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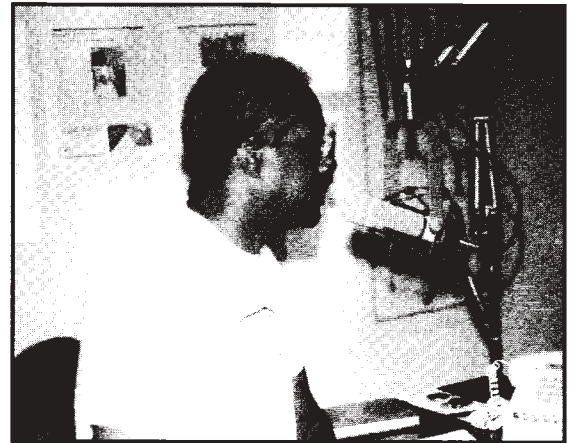
Fall 1996

Waking up with Jerry Carter, the Guru, and WNCU-FM

by Mark Tucker

Angry voices fill the airwaves of America. Shock jocks spew coarse put-downs and ugly insults. Sanctioned radio personalities attack enemies with gusto, delighting the dittoheads who share their extremist views. Everywhere people are venting spleen, from "Oprah" to call-in talk shows to the internet.

Last year, living in North Carolina, I discovered an aural refuge from all the bile and blather: radio station WNCU-90.7 FM in Durham, broadcasting from the historically black institution, North Carolina Central University. I grew especially attached to "Early Morning Jazz Set," a show aired weekdays from 8-10 A.M. and hosted by Jerry Carter, WNCU's operations chief and programming director. Carter's copilot is "The Guru" (aka William D. Burton), a gentle poet who reads inspirational verse, talks about spirituality and self-empowerment, and every morning offers an "affirmation"—a brief message reminding listeners to shake off yesterday's dust and embrace the here-and-now brimming with possibilities. When the Guru delivers his affirmation, usually just before the nine o'clock hour, Carter selects upbeat music as background, gradually bringing up the volume so the Guru's words seem to metamorphose into the vibrant sounds of contemporary jazz. "Believe the unbelievable," the Guru intones. "Dream the impossible," he says, as a Herbie Hancock tune takes over, propelling the listener into the new day with the force of a surging wave.



The Guru is in the house.

The very existence of a public-radio station at North Carolina Central proves that impossible dreams come true. The university's previous affiliate, WAFR—the first black-run public-radio station in the country—stayed on the air from 1971 to 1975. After its demise, years of planning and fundraising were needed to launch a successor. Leading the campaign was Donald Baker, a former WAFR deejay who joined Central's communications faculty in 1989 and now serves as WNCU's general manager. Carter also played a key role in shaping WNCU's identity. A veteran broadcaster and programming director from Virginia, he was recruited in 1994 to develop the station's music format and train Central students to become deejays. With new facilities built and a staff of young volunteers in place, WNCU signed on in August 1995 and has been burning brightly ever since.

Although contemporary jazz dominates WNCU's programming, the station also airs shows on the blues, reggae, hip hop, and gospel (ten hours on the weekend); it runs syndicated NPR features such as "Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz" and Branford Marsalis's "Jazzset"; and it sponsors public-interest programs featuring black professionals in law, business, politics, and education. As Baker told Durham's alternative newspaper *The Independent* earlier this year, "WNCU was designed to serve an underserved population, that is, the African-American community." At the same time, he said, it wants to promote "dialogue across racial lines." So far the strategy is working: surveys indicate that equal numbers of blacks and whites tune into WNCU, even though the station's programming is aimed toward African Americans in the "Triangle" area of Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill.

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Some jazz enthusiasts might be surprised by what they don't hear on WNCU and bothered by what they do. Classic recordings by revered figures like Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker are seldom featured. Neither Bix Beiderbecke nor Ornette Coleman has ever turned up on the playlist of forty CDs Carter draws up each week; this list guides the choices made by deejays during their regular shifts. Instead the emphasis is on music both *contemporary* (i.e., those artists and new recordings the industry happens to be pushing each week) and *accessible* to the twenty- to fortysomethings who make up WNCU's target audience. Carter is the main judge of what gets played. He listens through stacks of CDs searching for tracks to put into rotation—that is, to be repeated at regular intervals throughout the day, common practice for commercial stations with pop-music formats, though rare for college radio and NPR affiliates. "I listen for music that a person who does not like jazz will like," Carter says. "I can't play John Coltrane's *Equinox* for a twenty-nine-year-old who doesn't know jazz. But I can play the new versions of that tune by [flutist] Dave Valentin or [harpist] Jeff Majors, because they're accessible."

As programming director, Carter tries to identify recordings that older jazz fans can relate to and novices can readily appreciate. Often this means current interpretations of familiar repertory—a standard like *My Funny Valentine* is performed not by Sarah Vaughan but by Chakha Khan, while Horace Silver's *The Jody Grind* is heard in the updated version by Bob James and Oliver Nelson's *Stolen Moments* in the slick remake by UFO. In addition, cuts tend to be on the short side (4-5 minutes), improvised solos are never extended or unduly complex, and deejays announce only titles and artists for selections—not listing all the personnel or giving arcane discographical data. A longtime jazz fan himself, Carter wants to make converts to the cause, creating a nonthreatening environment that will "bring people into the fold, so that they can eventually get to the masters." It's difficult to know how artists like saxophonist Gerald Albright, pianist Ramsey Lewis, and vocalist Vanessa Rubin can help point listeners in the direction of Sonny Rollins, Art Tatum, and Betty Carter. "Believe the unbelievable," I can hear the Guru saying.



Jerry Carter in the WNCU studios.

The most distinctive program on WNCU is Carter's own "Early Morning Jazz Set" with the Guru, a mellow blend of music, poetry, relaxed banter, weather and sports updates, and community-oriented announcements. On a show aired last June, Carter played music by Return to Forever, the Crusaders, Michael Franks, Christian McBride, Jon Lucien, Steve Turre, and Dee Dee Bridgewater. A light rain was falling, so Carter urged commuters to turn on headlights and get to work safely—"We'd rather talk with you than about you." On the nationally syndicated spot "Focus on Women," Felicia Jeter interviewed a California nutritionist stressing the need for good posture, exercise, sunshine, and a healthy diet. One public service announcement told prospective home buyers how to get help from the FHA, while another had Denzel Washington endorsing the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. The Guru read a poem, gave an affirmation—"Thoughts held in the mind, produce after their own kind"—and at one point asked listeners, "What would your life be like if you were truly free?" The entire show radiated positive energy, sending out music to uplift the body and words to heal the spirit.

When I went to speak with Carter at the station's studio on the Central campus, I was greeted by an affable man with a salt-and-pepper beard, casually dressed in a white Adidas warm-up suit and wearing an olive-green cap with the WNCU logo. He'd just gotten back from a meeting of black radio executives in Charlotte, and at first voiced concern about the increasingly automated technology threatening the careers of many involved in the industry. He didn't stay gloomy for long, though, as he explained his programming philosophy at WNCU. "I'm an entrepreneur," he said. "The station is my delivery system for jazz. My job is to get the product to market. Anything that it takes to keep this music out front, I'm for it."

Helping Carter achieve this goal is *Gavin*, one of the leading radio trade publications (together with *Radio and Records*). Every Thursday Carter faxes to the magazine the titles of forty CDs WNCU has featured in rotation during the previous week. By adding Carter's report to those submitted by other jazz programming directors around the country, *Gavin* generates weekly charts showing the artists and discs receiving the most playtime.

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ISAM Matters by Carol J. Oja, Director

Longtime *ISAM Newsletter* readers might have paused when picking up this issue: it looks different. To celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of ISAM, which takes place during this academic year, we decided to give our pages a makeover, and we are grateful to John Hennessey for a spacious redesign. But we retire our longtime masthead with a real twinge. It first appeared at the head of the issue for November 1976 and came to us from Roland Hoover, then Director of Publications at the Brookings Institution (subsequently University Printer at Yale) and husband of the musicologist Cynthia Hoover. A specialist in historic typefaces, he designed the masthead from an American font of the 1920s, which, in turn, revived a Venetian typeface.

We enter our twenty-fifth year brimming with plans for the future. We also are enjoying a temporary lull in CUNY's budgetary mayhem. With unwavering support from the administration at Brooklyn College—especially the Conservatory of Music's Director Nancy Hager, Provost Christoph Kimmich, and President Vernon Lattin—we have so far survived the fiscal ferocity of New York's governor, who is intent on diminishing CUNY. But we would not be here without the loyal support of our friends and readers. Thanks for your letters in response to *Newsletter* articles, your phone calls, and, yes, your contributions. ISAM was founded for the purpose of stimulating the study of American music and disseminating the results. We look forward to doing both in the years ahead, continually reshaping our work to fit a rapidly changing musical and cultural environment.

At the same time, bounty continues to accrue from ISAM's past. Former ISAM Senior Research Fellows have recently produced a significant batch of books, some directly related to their stint in Flatbush, others building on it. *Wagner Nights* by Joseph Horowitz (University of California Press), a cultural history of persuasive breadth, won the Sonneck Society's Irving Lowens Book Award last year. *Putting Popular Music in its Place* by Charles Hamm (Cambridge University Press) draws together a host of essays on popular music, including some published in his 1988 ISAM monograph. These writings vividly chronicle Hamm's role as an intrepid explorer in areas once considered off-limits for a serious scholar. Kyle Gann's *The Music of Conlon Nancarrow* (Cambridge University Press) revealingly analyzes Nancarrow's complex rhythmic constructions.

ISAM's major initiative for 1997 will be the Henry Cowell Centennial Conference, scheduled for 12-15 March in New York City. No isolated event, this conference will form the centerpiece of a two-week Cowell Festival. As part of this, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts plans a Cowell exhibit (from which the Cowell photos reproduced in this issue of the *Newsletter* are drawn). See the next two pages for details.

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Henry Cowell Centennial Conference

12-15 March 1997

Sponsored by the Institute for Studies in American Music

"Henry Cowell's Musical Worlds" will explore the exuberant, pluralistic, boundlessly open-minded work of a pioneer among American experimentalist composers. Cowell shaped his professional life as a daring odyssey, whether through his forays into non-Western traditions; his novel techniques for string piano and tone clusters; his early influential treatise on "New Musical Resources"; or his practical advocacy of the avant-garde through the New Music Society and its offshoots. ISAM's conference will reassess Cowell's unique position and his ongoing impact on future generations.

Surrounding the conference will be a two-week, New York-based festival honoring Cowell and his music. In addition to ISAM the other cooperating institutions include the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the New School, the World Music Institute, and the 92nd Street Y. The conference schedule appears below, followed by an outline of events connected with the entire festival.

12 March 1997 — Brooklyn College

Pre-Conference Symposium: Modernity and Tradition - The Many Worlds of Henry Cowell (12:15-4 P.M.)

Lectures by H. Wiley Hitchcock and David Nicholls, performances by kotoist Miya Masaoka, Musicians' Accord, the Brooklyn College Brass Ensemble, and the Brooklyn College Percussion Ensemble.

14 March — NYPL for the Performing Arts

Session I: Keynote Address, "Remembering Henry Cowell," by Lou Harrison (10-12 A.M.)

- Moderator: H. Wiley Hitchcock (Distinguished Professor *emeritus*, CUNY), musicologist
- Respondents: Joel Sachs (The Juilliard School), pianist, conductor, and musicologist
Morris Dickstein (Center for Humanities, CUNY), cultural historian
Dick Higgins, composer and writer


Session II: Challenging Cultural Boundaries: Cowell's "Whole World of Music" and Its Legacy (2-5 P.M.)

Cowell's multicultural ventures and their impact on subsequent generations of composers will be explored.

- Moderator: Carol J. Oja (ISAM), musicologist
- Panelists: Miya Masaoka, composer
Richard Teitelbaum (Bard College), composer
Michael Tenzer (University of British Columbia), ethnomusicologist and composer
- Respondent: Kay Shelemay (Harvard University), ethnomusicologist

Concert with CONTINUUM (7:30 P.M.)

Chamber works and songs by Cowell.



Henry Cowell's Musical Worlds

15 March 1997 — The New School

Session III: Inventing a Language - Cowell's "New Musical Resources" and their Legacy (10 A.M. - 1 P.M.)

In Cowell's pathbreaking book, *New Musical Resources* of 1930, he devised a diverse array of novel—and in some cases revolutionary—musical possibilities. The panel will address the impact of Cowell's vanguardism on 20th-century American music.

- Moderator: Joseph Straus (Queens College and the Graduate School, CUNY), music theorist
- Panelists: Kyle Gann (Bucknell University), composer and new-music critic
Michael Hicks (Brigham Young University), musicologist
Steven Johnson (Brigham Young University), musicologist
David Nicholls (Keele University), composer and musicologist
- Respondent: Laura Kuhn (Arizona State University), musicologist and cultural historian

Recital: A Cowell Songbook with Mary Ann Hart (mezzo soprano) and Jeane Golan (piano) (2-3 P.M.)

Session IV: The Politics of Composition - Cowell's New Music Society and its Legacy (3-6 P.M.)

This session will consider the dissemination and financial support of 20th-century experimental music.

- Moderator: John Rockwell (Lincoln Center Festival), music critic and administrator
- Panelists: Joseph Dalton (Composers Recordings, Inc.), administrator
Peter Garland, composer-publisher
Don Gillespie (C.F. Peters), musician-publisher
Barbara Petersen (Broadcast Music Inc.), administrator-publisher

Concert with Musicians' Accord and the Colorado String Quartet (7:30 P.M.)

Chamber works by Cowell.



Edgard Varèse and Henry Cowell. Cowell Collection, NYPL.

Henry Cowell Centennial Festival

12-25 March 1997

Sponsored by the Institute for Studies in American Music, the New School, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the World Music Institute, and the 92nd St. Y.

Wednesday, March 12 - Brooklyn College/ISAM

ISAM Pre-Conference Symposium: Modernity and Tradition I—The Many Worlds of Henry Cowell

Thursday, March 13 - CUNY Graduate Center

CUNY Pre-Conference Symposium: Modernity and Tradition II—Ruth Crawford Seeger and Cowell's Legacy, with folksinger Peggy Seeger, pianist Virginia Eskin, scholars Joseph Straus, Judith Tick, and Catherine Hiebert Kerst

Thursday, March 13 - Merkin Hall

Evening concert of Cowell piano music and songs with Sorrel Hays and Thomas Buckner

Friday, March 14 - NYPL for the Performing Arts

ISAM Cowell Conference Sessions I and II

Evening concert of Cowell songs and chamber pieces by CONTINUUM

March 14 - May 17 - New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Exhibition: *Henry Cowell: A Centennial Celebration*

Saturday, March 15 - The New School

ISAM Cowell Conference Sessions III and IV

Evening concert of Cowell chamber pieces by Musicians' Accord and the Colorado String Quartet

Sunday, March 16 - World Music Institute

Cowell Global Vision concert at Symphony Space

Tuesday, March 18 - 92nd St. Y

West Meets East concert featuring works of Cowell, Cage, Harrison, McPhee, Garland, and Riley

Tuesday, March 25 - 92nd St. Y

Lou Harrison 80th Birthday Celebration with the Janus Ensemble

For full Festival information, call ISAM at 718-951-5655

ISAM events funded in part by the New York Council for the Humanities; Thomas Buckner; the Edward T. Cone Foundation; the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation; Broadcast Music Inc. Fund; the Aaron Copland Fund; the Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities at Brooklyn College; and a Brooklyn College President's Resource Grant.

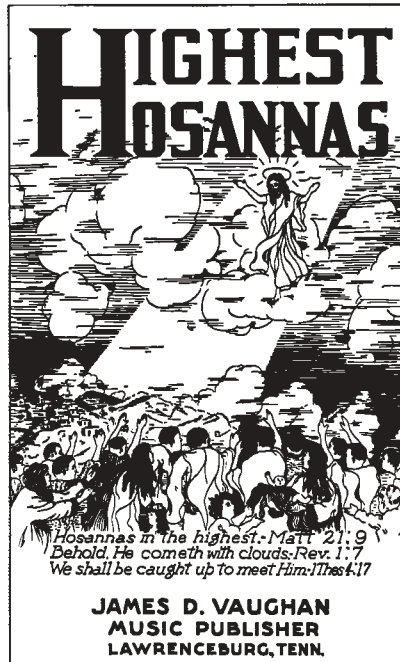
Country and Gospel Notes by Charles Wolfe

For much of the twentieth century, gospel and country have developed outside the standard commercial structures of popular music. In song publishing, performing, and recording, artists from these genres have often relied upon independent grassroots companies far removed from the show business centers of New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. The little shape-note paperback songbooks that formed the foundation for southern gospel music were created and promoted from places like Dayton, Virginia (Reubush-Kieffer), Lawrenceburg, Tennessee (James D. Vaughan), and Dallas, Texas (Stamps-Baxter). Gospel composer greats like Albert Brumley (*I'll Fly Away*) and Thomas A. Dorsey (*Peace in the Valley*) eventually formed their own publishing companies. Country singers in the 1930s and 1940s, most of whom were not allowed to join organizations like ASCAP, had to publish their own songbooks, which they sold by mail or at personal appearances. Eventually companies like American Music (located in Oregon) and Acuff-Rose (the first modern publisher in Nashville) rose up to meet this need.

And while the first generations of country and gospel artists in the 1920s did record on major labels, by the end of World War II they were relying on dozens of new independent labels like King (Cincinnati), Bullet (Nashville), Dot (Gallatin, TN), Rich-RTone (Bristol, TN), White Church (Kansas City), and Bibletone (New York). At a time when the major labels were mired in the fallow backwash of the big band era, these grassroots labels opened their doors to the energetic new sounds of honky tonk, country boogie, bluegrass, hot gospel quartets, rockabilly, doo-wop, and eventually rock-and-roll. But country and gospel have almost always been outsiders in the pop music business—a fact that has allowed them to be constantly reinvigorating themselves, but has also imposed a glass ceiling on their sales and share of the audience.

In the mid-1990s, this pattern has changed in dramatic ways. Many of the old independent publishers have been absorbed by larger companies and conglomerates. The best-known name in southern gospel, Stamps-Baxter, was bought out by the much larger national company, Zondervan. The original Nashville country publisher, Acuff-Rose, has become a part of the Gaylord Entertainment complex and is now known as Opryland Music Group. The Dot record catalogue is owned by MCA. Most recently, the Word, Inc. record group, for many years the most important independent gospel label, was also purchased by Gaylord, and this merits close examination. It is both a symbolic and mercantile milestone, and it has strong implications for the future of country and gospel music.

Word was started in 1950 by Jarrell McCracken, a student at Baylor University. Its name came from its first release, a spoken parable called *The Game of Life*, a fanciful account of the struggle between Christianity and the Forces of Evil couched in terms of a football game. The “game” was being broadcast over “radio station” WORD. Drawing upon the musical talent in and around Baylor—especially male soloist Frank Boggs—McCracken pioneered the use of the LP in gospel music. His headquarters were in Waco, Texas, which became a distinct advantage. “There wasn’t anyone around to say, ‘You can’t do that’ or ‘It won’t work.’ We just went ahead and did it,” recalled McCracken. Within a decade the company had pioneered direct mail sales with its Family Record Club. It was also purchasing older gospel companies like Sacred and starting subsidiary labels such as Canaan, which featured southern gospel quartets like The Florida Boys. By the late 1960s it had purchased the venerable publishing and recording company Homer Rodeheaver of Winona Lake, Indiana, and it was embracing the new “contemporary Christian” music of the California Jesus movement.



*A shape-note songbook from 1927.
Charles Wolfe Collection.*

By the time Gaylord bought Word in November 1996 for \$110 million, it was the home of nine major record labels, with a publishing division that controlled some 40,000 songs. Its artists include some of the biggest selling singers in contemporary gospel music: Amy Grant, Sandi Patty, Point of Grace, and the Christian rock band, Petra. Experts reckon that Word commanded as much as 40 percent of the modern gospel market. At present, that market is estimated at some 3 percent of national music sales (as compared with 15 percent for country music).

Gaylord itself, a name which does not even appear in most encyclopedias of country music, is the creation of a wealthy Oklahoma oilman, who founded it as a communications company. In the last five years, however, it has had a dominant presence in the Nashville country music industry. Its cash cow is the wonderfully successful Nashville Network (TNN), together with CMT (Country Music Television), its version of MTV. But it also owns the Grand Ole Opry and the Opry’s home station WSM, the Opryland amusement park and huge luxury hotel, the Acuff-Rose Publishing Company, the historic Ryman Auditorium (the old home of the Opry), and even a riverboat fleet that cruises the Cumberland River. Gaylord executives are currently planning synergistic ways to cross-promote and develop these diverse properties—something that has been done very little in country and gospel history. (The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, original owners of the Opry, refused to develop the Opry beyond its

(continued on page 14)

Listening Around

Honky Tonk Mystic. The voice of West Texas songster Jimmie Dale Gilmore is achingly beautiful. Reed-thin and bone-dry, it floats gracefully in its upper register like a hawk riding currents of air. It is one of those American voices that vividly conjures up a sense of place, as much a product of the dusty Texas plains as Aaron Neville's silky tenor belongs to New Orleans and Loretta Lynn's hard-edged contralto springs from the heart of Kentucky coal-mining country.

Gilmore's previous recording, *Spinning Around the Sun* (Elektra 9 61502-4), issued in 1993, was a tour de force. It featured mostly originals by Gilmore and by fellow Lone Star songwriters Butch Hancock and Al Strehli, included a few covers of older material (a stark *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*), and segued from contemplative ballads to foot-stomping bar songs. Sewing everything together was Gilmore's voice, wise and reassuring, guiding the listener through a dreamy landscape of canyons, rivers, mockingbirds, midnight trains, and broken hearts.

Now comes the sequel *Braver Newer World* (Elektra 61836-2) with the same format as before—jangling electric guitars, songs by Gilmore and his Texan associates, and elliptical lyrics that reflect the singer's involvement with Buddhism. Producer T-Bone Burnett is quoted as saying he wanted this to be "a real West Texas record, where you could see the horizon all around you for a long ways." Oddly, *Braver Newer World* evokes not so much wide open spaces but a darkened recording studio—when I close my eyes and listen I see a huge mixing board with thousands of knobs, a half-filled coffee cup, an overfull ashtray. Gilmore's voice is still there, high and lonesome as ever. But by putting it through too many channels and burying it in the mix, producer Burnett has managed to clip its wings.

"We're gonna fly away," Gilmore sings on one track, "until we find our home." For this far-sighted, clear-eyed musician from Texas, that may mean leaving behind a braver, newer world, and heading off once again toward that lonely horizon.

Planet Strayhorn. David Hajdu's *Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn* (Farrar Straus Giroux) has sparked new interest in a musician for many years overshadowed by his composing and arranging partner (and long-time employer) Duke Ellington. Compassionate and richly detailed, *Lush Life* depicts Strayhorn not as an Ellington satellite but as someone who created a luxuriantly sensual sound-world all his own. Several new recordings reinforce the view, among them *Lush Life: The Billy Strayhorn Songbook* (Verve 529 908), a compilation assembled by Hajdu that presents instrumental and vocal versions of mostly well-known works by Strayhorn (who appears as pianist on two of them). The repertory gets rarer on the Dutch Jazz Orchestra's *Portrait of a Silk Thread: Newly Discovered Works of Billy Strayhorn* (Kokopelli 1310). For this project, the Dutch musicologist and leading Strayhorn scholar Walter van de Leur made performing editions for a dozen compositions (eight never before recorded) which he unearthed at the Smithsonian and in the archive of the Strayhorn estate. Even the few familiar items on the set receive fresh treatments—like *Tonk*, performed not as the usual motoric keyboard duet but in its original incarna-

tion as a mini-concerto for piano and orchestra. . . . Pianist Fred Hersch serves up a delectable Strayhorn program on *Passion Flower* (Nonesuch 79395-2). His harmonic sophistication, delicate lyricism, and warm piano sound are superbly suited to Strayhorn's ballads, capturing their melancholy as well as their passion. Hersch understands the seductive quality in much of Strayhorn's music—how it draws the listener close with languid melodies and ripe chords, inducing tipsiness like some potent chromatic cocktail. When singer Andy Bey joins Hersch for a ravishingly slow *Something to Live For*, time seems to stop altogether and we float toward a place where it is always night and the air fairly drips with the scent of blossoms.

—Mark Tucker

Spinning 78s. Collectors of antique recordings are a special breed. While most of us marvel at the latest developments in digital technology, they reserve their enthusiasm for the earliest analogs. A collector, cranking up his Victrola, tells me of the purity and clarity of pre-microphone 78s. My ears tell me otherwise, hearing a thin, hollow sound enveloped in surface noise. These 78s and cylinders, he continues, reveal the performance styles and tastes of an earlier age. There I have no argument, and it is for this reason that I value the work of collectors. They are an invaluable resource, curators to an essential part of our musical and social history, and they always seem eager to share their artifacts and recondite knowledge.

Like most collectors, early record enthusiasts have their periodicals. A recent one that I've found intriguing is the *Victrola and 78 Journal* (known familiarly as *V7&J*). Distributed quarterly since mid-1994, it has grown to a respectable size of some eighty pages and has among its contributors such scholars as Brian Rust, Mike Montgomery, and Dick Spottswood, to name just a few. The nonspecialist may wish to skip over the arcane, nuts-and-bolts pieces aimed at the aficionado. (I faded quickly while reading articles about motors and lid supports but, curiously, was drawn into a discussion of different types of needles.) Of more general interest are topics such as the earliest jazz recordings, the marketing of race records, vocal quartets of the 1890s, guitar recordings, Hawaiian recordings, or sketches of figures such as Billy Murray, Collins and Harlan, Nat Shilkret, and various opera singers. Rounding out each issue are reviews of pertinent books, lists of rereleases on CD, and others of new performances in historic styles. Throughout are illustrations of phonographs, record labels, sheet-music covers, and relevant advertisements and drawings. Tim Gracyk, who publishes and edits the journal, is also a first-rate scholar. His own articles and reviews show extensive knowledge of the subject, passion for precision, and keen analytical ability. This is a journal worth your attention and support. It is available for \$20/year (four issues) from Tim Gracyk, 1509 River Oak Way, Roseville, CA 95747; e-mail: tgracyk@garlic.com. Check out his website at <http://www.garlic.com/~tgracyk/> for a sampling of the journal.

—Edward A. Berlin

A Chat with T. J. Anderson by Mark DeVoto (Tufts University)

Mark DeVoto, composer, writer, and expert on Alban Berg, was T. J. Anderson's daily colleague for nine years at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. He prepared the fourth and fifth editions of Walter Piston's Harmony (W.W. Norton, 1978, 1987).

Thomas Jefferson Anderson, whom everybody knows as "T. J.," composes music of vivid eclecticism, mingling popular elements from today's urban world with the most studied serial rigor. An active composer since his mid-twenties, Anderson has built up an impressive catalogue of music in all genres and nearly all media, much of it on commission, and he has enjoyed performances from Europe to Brazil. He is a renowned spokesperson for the African-American composer. The first president of the Black Music Caucus, he edited *Racial and Ethnic Directions in American Music*, a report issued by the College Music Society in 1982 that endures as a valuable assessment of the multicultural basis of contemporary music in America.

Born in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, in 1928, Anderson's first musical studies were on the violin. In high school, he took up the trumpet and played regularly in jazz bands until his mid-twenties. He majored in music education at West Virginia State College, graduating in 1950, and took a master's degree in education at Pennsylvania State University. Later he did graduate work at the University of Iowa, where he studied with composers Philip Bezanson and Richard Hervig, receiving a Ph.D. in 1958. In the summer of 1964 he studied at Aspen with Darius Milhaud. Five years later, he became one of the first African Americans to be composer-in-residence with a major orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony. There he wrote an important chamber work, *Variations on a Theme of M. B. Tolson*; the Atlanta Symphony, under Robert Shaw, gave the premiere of his *Spirituals* for soloist, chorus, children's choir, jazz quartet, and orchestra a decade later. In 1972 he was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Music Department at Tufts University, the first African American ever to hold such a post in a predominantly white university. Anderson's retirement from Tufts in 1990 has accelerated his productivity as a composer. He now lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he works on several commissions at a time. This year he became a Fellow at the National Humanities Center, the first composer to hold this appointment.

During a recent interview, Anderson reminisced about his musical background, explored his views about the interaction of composition and improvisation, and shared advice for young composers.

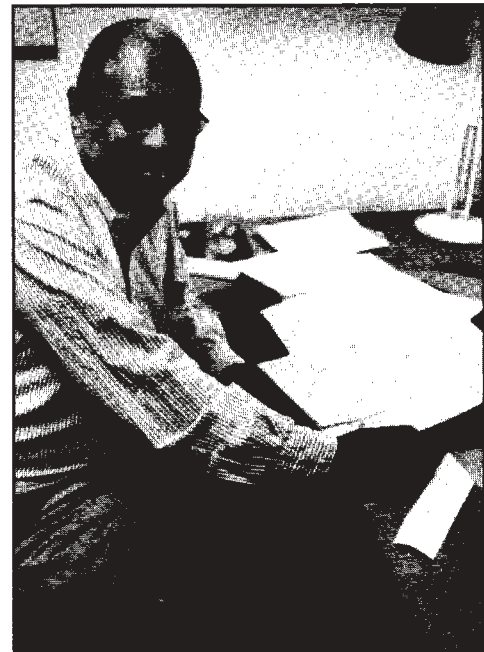
DeVoto. Your mother, who died just this year, was a musician. Can you tell us about her musical influence? What kind of music did you have at home as a child? Did you study piano as well as other instruments?

Anderson. My mother was a product of the daughter-playing-the-piano-in-the-parlor era. Her father was a minister, so she played mostly hymns. She couldn't play jazz, but she could improvise. She knew a lot of the classics. She played all the

shorter piano music, pieces by Purcell, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, but her favorite composer was MacDowell. *To a Wild Rose* was her favorite composition. She also was familiar with the piano music of Harry T. Burleigh, including his settings of spirituals, and she knew the music of Coleridge-Taylor. Her sister sang with R. Nathaniel Dett at Bennett College.

My first instrument was not the piano but the violin. I studied it for eight years. But in high school I knew you couldn't make money as a violinist, so I took up the trumpet.

DeVoto. What kind of jazz performance did you do in the 1940s and 1950s?



*T.J. Anderson at work.
Photo by Kent Mullikin, National Humanities Center.*

Anderson. In the 1940s I became a bebop trumpet player. That lasted through college and into graduate school. About 1952, while teaching school in High Point, North Carolina, I had my last fling with jazz. There were three of us in a band—Jackie McLean, who had been playing alto sax with Miles Davis, and a drummer named Dannie Richmond, just before he went on to play with Mingus for most of Mingus's career. We did a lot of practice with very few performances! The reason I decided not to be a jazz performer is that I could control more as a composer. Jazz is always interactive and collective, but as a composer I'm completely in control.

DeVoto. When did you first think of yourself as a composer?

Anderson. I had studied composition with George Ceiga at Penn State. I wrote an orchestral piece, a tone poem about a steel mill, in 1951. It was a terrible piece, but Ceiga praised me for being a composer. And naturally I wanted a second opin-

ion, so I went in 1954 to the Conservatory in Cincinnati to study with T. Scott Huston. Let me emphasize: I always thought of that period as an apprenticeship. It's very important for student composers to think of their studies that way. I'm a great believer in that, because that's the way you learn. So I've always been grateful it wasn't until after my work with Milhaud that I really began to think of myself as a composer.

DeVoto. You have used the variation form on occasion, such as *Variations on a Theme of M. B. Tolson*, which involves dissected blues progressions, and *Variations on a Theme of Alban Berg*, which takes off from the famous crescendo on the note "B" in *Wozzeck*. How do you perceive the special problem of variation technique in atonal music?

Anderson. The interconnectedness between jazz and variation technique came very naturally to me as a composer. Everything is an extension of something that's already there; it arises from improvisation. Variation in atonal music? That's an interesting question. I don't really think of anything as atonal. Of course I know what Schoenberg said about this question too. But when I look at a work, I start with its cadence and look back. I talk about the use of material, about transitions. I talk about dominant functions, phrases, thematic relations, development, modulation shifts—all these things are *compositional* procedures. Although you may not be dealing with the traditional tonic-dominant relationships or harmonic structures, you still have phrases, you're back to the nitty-gritty. Whenever I teach music I teach on the basis of these things. I don't teach on the basis of the row at all.

DeVoto. Composers since World War II have adopted row techniques in many different ways.

Anderson. Olly Wilson once said that "the row is a means to get at the personality." That's true. That's why Berg is so different from Webern, it's only a tool to get to something else. At the same time, the row is an enormous fact of life that has to be accepted. My generation thought that if you used the row, you were *in*. They thought that was the first thing you had to do.

DeVoto. Much of your music involves controlled improvisation. Do you find any problems in performance with different improvisational styles, different interpretations of notation, and things like that?

Anderson. I remember that when I studied with Milhaud he once told me he liked musicians but didn't trust them. I always thought that was a very funny remark. Some people think my *Variations on a Theme of M. B. Tolson* is partly improvised even though the work is totally notated. Once I realized that I could notate the *feeling* of improvisation, then I gradually began to have improvised sections. In works like *Sun Star* for solo trumpet and two cassette recorders (1984) and in *Thomas Jefferson's Orbiting Minstrels and Contraband* of the same year, I use improvising ensembles. There are also cues for improvisation in

smaller groups, as in *Songs of Illumination* (1990) and *Seven Cabaret Songs* (1994). In those I've been fortunate enough to have performers who really know how to improvise, like Bill Brown and Nnenna Freelon. I can turn them loose.

DeVoto. Do you mean vocal improvisation?

Anderson. Yes, they're excellent singers, but they're also natural improvisers. I generally use three forms of improvisation: improvisation of chords, improvisation of modes, and then what I call free improvisation, where they do anything they want to.

DeVoto. As one who has always preferred live instruments to electronic tape, what are your thoughts about the new technology?

Anderson. I welcome it. I've always had access to it whenever I've been. But I've never made technology a natural part of my own vocabulary because I don't hear it. I have to hear things first before I put them down. I can't do it the other way around. Until I've been around enough electronic music and it becomes a natural part of my listening vocabulary, until it's stored in my mind, I just won't use it.

DeVoto. You also have ensemble music where the parts are notated, but how they play in relation to each other is improvisatory—they don't follow each other's tempi or starting points.

Anderson. But that's different, that's not improvisation. And it's not chance, either. You know what they say about several conversations going on at the same time—a better metaphor is having people speak in many different tongues simultaneously. In a world as complex as ours we have to recognize all these messages, and you can't force the messenger to speak one tongue. In other words, the world is so complex that you have to have all these things going on at the same time. You can't block out everybody else. You have to provide a complex environment. You may focus on the violin here, you may focus on the cello there, the clarinet here. But these instruments are playing in relation to each other, and they're controlled in terms of time and duration. It's not chance at all.

DeVoto. What do young composers today need to know in order to compose?

Anderson. All composers should study the literature. It's inconceivable to me that I shouldn't know the music of Michael Tippett, Monteverdi, Ellington, Berio, Brahms, Revuelets, Hale Smith—I could name a whole lot of others. You have to study them with scores. The history of music shows that every composer first learned scores. Our composers want to start with Self, not with The Literature. So with young composers you have to impress upon them the importance of forgetting Self and learning music as a discipline, which leads me back to the question of apprenticeship that I was talking about before. You have to see yourself as an apprentice, not as a budding genius. You've got to impress that on them.

Charles Ives Read by David Metzger (University of British Columbia)

Does Charles Ives belong on a stamp? That question kept the "AMS List" buzzing for a few days back in September. Many on the nay side objected to the composer's misogynistic and homophobic views. Serious issues, yes. But this tempest in a cyberspace teapot is most interesting for what it says about changing views of Ives, not about his suitability for postage. The old image of an iconoclastic New England hermit has largely disappeared, replaced by a variety of competing perspectives, including that of a deceiver who revised manuscripts so as to make his music more "modern" and of a musician less atypical and more grounded in European traditions than the myth surrounding him has suggested. Many different Iveses have emerged from the rush of publications about him that have appeared over the last decade. Recently, this flow has picked up with four new books. Placing Ives in various musical, aesthetic, and political contexts, these works offer additional portraits of a composer who will soon be staring up at us from an envelope.

Jan Swafford finds himself in the unenviable position of offering the first biography of Ives after Stuart Feder's captivating *Charles Ives, "My Father's Song": A Psychoanalytic Biography* (Yale University Press, 1992). Swafford's *Charles Ives: A Life with Music* (W. W. Norton, 1996; \$30) is a solid work, but it rarely makes the imaginative and surprising leaps—some successful, some not—that Feder's book does. Moreover, the author often leaves interesting issues underexplored. For instance, he brings up Ives's aversion to the feminine and his homophobia but then largely dismisses them as part of a "characteristically American complex" of the time. Much work has been done in these areas since Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People: A Study in National Character* of 1964, which Swafford cites on that "complex," and he could have profited from that scholarship. Also frustrating is Swafford's claim that Ives "was not a Modernist," meaning that the composer did not fit in either personally or aesthetically with some of the more obvious manifestations of the movement, such as the ultra-moderns, futurists, primitivists, and others. True to some degree, but early twentieth-century modernism was a broad cultural phenomenon that encompassed a variety of characters and backgrounds. Surely Ives's experimental techniques and the new means of experiencing music that he demanded, as in the collage pieces, were important modernist developments and need to be understood in that context. Despite such shortcomings, Swafford's biography provides an engaging study of Ives's life. Its richness results from the writer's intimate connection with the music.

J. Peter Burkholder's *All Made of Tunes: Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing* (Yale University Press, 1995; \$35) is the most significant of the four recent publications. The author consistently challenges our understanding of Ives's incorporation of pre-existent material, a practice that, like many features of the composer's music, has been frequently discussed. But it has never been treated in such a thorough and insightful manner. Quotation, as Burkholder convincingly argues, is not a single technique but rather a practice involving different strategies. He describes fourteen separate, but often overlapping,

methods, ranging from modeling the form of a work on another piece to "cumulative setting," his term for compositions in which borrowed material slowly coheres, taking more or less complete form by the end. Burkholder also demonstrates that Ives's approach to borrowing was constantly changing. His earliest compositions employed such direct techniques as modeling and variation, whereas late ones tended toward the innovative strategies of cumulative setting and collage.

The extramusical aspects of Ives's quotations do not receive the same degree of rigor and ingenuity as are found in Burkholder's discussions of analytical and chronological topics. Quotations in Ives's layered-memory and "chaotic" pieces generate numerous, often contradictory, associations. Burkholder does not explore these multivalencies and ambiguities, settling instead to elucidate more or less direct and illustrative relationships between quotations and texts, whether programmatic or vocal. Even so, he has offered an impressive work—a lucid and insightful discussion of a central element in Ives's music.

Charles Ives and His World—a collection of essays tied to the 1996 Bard Music Festival and edited by Burkholder (Princeton University Press, 1996; \$55, paper \$19.95)—greatly advances recent efforts to contextualize Ives. Contributions by Leon Botstein and Michael Broyles explore Ives's nostalgia, an often-cited yet understudied topic. The two view the composer's fondness for the past from different perspectives. Botstein focuses on the paradox of nostalgic content and innovative idioms in Ives's works, seeing it not as a clash of opposites but rather as a pointed political statement. Ives, according to Botstein, realized that the only means of conveying the value of past traditions was to express them through striking new languages that would grab the attention of listeners who had grown complacent with conventional idioms. Botstein argues that Mahler exploited this paradox for similar aims, thus building on parallels between the two contemporaries drawn by Robert Morgan in his 1978 essay, "Ives and Mahler: Mutual Responses at the End of an Era." Broyles cuts in from another direction, placing Ives's nostalgia in specific political contexts: republicanism (the political philosophy, not the party) and the colonial revival of the early twentieth century. By relating Ives to these traditions, he challenges previous arguments that situated the composer in the Populist and Progressive movements. For Broyles, Ives does not fit comfortably in either context, especially the amorphous Progressivism. Broyles also throws new light on the composer's early years in the insurance business and on the traumatic effects of the 1905 Armstrong investigation into malpractice in that industry, which may have caused Ives to look back to the past for solid values.

In his own contribution to this collection, Burkholder divides Ives's work into broad stylistic categories, contending that Ives used these individual styles to target specific audiences. David Michael Hertz draws connections between the *Concord Sonata* and piano music of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European composers. Some of Hertz's connections are
(continued on page 15)

Chronicling Minimalism

Not so long ago the music of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, and other practitioners of so-called "minimalism" lurked on the fringes, hailed by some as a revolutionary antidote to angst-ridden post-war complexities and decried by others as simple-minded. Over time it has gained a considerable following—far greater than usual in the mainstreaming of an avant-garde aesthetic. Signs of its maturity and acceptance abound. Reich turned sixty this year; Glass will do so in 1997. None such has announced a monumentalizing project: the release on ten CDs of the complete works of Reich. And the spare, hypnotic patterns that are ubiquitous to minimalism, albeit in myriad incarnations, have become a sound signature of our day, one example being the crisp audio bites that separate news segments on NPR's "All Things Considered." Another step toward broad-based acceptance comes with the publication of *Minimalists* by K. Robert Schwarz, a freelance music critic and former ISAM Research Assistant (Phaidon Press, 1996; \$19.95). Although not the first book about this group of composers, Schwarz's *Minimalists* achieves a rare balance of journalistic readability and musicianly insight. It also delivers an abundance of primary source material (especially interviews conducted by Schwarz with the composers) and is exceptionally well-illustrated.

Schwarz considers his protagonists one-by-one, beginning with La Monte Young and Terry Riley, early composers of pattern music. He then devotes two chapters each to Reich and Glass; covers John Adams, Meredith Monk, and "post-minimalism" in one swoop; and ends with a batch of key Europeans (Michael Nyman, Louis Andriessen, Arvo Pärt). Particularly intriguing is the detailed account of how Reich, "raised as a secular, assimilated Jew," discovered ancient Jewish traditions in the early 1970s and began learning Hebrew. Soon he was studying scriptural cantillation in New York, which in turn led him to Israel to record cantorial singing. All this, of course, inspired *Tehillim*, a joyous cascade of Psalm verses set in Biblical Hebrew, and *Different Trains* and *The Cave*, two deeply moving works with the contemporary politics of Judaism at their core. The book concludes with a list of compositions and recordings for each composer discussed. Schwarz's *Minimalists* provides a model of intelligent accessibility—of how to write for a general audience and deliver real substance.

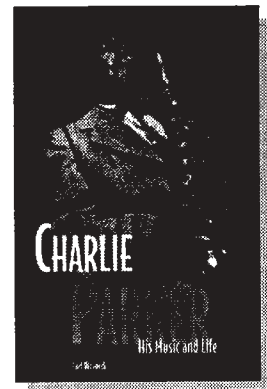
—CJO

William Grant Still Conference. The Still centennial in 1995 inspired a string of conferences and concerts—including those sponsored by the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and ISAM. With *William Grant Still and his World*, tentatively scheduled for June 1998, the reevaluation will come home, as it were, taking place at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, a city that also houses William Grant Still Music, operated by Still's daughter, Judith Anne. To participate, send a one-page abstract and a tape (for performers) by 1 March 1997 to: Catherine Parsons Smith, Department of Music, 226, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557-0049.

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MICHIGAN

Keyboard Kapers by Jeff Taylor

American piano music of the 1920s is in vogue these days. Sparked partly by Nonesuch's successful CDs of piano roll performances by Gershwin, the renewed interest in this repertory is revealing a long-neglected feature of our musical past. With an album of performances by "Lindbergh of the piano" Pauline Alpert (Pearl 9201), Pearl Records has launched a proposed eight-volume series of discs, *Keyboard Wizards of the Gershwin Era*, devoted to Gershwin's largely forgotten pianistic contemporaries. A compilation of recordings by Gershwin's colleague and friend Zez Confrey has been brought out by Archive Productions (CD-1602), which plans future reissues of performances by Roy Bargy and Rube Bloom. New interpretations of the repertory are being recorded too: Alan Feinberg's recent addition to his ongoing American piano series—*Fascinatin' Rhythm: American Syncopation* (Argo 444 457-2)—includes works from the 1920s by Confrey, Bloom, and the brilliant white cornetist and pianist Bix Beiderbecke. Artis Wodehouse (producer of the Nonesuch Gershwin reissues), Tony Caramia (of the Eastman School), and Peter Mintun (who has played extended engagements at New York's Carlyle Hotel) are among a group of pianists also tending to this repertory in live performance. And in the past few months, both the *New York Times* and *Time* have run feature articles about the music.

These revivals provide yet another reminder of the exhilarating confusion that characterizes American music of the 1920s. Like many composers of the period, Confrey, Bloom, and Beiderbecke drew on a bewildering jumble of ragtime, jazz, blues, popular song, and concert music. This mix was especially potent in New York, where nearly all had strong ties. As a result, the works they produced often stubbornly resist classification. Some clearly fall under the heading "novelty piano"—flashy, rhythmically intricate, ragtime-infused pieces like Confrey's *Kitten on the Keys*. Yet at times these composers also seemed driven to distance themselves from the commercial contexts in which they functioned, perhaps seeking to produce works they viewed as holding higher artistic merit. Confrey's output, for example, includes waltzes, polkas, tangos, a concert etude, impressionistic MacDowell-like suites, and paraphrases of European concert music. Some of these pieces betray their time and place with a strategically placed blue note or flash of stride piano in the left hand. Others seem entirely of another era, evoking parlor music of the nineteenth century.

One feature all these works show, however, is a deep love of the piano, which was enjoying a final peak of popularity during the 1920s before being upstaged by radio, sound films, and records. Gershwin's contemporaries, although from a variety of

musical backgrounds, shared an intuitive sense of how to write for the instrument, and they devised music that sounds impressive and is immensely satisfying to play, while at the same time remaining well within the means of a competent amateur. I was recently reminded of this when, intent on scholarly research, I took a stack of 1920s piano music to an empty classroom and ended up having a three-hour romp through the world of Confrey and Bloom. It is forgiving stuff. Even the most demanding works are laid out carefully between the two hands and often fingered meticulously. Many are also based on a series of repeating pianistic gestures, so once these devices click into place the whole piece can be negotiated with ease.

And it is not just the virtuosic show pieces that are ingratiating for the performer; the rich sonorities and plaintive lyricism of many of the slower, more impressionistic works are equally satisfying. The richly scored D-flat ninth that appears in the second bar of Beiderbecke's *In A Mist*, for example, has become a favorite of one of my students, who likes to strike the chord dramatically when I enter the classroom.

Although in one sense *Gebräuchsmusik* of the Jazz Age, this repertory was also wildly popular with audiences (Confrey's own recordings were best-sellers, and his performance at Paul Whiteman's 1924 Aeolian Hall concert was a highlight of the event). It can still provide a satisfying listening experience when given a sympathetic performance. This is apparent in a batch of recordings produced over the past two or three years by pianist Mike Polad. Having built a small cottage industry devoted to this repertory by producing recordings at his home in Minnesota, Polad has released a fine set of three CDs on his own Polecat label, with a series title cleverly borrowed from a catch-phrase of the 1920s: *Piano Deco*, Vols. 1-3 (Premier/Polecat CD 101, 102, 104). Clearly a labor of love, the recordings

include works by Beiderbecke, Bloom, and Confrey, the latter represented not primarily by his novelty works—*Kitten* is conspicuously absent here—but by more introspective pieces such as his *Three Little Oddities*. The most intriguing aspect of the series, however, is the inclusion of works by Eastwood Lane, whose influence on Beiderbecke is well documented by both musicians and scholars. Many of these pieces remain unpublished and have never been previously recorded.

Aside from the Beiderbecke connection, Sidney Eastwood Lane (1879-1951) is almost completely forgotten today. Yet in the 1920s he was a conspicuous figure on Manhattan's cultural scene, socializing with the New York literati (including members of the Algonquin roundtable) and serving for twenty-three



Eastwood Lane at the piano.

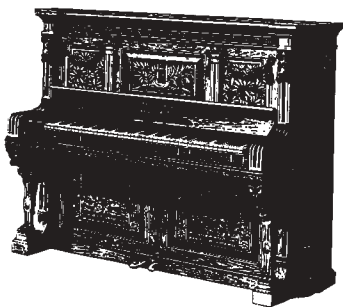
Photo from the Syracuse University Archives.

Singing Folk by Nancy Groce (New York City)

years as assistant director of the Wanamaker Concerts. He provided music for ballet productions by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, and his works, in orchestrations by Ferde Grofé, were performed by both Paul Whiteman's orchestra and the Philadelphia Symphony. Essentially self-taught (despite a three-and-a-half year stint at Syracuse University), and sporting an almost Ivesian disregard for "correct" compositional techniques, he worked out pieces entirely by ear before arduously committing them to paper.

Polad performs Lane's pieces with great sensitivity, yet I find listening to them an unnerving experience. Affected by his compositional process, as well as his work with St. Denis and Shawn (several of these pieces were intended to accompany their productions), Lane's music unfolds as a stream of dramatic events. Melodic and rhythmic ideas emerge and dissipate, moods suddenly change, and musical thoughts gather intensity, only to be deflected on an unexpected course or interrupted by a rippling arpeggio. The music is by turns fascinating and exasperating, often hypnotic, occasionally monotonous. Some passages seem mundane, others strikingly original (the ghostly opening of *Lines for Ann Rutledge*, for example). Although Lane shares with his contemporaries an almost instinctive sense of the piano's possibilities, he seems tenuously connected to his own time. William J. Schafer, who provided the excellent liner notes, makes frequent reference to the jazz inflections of these works, but I detect little jazz here. More direct is the tie to music from the end of the previous century, especially MacDowell's *Woodland Sketches* (clearly the inspiration for Lane's own *Adirondack Sketches*) and the early piano works of Debussy. Even highly rhythmic pieces like *Lumber-Jack Dance* and *The Crap Shooters* seem of another era, the former evoking Debussy's *Danse* and the last movement of his *Petite Suite*, and the latter striking my ear as a direct descendant of Gottschalk's *The Banjo*.

Though problematic at times, this music fills in an intriguing piece of the 1920s' intricate musical puzzle and should be investigated by any scholar or performer seriously interested in the era (unfortunately scores for works by Lane are difficult to find, although Polad has now issued his own folio). The adulation for Gershwin's piano works is deserved but his musical story remains one of many. (*The three discs in Mike Polad's Piano Deco series may be obtained for \$15 each, plus \$3 postage and handling, from Empire Music, 170 W. 74th Street, New York, NY 10023. Polad's folio of four Lane pieces may be ordered by writing him at 3730 Fairlawn Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55345. Price \$10, plus \$2 postage.*)



Robert Cantwell's *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Harvard University Press, 1996; \$24.95) is an insightful, unflinching, and very personal exploration of the early years of the American folk music movement. As the author states in his introduction, the work "is not a history of the folk revival—it is an attempt to construct the context of a single image from the Newport Folk Festival of 1963." This image is a photograph by David Gahr of the festival's finale portraying Peter, Paul, and Mary, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, the Freedom Singers, and Pete Seeger linked arm-in-arm on stage. It captures a core group of performers who had taken diverse paths to arrive at the same place.

Through the lens of his own late-1940s, early 1950s childhood, Cantwell sets out to explore the cultural landscape that brought about their journey. Why, he asks, did folk expressions of the culturally disenfranchised and powerless suddenly have such appeal in the late 1950s to middle-class young people like himself? And how did folk revivalist performers, whether from recently arrived urban ethnic groups or elite social backgrounds, transform themselves into the "folk"?

Cantwell argues persuasively that there is no single answer to these questions, for the revival drew from disparate cultural streams. Nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy, for example, provided much of the repertory that twentieth-century "folk singers" eventually adopted. Turn-of-the-century classical musicians and their search for indigenous national source material also fueled many of the earliest folk song collecting efforts, eventually providing the rationale for federal support of early folklorists such as John and Alan Lomax. Cantwell further traces the contributions of poet Carl Sandburg, record producer Moe Asch, and folk song collector Lawrence Gellert. He goes on to sketch other key personalities including Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax, Beth Lomax Hawes, Ralph Rinzler, and the Almanac Singers. Based largely in and around New York City during the 1940s and early 1950s, these artists, promoters, and scholars succeeded in creating a new performance genre, "non-ethnic urban folk music."

The most provocative part of Cantwell's discussion focuses on how the notion of the "folk" evolved in America. "Like other noble ideas," he writes, "the idea of the folk must be an invention . . . a representation." In America this concept is both "aristocratic and romantic—embedded in myth, turned toward the past, inscribed with rituals of Christian piety," while at the same time, "visionary, democratic, secular, populist, progressive." Hence it touches on "the central paradox of the American political experiment, designed to secure for the commonality the condition of nobility."

For all its strengths, this study is occasionally marred by the author's indulgences. We are told Cantwell's personal history at least three separate times. There is also a good bit of overwriting, including long, looping sentences that confuse rather than enlighten. Equally troubling is a tendency to become enmeshed in the symbolic. Despite these problems, *When We Were Good* takes a major step toward understanding an undervalued
(continued on page 15)

WNCU-FM (continued)

(Jazz is only one of more than a dozen musical categories served by *Gavin*; others include Top 40, A/C (Adult Contemporary), Smooth Jazz (formerly NAC, or New Adult Contemporary), Country, Rap, and so on.) As a *Gavin* reporting station, then, WNCU participates in the nationwide musical ratings game—which keeps the product moving—and in turn receives a steady stream of new releases from the major labels. Carter takes a practical view of the arrangement: “The purpose of a radio station is to be part of civilization, what’s happening now. Why should I play old recordings on the air that people already have in their collection? Personally I’ll listen to the older recordings myself at home. But I feel sorry for jazz purists who feel nothing ever happened after 1961. . . . If I don’t play new records, they won’t sell in the stores, and the people making this music will be out of work.”

As something of a “purist” myself—at least many of my favorite jazz recordings date from *before* 1961—I initially found WNCU’s brand of contemporary jazz slicker and more pop-oriented than I liked. Where was the *real* jazz, I wondered: Charlie Parker, Jelly Roll Morton, Coleman Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald, and all the other legendary standard-bearers of The Tradition? Over time, and with repeated listenings, my resistance broke down. I grew fond of new releases by Joe Sample and Ramsey Lewis, enjoyed sampling the latest “product” from James Carter and Bob Mintzer, and went out and bought Herbie Hancock’s *The New Standard* after I’d heard the cover of Sade’s *Love Is Stronger Than Pride* featured in heavy rotation.

The jazz played by WNCU, I came to realize, is an idiom radically different from the traditional, even canonical version presented by Wynton Marsalis and Marcus Roberts at Lincoln Center. The rhythmic groove is closer to funk and hip hop than to swing. Singers are just as prominent as instrumentalists. It is more electronic than acoustic, using state-of-the-art technology to produce a glossy surface sheen. It relies more on repeated melodies and short “hooks” than on extended improvised solos. Most of all, the music sounds contemporary rather than retrospective—more interested in celebrating the present than paying homage to the past.

These aesthetic qualities, as Carter recognizes, can help WNCU draw in more listeners, especially younger ones. “I’m not here to preserve the music,” he says. “If I was at a station with [a budget of] two to three million dollars I might see it as my duty to preserve the music and culture. But we’re trying to start up and grow. We have to broaden our base over time.” As for characterizing the music played by WNCU, Carter deftly sidesteps the issue. “It’s not my duty to define what jazz is or isn’t,” he says, smiling. “We just give you the music and let you decide. What you consider jazz is a personal matter, really—like your religious beliefs or sexual orientation.” This open-mindedness doesn’t mean WNCU takes a free-form approach to programming. Carter has devised time clocks for the main listening periods of the day, each prescribing a different mix of new and old music, juxtaposing emerging and familiar artists. “I try to keep my own spiritual life in balance,” Carter says, “and I apply this same principle to programming.”

The story of WNCU can be read differently: as a case study of African-American empowerment in the New South, as a successful business venture within a market economy, or as an attempt to build a multiracial audience for a medium that has traditionally constructed itself along lines of color. I also see Carter and the Guru, in their cool, understated way, sounding a defiant note of protest against the hateful, over-heated, irrational discourse promulgated by so many in “talk radio.” Using soulful music and soothing words, these men have created a spiritual ministry of the air. Their goals, as Carter outlines them, are simple and straightforward: “We want everyone to feel good about being American. We try to let people know that they can take control of their lives. And we want everyone to understand that we’re all connected.”

Listeners in the Triangle region of North Carolina are responding positively to such affirmative sentiments. Is it naive to think that other radio stations around the country might get on the same wavelength?

I know what the Guru would say.

Country & Gospel (continued)

original conception as a radio show. The company kept its focus on insurance.)

The key to this new cross-fertilization is a concept called “country life-style.” It is a marketing theory based on a belief that people who like country (and gospel) music also like a number of other technology-heavy recreations. These include NASCAR racing (professional stock-car racing), bass and high-tech fishing, and recreational vehicles and camping. Not surprisingly, Gaylord has bought heavily into these areas: racing and auto shows are the highest-rated programs on the Nashville Network, and Gaylord has recently purchased the national chain of Pro Bass stores. By the start of 1997, Gaylord’s own web site, “country.com,” will be up and running. It will have a substantial data base on country music, as well as large sections on NASCAR activities and fishing.

No one knows how effective this new synergistic marketing will be. But with the acquisition of Word, gospel music has been added to the mix in a big way. Other music conglomerates, such as BMG and EMI, have also recently purchased some independent gospel labels, such as Reunion and Sparrow, but seem to be having limited success with them. With Gaylord’s “country life-style” approach, however, something different is happening. It marks a radical change in the way gospel and country are being marketed to the public, and it signals the end of a long tradition.

Charles Ives (continued)

intriguing, whereas others are quite general and need to be pursued further. The latter is especially the case with his non-musical parallels, such as superficial comparisons to Whitman. Mark Tucker describes the personal and musical significance of the composer's many visits to the Adirondacks, engagingly reminding us that New England was not the only geographical stimulus for Ives. The collection concludes with a rich compilation of correspondence, reviews, and profiles.

Charles Ives and the Classical Tradition (Yale University Press, 1996; \$25), edited by Burkholder and Geoffrey Block, also pursues a contextual approach, considering Ives's relationship to his European and American contemporaries and predecessors. The strongest essay in the collection is Robert Morgan's "Ives and Mahler," which is reprinted here. Discussing such topics as quotation, defamiliarization, and disjunction, as manifested in both composers, Morgan demonstrates how the two articulated a "musical response to some of the most important intellectual and artistic ideas of the nineteenth century." He does not merely point out correspondences but gets at similar "aesthetic interiors" of the works, relating those cores to surrounding cultures. Many of the other articles, though, never reach those "interiors," settling instead for general correlations.

Some contributors (Philip Lambert, for instance) err in the opposite direction by delving into detailed analyses. One wonders how such specific correlations between compositional techniques—especially when considered in isolation—meaningfully connect Ives to his European contemporaries. Are these techniques used to the same effect? Are there cultural or non-musical ties to strengthen the proposed links? Do the works have similar "aesthetic interiors"? Yet, even if many of the arguments put forth in this volume could have been more discriminating, there is still much to be gained from it. When added together with all the books reviewed here, it yields rich new perspectives on Ives.

Singing Folk (continued)

genre of American music—a genre, I might add, that makes many folklorists and ethnomusicologists uncomfortable because it comes just a little too close to their own lives. "We are the folk," Cantwell writes at one point. If so, this study should do a great deal to help us understand how this came to pass, both intellectually and emotionally.

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