidentified." Though scholars like Pekka Gronow, Bill Bryant, Cristóbal Diaz Ayala, and Norm Cohen, along with Spottswood, have started to explore this field, *Ethnic Music on Records* should stimulate an entire new generation of scholars to new efforts.

Five of the volumes consist of artist discographies, classified within nationality or ethnic group. Volume 1, for instance, is devoted to Western Europe; it lists recordings that were made in America by immigrants from Dutch, French, German, and Italian homelands. Volume 2 is devoted to music from Slavic countries, Volume 3 to Eastern Europe. Volume 4, the largest by far, includes Spanish as well as Portuguese, Philippine, and Basque recordings; and Volume 5 is a sort of catch-all that includes Mid-East, Far-East, Scandinavian, Irish and Scottish, West Indian, American Indian, and "International" recordings. Volume 6 offers a title index, an artist index, and a list of record abbreviations, while Volume 7 contains a record-number index and a matrix-number index.

Though commercial companies had started making ethnic records by 1900 (a 1906 Columbia disc catalogue advertised records in eleven languages), the high-water mark seems to have come in the 1920s and 1930s. By then the companies were relegating their ethnic records to specific catalogue-number series (as they were doing with "race" and "hillbilly" records) and even issuing specialized catalogues (in the native languages) for dealers and customers in ethnic communities in the large cities—newly arrived immigrants who longed for a touch of home, older ones who wanted to preserve some of their language

and culture. Though some companies released records that had been recorded overseas, Spottswood omits these from his work, limiting his entries to discs cut in the U.S. by immigrant performers. Also omitted are operatic and other classical recordings that were marketed to a general audience, as well as Hawaiian music (which "functioned primarily as a variety of American popular music"); humorous material employing ethnic stereotypes; instrumental recordings, by record-company "house" bands, that were occasionally issued in foreign series; and American Indian recordings "of private or institutional origin." (Oddly, though, a number of Library of Congress AFS field recordings of other groups are included.)

Even the casual student will recognize some of the major inclusions here: definitive accounts of *klezmerim* bands, Irish fiddlers, Cajun string bands, West Indian singers, *norteno* music—musics that have already won followings through various reissues and revivals. Less well known are 1922 recordings by a Welsh gospel quartet, a 1925 Bohemian concertina duet of *Over the Waves*, a set of 1926 sides featuring a Russian whistler, and a brace of 1938 Icelandic ballads recorded by a singer in San Francisco. There are, of course, hundreds of other surprises in this vast map of the byways of our folk and popular music heritage. "Byways" may be too judgmental a word: when all is said and done, the music described here may well be seen as a major force in the American musical mainstream.

In a work this vast and complex, everyone can find something to quibble with. For this reviewer, it is the format of the discographical entries, which reverses the usual pattern of putting the personnel and recording date at the beginning of the entry, relegating them instead to a hard-to-find lower right corner below the song titles. More information about the overall work of commercial companies in this field would have been useful, and the Record Number Index, which lacks both a table of contents and running heads, makes the reader flip pages ceaselessly to locate a particular record company. But these are acceptable shortcomings in view of the scope of the work. To put this scope in perspective, consider the number of books and monographs ~~that have been written on the approximately 7,000 blues recordings~~ issued during the 1903–1942 period; then consider the slender body of material written on ethnic recordings, and the fact that Spottswood's magnificent opus cites over 62,000 ethnic recordings—almost ten times the number of blues sides. His is a major work indeed; Spottswood deserves all the credit he can get for compiling it, and Judith McCulloh—music and folklore editor of the University of Illinois Press—and the press itself deserve our thanks for fighting to get it into print.

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*We're proud to report that Charles Wolfe was one of four recipients of the International Bluegrass Music Association's Certificate of Merit. The certificate, presented to Wolfe on September 27 in Owensboro, Kentucky, recognizes "lifetime contributions" to the bluegrass industry. Wolfe's scholarship in the area of bluegrass and country music includes such books as Kentucky Country, Tennessee Strings, and The Grand Old Opry: The Early Years.*

**BOOK NOOK III****ROOTS OF TIN PAN ALLEY**

Nicholas Tawa's *The Way To Tin Pan Alley* (Schirmer Books; \$29.95) covers the years 1866-1910. He thus spans the transition from a period dominated by polite parlor songs, heavily reliant on European models, to another characterized by more clearly vernacular indigenous idioms. His treatment of the years between the end of the Civil War and the rise of Tin Pan Alley in the 1890s is especially welcome; vernacular song of this period has received little scholarly attention.

Guided by citations in reference works, popular histories, and reminiscences, Tawa has assembled and "thoroughly dissected" a sample of 500 songs, analyzing them for subject matter, textual format, and musical style. His organization is thematic, not strictly chronological. Discussion of "conservative songs" gives way to a chapter on "songs for a changing society," then to examination of "text and music in the new songs" of Tin Pan Alley. This qualitative sample is analyzed quantitatively, with statistical summaries of such characteristics as tonality, melodic-phrase form, vocal range, gender of personae in text, time signature, length of stanza, poetic meter, and tempo indication.

Tawa also examines institutions responsible for the songs' composition, publication, and dissemination. He offers pertinent, well-annotated discussions of the popular songs' public, their use in different performance contexts, the origins and training grounds of songwriters, techniques of composition, and history of variety and vaudeville.

Tawa draws on both contemporary observations and post-hoc social history while exploring the relationships among songs and the wider milieu that spawned and supported them. He suggests that songs transgressed conventional limits only "at those moments in American cultural history when society was in the process of accelerated change and needed a new category of song to reflect back what it was becoming. . . ." His analytic model is based on a functionalist perspective which views society as a system of interrelated institutions meeting social needs, maintaining stability, and promoting change. Such a model encourages the identification of relationships among phenomena, which may, however, be merely coincidental. (Does "increased complication of the music" in early Tin Pan Alley products really reflect "an urban, cosmopolitan, and many-sided taste greatly removed from the more unassuming, homogenous, folk-oriented, and close-to-the-soil sounds of antebellum America"?)

Few musicologists have approached popular songs of this period with respect, and it is heartening to find this one taking the music seriously and sympathetically. Tawa's book contains much fascinating information and is worth reading, slowly and with care.

— Paul Charosh  
(Brooklyn College)

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## AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

*Aaron Copland died on December 2, just as this issue of the I.S.A.M. Newsletter was going to press. It seemed fitting to reprint the following appreciation, written by H. Wiley Hitchcock on the occasion of Copland's 80th birthday. Originally included in Perspectives of New Music [19 (1980–81), 31–33], it is reproduced here—in an edited version—with permission.*

For many people Aaron Copland seems to *be* American music. It is not easy to think of another American composer with so distinctive a voice, or one who is so unarguably recognized as a “major” composer the world over. Few alive today can even imagine an American musical culture without Copland at the center of it: his has been a forceful, dominant, and much beloved presence ever since he came back from study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger in 1921–24.

Copland's long career has in fact been one of service to American music and music in America. This is true of his work as a composer, as an organizer and promoter of other composers, and as a writer and speaker.

As a composer, Copland has meant, I think, a kind of *selfhood* for American music. He was one of the first to believe that in American popular and traditional music, and in jazz, our composers had a usable past (and present) on which to build a “serious” art-music . . . and to act on that belief. (Charles Ives had not been discovered in the 1920s.) So, around 1925, Copland consciously shifted his style from one he considered as “too European in derivation” and wrote his first “jazzy” works, the orchestral suite *Music for the Theatre* and the *Piano Concerto*. He soon found that manner too limiting, but it had affected the very marrow of his musical bones, and although he developed other styles, all his music has a rhythmic bite and tension, an inner vitality and drive, very close to popular music, especially dance music.

That kind of proximity to his American musical roots is certainly one reason why Copland has won a wider audience than any other “serious” American composer. People are *easy* with his music; it speaks to them directly and without off-putting pretensions. And with reason: about fifty years ago, in the early 1930s, Copland made a conscious decision to “say what I had to say in the simplest possible terms.” One result of this is that many, many people have been led to an attitude of affectionate respect for Copland as a composer . . . and by extension to American composers in general. This is unprecedented in our history, believe me, and although I am perfectly aware that other factors fed into this change of attitude, I believe Copland's model to have been a critical one.

In yet another way, Copland's music has brought a kind of selfhood to American music in general. It is all *affirmative*, yea-saying, positive, optimistic. It says that life, American life, has precious and cherishable values. Copland was recently quoted as saying, “Agony I don't connect with. Not even alienation.” Far from it; and that is the message of his music.

Fifteen years ago, in a commencement address at Brooklyn College (June 5, 1975), Copland spoke of the values to society of the artist, and of the crucial role the creative artist plays as

spokesperson for society:

His importance to society, in the deepest sense, is that the work he does gives substance and meaning to life as we live it. . . . Obviously, we depend on the great works of the past for many of our most profound artistic experiences, but not even the greatest symphony of Beethoven or the greatest cantata of Bach can say what *we* can say about our own time and our own life. . . . It's not a question of simply depending on the great works of the past—they are wonderful and cherishable, but that's not enough. We as a nation must be able to put down in terms of art what it feels like to be alive now, in our *own* time, in our own country. . . .

In his music, his words, his actions, his whole life, Aaron Copland did just that for a long, long time. We have been lucky to have had him all that time.

## DICKENS ON BLACKS DANCING IN NEW YORK

*Charles Dickens first visited the United States in 1842 and wrote of his visit in the book American Notes for General Circulation. Regrettably, he says very little about music, but in a chapter on New York City he describes some dancing he observed in a bar-room called Almack's, in the slum area known as the Five Points. (Lest some of his comments suggest racism, it should be said that Dickens was a fierce abolitionist; his chapter in American Notes on “Slavery” is a bitter, brutally realistic, and harshly critical account of that institution as he had observed it here.)*

The beautiful metropolis of America [New York] is by no means as clean as Boston . . . and there is one quarter, commonly called the Five Points, which, in respect of filth and wretchedness, may be safely backed against Seven Dials, or any other part of famed St. Giles's [in London]. . . .

Our leader has his hand upon the latch of “Almack's,” and calls to us from the bottom of the steps; for the assembly-room of the Five Point fashionables is approached by a descent. Shall we go in? . . .

Heyday! the landlady of Almack's thrives! A buxom fat mulatto woman, with sparkling eyes, whose head is daintily ornamented with a handkerchief of many colours. Nor is the landlord much behind her in his finery, being attired in a smart blue jacket, like a ship's steward, with a thick gold ring upon his little finger, and round his neck a gleaming golden watch-guard. How glad he is to see us! What will we please to call for? A dance? It shall be done directly, Sir: “A regular break-down.”

The corpulent black fiddler, and his friend who plays the tambourine, stamp upon the boarding of the small raised orchestra [area] in which they sit, and play a lively measure. Five or six couples come upon the floor, marshalled by a lively young negro, who is the wit of the assembly, and the greatest dancer known. He never leaves off making queer faces, and is the delight of all the rest, who grin from ear to ear incessantly. Among the dancers are two young mulatto girls, with large, black, drooping eyes, and headgear after the fashion of the hostess,

(continued on page 15)

## YANKEE LIEDER (continued)

G. Schirmer, Inc., asked me to put together an anthology of American songs that were in the public domain. That's when I learned a lot of Victorian-era Americana, and my selections were published by Schirmer as *Songs of an Innocent Age*. (For Dover Publications, too, I compiled a Victorian-era songbook, soon to be released.) Schirmer asked me what other American-song projects were close to my heart. I urged them, first, to reissue in three volumes all the songs by Griffes that they had originally published singly: two volumes of his English-language songs appeared in print last summer [1989]; a volume of German-language songs is to come. I have also organized a large collection of songs by Chanler for them, and we are talking about an American Encore book, too.

After my Bicentennial recital series I kept on trying to get acquainted with composers I didn't know. I discovered the very young Robert Beaser and, at about the same time, the seventy-year-old Paul Bowles. Elie Siegmeister, who turned eighty not long ago, sent me recordings and tapes of some of his songs; and songs by Juliana Hall and Nathan Currier, both still in their twenties, have me excited. My programming has become similar to that of the American Composers Orchestra: a mixture of premieres and revivals. And now, when I put together American recitals, I avoid the obvious (I rarely program Ives, Copland, Barber, Rorem, or Argento, though I love their songs) and try, by sharing my enthusiasm for our enormous and marvelous repertoire, to get other singers to look farther afield.

I hope I've given you an idea of how I got involved with American song. I'm sure the music has shown you why I fell in love with it. And I'm sure the affair will never end.

\* \* \*

[Professor Sperry ended his lecture with a mini-recital of American songs from the Victorian era to the last few years, organized more or less chronologically. Accompanied by his longtime associate, the pianist Irma Vallecillo, and commenting on each of the songs as representative of a group of composers or a tendency in the history of American song, he sang the following:]

Ethelbert Nevin, "Orsola's Song"  
 Charles Ives, "Charlie Rutlage"  
 Arthur Farwell, "Ample Make This Bed" (Emily Dickinson)  
 Paul Bowles, "April Fool Baby" (Gertrude Stein)

*I.S.A.M. Newsletter*, Vol. XX, No. 1/ISSN: 0145-8396

*Editor:* H. Wiley Hitchcock  
*Assistant editor:* K. Robert Schwarz  
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*Typesetter:* Laraine Goodman  
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 Nancy Pardo, and Kevin Parks

The *I.S.A.M. Newsletter* is published in November and May. Copyright © 1990 by the Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210. 718/780-5655.

Ben Weber, "Mourn, Mourn" (John Dowland)  
 Larry Alan Smith, "All Music All Delight," from the cycle *Songs of the Silence* (Richard Nickson)  
 John Musto, "Could Be," from the cycle *Shadow of the Blues* (Langston Hughes)  
 Robert Beaser, "Wrath," from the cycle *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Anthony Hecht)  
 Stephen Paulus, "Moor Swan," from the cycle *Artsongs* (Jon Logan)  
 Christopher Berg, "Poem" (Frank O'Hara)

## GENIAL IDEA (continued)

France." The transatlantic Anglo-American connections are revealed in nine tracks of "Wandering songs and ballads," with many ear-opening doppelgangers. Finally, dropping the comparative demonstrations, the Camerata ends its lesson in acculturation with five Yankee tunesmith and folk-hymnodist choral pieces, resonant with echoes of medieval harmony and folkish melody. The performances are stunning—varied and convincing—and the performers obviously revel in the repertory. Regrettably, the level of the notes and documentation (of sources and editions) is not nearly as high as that of the music, the performances, or the recording; and the accompanying booklet, though including all texts (in three languages), is not user-friendly. This is unfortunate, since such a genial idea deserves not only gratifying listening but live replication and/or imitation, which are made almost impossible here. —H.W.H.

## DICKENS (continued)

who are as shy, or feign to be, as though they never danced before, and so look down before the visitors, that their partners can see nothing but the long fringed lashes.

But the dance commences. Every gentleman sets as long as he likes to the opposite lady, and the opposite lady to him, and all are so long about it that the sport begins to languish, when suddenly the lively hero dashes in to the rescue. Instantly the fiddler grins, and goes at it tooth and nail; there is new energy in the tambourine; new laughter in the dancers; new smiles in the landlady; new confidence in the landlord; new brightness in the very candles. Single shuffle, double shuffle, cut and cross-cut; snapping his fingers, rolling his eyes, turning in his knees, presenting the backs of his legs in front, spinning about on his toes and heels like nothing but the man's fingers on the tambourine; dancing with two left legs, two right legs, two wooden legs, two wire legs—what is this to him? And in what walk of life, or dance of life, does man ever get such stimulating applause as thunders about him, when, having danced his partner off her feet, and himself too, he finishes by leaping gloriously on the bar-counter, and calling for something to drink, with the chuckle of a million of counterfeit Jim Crows, in one inimitable sound! . . .

[From *American Notes and Pictures from Italy* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893), Chapter 6 ("New York"), pp. 68, 69, 78–79]

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