NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN AMERICAN MUSIC

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

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TOP OF THE POPS *by John Updike*

Cole Porter was born one hundred years ago this year. Thinking about how we might signal his centenary, we recalled a delectable foreword that John Updike contributed to Robert Kimball's compilation of The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter ***(Knopf, 1983) and, in the same book, some stunning photographs of Porter by Eileen Darby. To our delight, Mr. Updike, Ms. Darby, and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., have given us permission to reprint the verbal and visual appreciations below. (Mr. Updike has revised his essay very slightly to suit its new context.)***

You're the top!
You're the Colosseum.
You're the top!
You're the Louvre Museum.
You're a melody from a
 symphony by Strauss,
You're a Bendel bonnet,
A Shakespeare sonnet,
You're Mickey Mouse.

Could there be a love song more American than this?—this consumer's checklist, this breezy catalogue with its climactic, sublimely simple assurance to the beloved that she (or he) is Mickey Mouse. In the succeeding refrains, the Mickey Mouse line becomes "You're cellophane," "You're broccoli," "You're Camembert," "You're Pepsodent," "You're Ovaltine," and "You're stratosphere." Each time, whether we hear the words in the voice of Ethel Merman, who introduced the song almost sixty years ago in *Anything Goes*, or of Anita O'Day, who made a haunting croaky-voiced recording some decades later, something tender, solemn, nonsensical, and absolute seems to be being said. The song lyricist's task is to provide excuses for onstage demonstrations of energy and also, at the top of his craft, to provide new phrasings for the ineffable and virtually trite. How many times can the discovery and proclamation that one ersatz creature is in love with another be endured? Infinitely many, as long as real men and women continue to mate: popular composers from generation to generation, if they do not teach us how to love, do lend our romances a certain accent and give our courting rites and their milieux—proms, bars, automobiles with their dashboard moons—a tribal background, a background choir of communal experience. In the urbane, top-hat fantasy world wherein Fred Astaire and Cole Porter reign as quintessential performer and creator, love is wry, jokey, casual, and even weary but nonetheless ecstatic: you're Mickey Mouse. Not to mention, "You're romance, / You're the steppes of Russia, / You're the pants on a Roxy usher." One of the delights of the all-inclusive collection that Mr. Kimball has assiduously compiled from so many tattered sources consists of following half-recalled lyrics through their many ebullient refrains; we find, for instance, that Porter rhymed "top" not only with the expectable "flop," "pop," "hop," and "stop" but also with the more rakish "blop," "de trop," and "the G. O. P. or GOP."

Cole Porter (Photo copyright © by Eileen Darby)

He brought to the traditional and somewhat standardized tasks of songsmithing a great verbal ingenuity, a brave flexibility and resourcefulness (how many of these lengthy lyrics were discarded by showtime!), a cosmopolitan's wide expertise in many mundane matters including foreign lands and tongues, and a spirit that always kept something of collegiate innocence about it. The decade of the Depression, Porter's creative prime, maintained in its popular culture much of the Twenties' gaiety and bequeathed a surprising amount of it to the war-stricken Forties—the jauntiness of "Shootin' the Works for Uncle Sam" ("North, South, East, West, / All the boys are hep / To do their damndest (darndest) / To defend Miss Liberty's rep") on the eve of Pearl Harbor almost grates, and Porter's wartime musicals quaintly—it seems now—reassure the boys overseas that "Miss Garbo remains as the Hollywood Sphinx / Monty Woolley's still bathing his beard in his drinks" and that "Café Society still carries on." This lighthearted era was a heyday of light verse:

TOP OF THE POPS *(continued)*

there were book reviews in verse, and sports stories; there were droll ballades and rondeaux and triolets. The plenitudinous newspapers and magazines published Don Marquis, F.P.A., Louis Untermeyer, Arthur Guiterman, Christopher Morley, Dorothy Parker, Ogden Nash, E. B. White, Morris Bishop, and Phyllis McGinley, not to mention such clever curiosities as Newman Levy's rhyming versions of opera plots and David McCord's typographically antic "Sonnets to Baedeker." Song lyricists were of this ingenious company; William Harmon's *Oxford Book of American Light Verse* includes, with poems by all the abovementioned, lyrics by Porter, Lorenz Hart, Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Johnny Mercer. Wit of a specifically literary sort lies behind Porter's sophisticated references and outrageous rhymes—"trickery / liquor we," "throws a / sub rosa," "presto / West, oh," "Siena / then a," and, famously from "Night and Day," "hide of me / inside of me" (which Ring Lardner parodied as "rind of me / mind of me" and "tegument / egg you meant.") Light verse seeks, though, to make its trickery seem unforced, and the peculiar grace of the form is well illustrated by the vivid refrain of "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," beginning:

> While tearing off
> A game of golf
> I may make a play for the caddy.
> But when I do
> I don't follow through
> 'Cause my heart belongs to Daddy.

And the next lines follow with another ***double entendre*** almost as elegant: "If I invite / A boy, some night, / To dine on my fine finnan haddie, / I just adore / His asking for more, / But my heart belongs to Daddy." The internal rhymes on the second and fifth syllable of the third line are a consummate prosodic trick, repeated, without apparent effort, here and then twice more in the second refrain.

Yet, how much, it must be asked, of our delight in these particular verses depends upon our memory of the melody, a melody that launched the Broadway career of Mary Martin, a melody that has given dozens of thrushes excuse to pucker, pout, and prance, a melody of irresistible momentum and lilt? Very much, must be the honest answer. And where no tune comes to mind to fit the words, these lyrics spin themselves a bit vacuously down the page with their "honey / funny / sunny / money" cheer and relentless allusions to half-forgotten celebrities and publicly certified emotional states. Some of the love songs, I fear, put us in mind of that Ira Gershwin lyric that goes (in part):

> Blah, blah, blah your hair,
> Blah, blah, blah your eyes;
> Blah, blah, blah, blah care,
> Blah, blah, blah, blah skies.
> Tra la la la, tra la la la la, cottage for two,
> Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, darling, with you!

Without music, one cannot really read (from Porter's "Why Should I Care?")

> Tra, la, la, la,
> La, la, la, la, la, la,
> Tra, la, la, la,
> La, la, la, la, la, la, la

or the thirty-four "again"s of "I'll Black His Eyes" or the one hundred eighty-four "ha"s of "Riddle-Diddle Me This." Without music, the simple lines of "I Love You" and "True Love" remain banal, daring parodies of banality, indeed; but alloyed with their enchanting tunes, and sung by Bing Crosby (in duet, for the sweet waltz of the second, with the delicate voice of Grace Kelly), the words become gold, affecting and unforgettable. The point scarcely needs making, least of all in the case of a composer like Porter who created his own melodies, that song lyrics are part of the whole, and that only reading them is a little like looking at an album of photographs of delicious food. The food looks good, but the proof is in the eating. The proof of Cole Porter's genius was in the stage shows and movies he made his crucial contributions to, and in the dozen or more standards—"Just One of Those Things," "I Get a Kick Out of You," "Begin the Beguine," "In the Still of the Night," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "It's De-lovely," "From This Moment On," "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," "It's All Right with Me," "Night and Day," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," "You're the Top," etc.—that are woven into the airwaves of these United States and familiar to all who have ears to hear.

Verse, including light verse, makes its own music. The tune is elusive but it requires no stage manager or electronic equipment; it hums and tingles up off the mute page. A light-verse writer is not constrained to extend his inspiration through enough refrains to exhaust the chorus, to shape his syllables toward easy vocalization by a possibly difficult star (Bert Lahr, we are told, refused to perform a song Porter composed for him because it rhymed "cinema" and "enema"), or to appeal to any store of shared information less vast than the language and its accumulated treasury of allusions. No doubt Cole Porter could have been such a writer, had the immeasurably wider audience for musical comedy not beckoned. Without any orchestral egging on we smile at such lines as

> Your effect should be fantastic
> In that pistache Perfolastic

and

> Digging in his fertile glen,
> Goldwyn dug up Anna Sten

and

> Some folks collect paintings,
> Some folks collect stamps,
> Some are amassers
> Of antimacassars
> And other Victorian camps

and

> If a lass in Michigan can,
> If an ass in Astrakhan can,
> If a bass in the Saskatchewan can,
> Baby, you can can-can too.

(continued on page 15)

I.S.A.M. MATTERS

First Things First. Our pleas for contributions to permit continued publication of this Newsletter got an extraordinary response—from no less than 550 individuals and institutions, many sending more than the $5 minimum we asked for. So here we are again! The fiscal condition of New York State and New York City—hence that of institutions like ours that are principally supported by them—continues to be dismal (which is putting it mildly). But thanks to a touchingly loyal and responsive readership we are still in business. Many, many thanks to all!

Good Fellow and (we hope) Fellows. Senior Research Fellow **Joseph Horowitz** has completed a semester-long seminar on the American symphony orchestra—one so demanding and challenging that his students and colleagues murmur "Here comes Simon Legree!" when he appears for seminar sessions. Plans for an I.S.A.M. monograph by him have fallen through for the best of reasons: his research on the Hungarian-born conductor Anton Seidl, conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, and other groups toward the turn of the century, has proved so fruitful that he is headed toward a full-length book and commercial publication of it. . . . Our fingers are crossed for funding to permit bringing, as Fellow for the first semester of 1991–92, **Kyle Gann,** composer and critic (principally of the *Village Voice*), to direct a seminar on mathematically oriented new-music composers of the 20th century (Nancarrow, LaMonte Young, Ben Johnston, et al.) and, for the second semester, **Horace Clarence Boyer,** gospel singer and historian (and professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst), to direct one on gospel-music traditions.

Raves for Newsletter Regulars. We cannot resist puffing here a couple of new books by a pair of I.S.A.M. Newsletter regulars. These are a critical biography by **Carol Oja**—*Colin McPhee: Composer in Two Worlds* (Smithsonian Press; $39.95)—and the first volume of what will surely become a complete critical biography by **Mark Tucker**—*Ellington: The Early Years* (University of Illinois Press, $29.95). The "two worlds" of Oja's composer/ethnomusicologist were New York and Bali, and hers is a sensitive and contextually rich study of his double persona, presented in a book that is exceptionally well-edited and -produced. The "early years" of Duke Ellington are those of his childhood and youth in Washington (1899–1923) and his years in New York City (1923–1927) before his leap to fame at the Cotton Club. Tucker's research on these previously cloudy Ellington years is exhaustive, definitive; his analyses of the early recordings (with many revealing music examples based on his own very precise transcriptions) deft and illuminating. . . . I said Oja and Tucker were "a pair": as woman and husband, they are, of course.

IVESIANA

Toward a Catalogue Raisonné. The Charles Ives Society has received from the National Endowment for the Humanities a substantial grant in support of work toward a catalogue raisonné of Ives's music. Working together as editors will be H. Wiley Hitchcock and Paul C. Echols. A good start on the project has already been made under commissions to Echols from the Ives Society, and the editors hope to complete it late in 1992. Yale University Press will be the publisher.

IVESIANA *(continued)*

Recordings of Note. Michael Tilson Thomas, directing the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, has completed his project to record **the major orchestral works** of Ives, in new critical editions sponsored by the Ives Society. Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 have recently been released on a Sony Classical CD (SK 44939), in readings of unprecedented clarity and energy. Paul Echols writes the authoritative liner notes. . . . Bridge Records recently issued, on a pair of CDs (BCD 9024A/B), **the four sonatas for violin and piano**, in performances of exceptional vitality by Gregory Fulkerson and Robert Shannon. . . . The composer-conductor John Adams turns twice to Ives, with ***The Unanswered Question* and five songs** orchestrated by himself, in the brilliantly conceived CD he calls *American Elegies* (Elektra Nonesuch 79249-2), which is reviewed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

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REGARDING RECORDINGS I

The rise of the Mississippi Delta blues singer **Robert Johnson** to public awareness—and now popularity, with the astonishing success of *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (Columbia C2K 46222; all three formats)—has been a long, slow one.

Johnson recorded his rough, raw blues over a very brief period: 1936–37. His idols were Charlie Patton and Son House, who had cut their first classic blues recordings seven or eight years earlier. Johnson synthesized elements of their style—chilling slide guitar, walking basslines, swooping falsetto—in a blend that foreshadowed the postwar Chicago blues of such musicians as Muddy Waters. Though Johnson was never commercially successful as they were to be, his recordings became well enough known to put such producers as Alan Lomax and John Hammond on his trail. They were too late: Johnson had died in 1938, at the age of 26.

Public consciousness of Johnson's work first arose more than twenty-five years ago, when Columbia released an album of reissues of some of his recordings. His powerful music gradually reached people all over the world, though often filtered through second-hand sources (versions of "Crossroads," "Sweet Home Chicago," and "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom" by Elenore James, John Hammond Jr., Canned Heat, and Johnny Shine, among others). Johnson's ascendancy accelerated last year with the publication of Peter Guralnick's brief but fascinating study *Searching for Robert Johnson* (E. P. Dutton)—a provocative preliminary, perhaps, to the definitive account toward which Mack McCormick and Stephen Lavere have been inching (competitively).

Now, with *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings*, we have a deluxe set of forty-one of Johnson's mid-1930s recordings—original releases, unissued selections, and alternate takes—plus a carefully annotated, exceptionally well illustrated forty-seven-page booklet of notes and appreciation (with contributions from Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton). The package includes Johnson's entire recorded legacy. (Or does it? Several well-known record collectors claim to possess unissued takes that are missing here.) The alternate takes include interesting variants: the two versions of "Kindhearted Woman," for example, offer striking textual contrasts, and Take 1 features Johnson's only known guitar solo. The set as a whole definitively summarizes the work of this troubled, brooding, misogynistic artist.

An occasional flaw in the sound is the only thing I would complain about—as in the first few bars of the guitar introduction to "Traveling Riverside Blues," which are distractingly distorted, sounding almost as if they belonged to an entirely separate performance. Such flaws may reflect Columbia's failure—alone in this volume of the Blues 'n' Roots series—to apply the Cedar noise-reduction system, which may be costly but is effective and worth the money.

—*Kip Lornell*
(Smithsonian Institution)

BOOK NOOK I

One of the ironies of the current explosion in African-American studies is that music, so central to the black American experience, should be consistently overshadowed by literature. It is worth noting, therefore, that one of the main aims of the recent collection of essays edited by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., ***Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance*** (Greenwood Press; $39.95), is to reassert the centrality of music in what otherwise has been considered a literary movement.

The topic is not without its interpretive problems. On the one hand, the composers and critics associated with the Harlem Renaissance evoke our admiration for their courage in asserting their racial identity at a time when black Americans were offered relatively little encouragement or sympathy. But their attitudes toward black folk music can only be seen as wrongheaded. Today we recognize the spiritual and the blues as major contributions to world culture, needing no apology or embellishment. For Nathaniel Dett or Alain Locke, however, they were "quaint" and "crude"—raw material out of which a "truly dignified" art music could be created, but of no independent value.

The essays devoted to these composers (by Rawn Spearman, Georgia Ryder, and Rae Linda Brown) tend therefore to be apologetic, pleading that their work be understood in the context of its time. Some of the music discussed, like William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony*, is relatively well known; others, like Dett's oratorios, far less so, and Florence Price's *Symphony in E Minor* (stilll unpublished and unrecorded) virtually unknown. This volume will help to bring these compositions out of obscurity (aided by a comprehensive bibliography by Dominique-René de Lerma), but it cannot restore them to the centrality they once enjoyed—as "the most important contribution to music yet made by a member of the Negro race." (This in the age of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, not to mention Thomas Dorsey or Robert Johnson!) Too often cultural advancement was confused with social elevation, identified narrowly with European concert life, with results that are predictably pretentious, no matter how well intentioned.

In his opening overview, Floyd makes a strong case for expanding the musical Renaissance to include vernacular musicians: "pre-Renaissance figures" like James Reese Europe and W. C. Handy, jazz bandleaders Ellington and Fletcher Henderson, and pianists like Fats Waller and James P. Johnson. Only two of the essays serve to flesh out this side of the ledger, however, and in so doing they raise a different set of problems. As John Graziano notes, black musical theater had only a "tenuous" link with the ideals of the Harlem Renaissance, and was in any case a broad-based movement that had scored its first successes decades before the Renaissance proper. Mark Tucker acknowledges that Ellington can be understood to have "fulfilled the dreams" of the Renaissance, but only in retrospect; and his artistic personality was given its definitive shape not by Harlem, but by the fiercely proud black community of Washington. If *Black Music in the Harlem Renaissance* seems on the whole to raise more questions than it answers, that may point to the inadequacy of the Harlem Renaissance as an intellectual frame for the astonishing development of black music in the early part of the century.

—Scott DeVeaux
(University of Virginia)

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BOOK NOOK II

Two cheers for Joseph Swain! In ***The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey*** (Oxford University Press; $24.95) he has given us the first serious study of the stage musical—and about time, too. Of all its would-be critics and historians, only Lehman Engel, in his *The American Musical Theater: A Consideration* (1967), had hitherto come close to opening a scholarly debate on the subject, as Swain acknowledges. Most of the others were train-spotters, as we call them in Britain, happier remembering numbers of performances, invoking the names of stars, and repeating the litanies of received critical history than addressing issues.

Recently the film musical has been opened up for generic investigation, notably by Rick Altman in his *The American Film Musical* (1987), but as a theorist of popular culture he plays the all too familiar trick of analyzing everything except the music. Swain tips the balance the other way: this is a musician's study.

He is right to assert that "the repertoire . . . has undergone a process of classicization," and he accordingly adopts the professorial strategy of a chapter each devoted to key works, letting issues arise out of them. *West Side Story* gets the longest chapter—and who would quibble with that decision?—while *Show Boat* and *Sweeney Todd* tie for second place. Next comes *Carousel*, followed by *Fiddler on the Roof*, then a tie between *My Fair Lady*, *The Most Happy Fella*, and *Oklahoma!*. There are slightly smaller chapters on *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Godspell*, Lloyd Webber (*Evita* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*), and *A Chorus Line*. This last makes its copyright owners look stupid by their refusal to grant permission for use of either music or lyric examples. Elsewhere the book is awash with music examples and close analysis of them, and that is its greatest strength. Swain's perspective is always considerate and in general well balanced between short and long focus, and his chapter titles help him maintain this balance. Thus Lerner and Loewe are treated in the chapter "Myth as Musical," primarily devoted to *My Fair Lady* but also discussing *Camelot;* "Shakespeare as Musical" scrutinizes Cole Porter's creative personality before homing in on *Kiss Me, Kate* (but does not deal with *The Boys from Syracuse*); and so on. Swain's use of scholarly quotation and of general and particular bibliography, while not always at the cutting edge of criticism, is nonetheless judicious—for instance, when he considers the nature of tragedy in connection with *West Side Story* and the nature of exoticism in his chaper on "The Ethnic Musical."

But his is a conservative study, in the sense that its acknowledged model is Kerman's Leavisite *Opera as Drama*. One criticism is that Swain does not play this authoritative role quite well enough, and many of his analyses of melody, harmony, or whatever can be faulted for contextual inadequacy. The main limitation, however, is his critical agenda. Just as Kerman's approach implied that all opera aspires to the condition of poetic drama (but with music doing the work of words), so Swain's analyses teach us that all musicals aspire to the condition of opera. One can profoundly disagree with this premise . . . and thus call into question the whole notion that the "integrated" musical was where it was all aiming. The integrated musical ended up as rock opera; what got lost on the way were the intimate, craftsmanly relationship between lyrics and music which comprised wit (utterly unlike the classical notion of word-setting), the suite approach to dance and the carnival aesthetic of generic procession and contrast, and perhaps above all the reflexive dimension of song whereby music, rather than dictating (like the camera in a film) our point of view of the drama, *was* the drama. This was a much greater loss than we might think, for the presentation of a song onstage or on the screen opens up a great many more layers of meaning and dramatic ambiguity than the "integrated" ideal can handle. Film theorists and contemporary theater directors recognize this better than musicologists, and our third cheer must be reserved for a bridging of the gap.

—*Stephen Banfield*
(University of Keele, U.K.)

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BOOK NOOK II *(continued)*

The Charles Ives Tunebook (Harmonie Park Press; $50.00) is a long-awaited and very welcome addition to the Ives literature. Clayton Henderson assembles in one handsome volume all the tunes Ives borrowed in his music and presents them in the versions Ives is most likely to have known, complete with text where appropriate. The tunes are grouped by category: hymn tunes, patriotic songs and military music, popular songs, college music, fiddle tunes, excerpts from "classical" music, and "unknown tunes" (possible borrowings that have not been identified). The many indices—by title, composer, author, first lines of text, and musical incipits, including refrains—make it easy to find tunes one might previously have had to pursue through several hymnals or songbooks.

With each tune are listed the works by Ives in which it appears and the location of its first appearance in each. These listings will be useful for comparing how Ives uses the same tunes in different pieces and in locating borrowings that are abbreviated or obscured (of which there are many). Henderson also provides a list of Ives's pieces which use borrowed tunes, indicating for each piece which tunes are borrowed and where they first appear. With this book in hand, an Ives enthusiast can work through any of Ives's compositions, locating the tunes he borrowed and seeing how they are used.

As might be expected in any project this large, there are omissions and errors. For example, Reinbert De Leeuw has noted that an episode in the first movement of Ives's First String Quartet (later adapted as the third movement of his Fourth Symphony) borrows a motive from J. S. Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor ("Dorian"), BWV 538. The tune in the flute in measures 16-18 of the second movement of the Fourth Symphony is not "Massa's in de Cold Ground," as Henderson suggests, but (as Thomas Brodhead has pointed out to me) the closing notes of the verse of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." Some of the "unknown tunes" are known; for instance, I identified the first of them as an adaptation of a figure from Brahms's Third Symphony, first movement, measures 47-48, in my article on "Quotation and Paraphrase in Ives's Second Symphony," *19th-Century Music* 11 (Summer 1987): 19.

Such errors and omissions are, of course, the occupational hazards of quotation hunters. Henderson very generously invites his readers to help him discover and identify quotations he has missed. We should take him up on his offer, so that he can assemble a complete errata list and then prepare a revised edition.

But will we ever have a complete list of Ives's borrowings? Probably not. He loved to indulge in ambiguities, using tunes that sound as if they could be borrowed but might not be, and sometimes obscuring beyond recognition the tunes he did borrow. As we continue to explore the ways Ives used existing material and the meanings this gives to his music, Henderson's *Tunebook* will be our constant companion.

—*J. Peter Burkholder*
(Indiana University)

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A VISIT WITH VINCE GIORDANO

From the street it looks like every other house in this modest Brooklyn neighborhood. Step inside, though, and enter another world. The living room is decorated in Early Clutter, with old instruments and recording equipment scattered around the baby-grand piano. Upstairs the walls are covered with framed photographs of musicians— Paul Whiteman, Fletcher Henderson, Bunny Berigan, Don Redman—and the rooms are filled with records, books on jazz, and more instruments. A garage out back contains some ten thousand pieces of generic silent-movie music, with titles like "Agitato #5" and "Evil Intentions," written by composers like William Axt and Leo Kempinski. But what really sets the house apart is the basement, which is packed with filing cabinets holding an immense collection of American music from about 1900 to 1945, including roughly thirteen thousand pieces of sheet music and twenty-five thousand jazz and dance-band orchestrations. In one corner a computer glows, while on the opposite wall a blue-and-gold banner announces "AL. GRANESE AND HIS FAMOUS JOLLY DANCE ORCHESTRA." The genial spirit presiding over this dusty domain is Vince Giordano: bandleader, tuba and bass player, insatiable collector, and enthusiastic exponent of American popular music from the 1920s and '30s.

Giordano is well known to devotees of traditional jazz. In demand for his instrumental skills and knowledge of period styles, he can be heard on many recordings (especially on Bob Erdos's Stomp Off label) and on the sound tracks of such films as *The Cotton Club* and Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. Since 1976 he's led his own classic-jazz repertory orchestra—the Nighthawks, named after those of Coon-Sanders fame—which performs mainly in and around New York City, entertaining at society bashes and holding forth Tuesday nights at the Red Blazer Too (349 West 46th Street, between 8th and 9th avenues). In short, Giordano is a key figure in jazz's Early Music movement—a bit like Roger Norrington and Jaap Schröder rolled into one.

Onstage Giordano cuts a dapper figure, looking as if he's just stepped out of a 1930s Hollywood musical. At home, in plaid workshirt and jeans, he seems more the earnest, slightly distracted curator. For the past fifteen years Giordano, now thirty-nine, has pursued many avenues in his quest for old music. He has haunted junk shops and garage sales, explored collections in libraries and universities, scoured attics, closets, and publishers' storerooms. He has run ads in magazines, tracked down retired bandleaders, and contacted the relatives of deceased musicians. And he has made unusual research trips, such as one last December to the Ambassador Theater in St. Louis, where there were nine hundred boxes of music for sale.

"That was a misadventure if ever there was one," Giordano recalled recently. "The theater had no heat and it was sub-zero outside. There were seven or eight leaks coming off the roof when the snow would melt, and the water was just cascading down. I managed to find one radiator that was barely working. And being from New York and seeing the homeless situation there I found all this cardboard and made a giant igloo around the radiator with strapping tape.

"I had along a laptop with an index to my collection, since I don't remember all the titles I have. It was difficult to type with gloves on. I was putting in seventeen, eighteen hours a day looking at this stuff. I wanted to do the job in four days but wound up staying nine; it was just too immense. After a while I looked like a homeless person, wearing six layers of clothing and getting filthy from all the music.

"The Ambassador opened in 1923 or '24, but it had gotten an older collection of music from the Missouri Theater. There were things I'd never seen before: cakewalks, ragtime orchestrations, coon songs, early Irving Berlin and Gershwin, stuff by [Harry] Alford and [Carleton] Colby. There was a lot of special material issued by Paramount Publix [the theater chain], since it used to be a Paramount theater."

After the theater-owner had watched Giordano work for a few days, he raised his asking price astronomically. "I really got taken," Giordano admits, "but I just couldn't walk away. Nobody wants this old crazy music. It has to go into the right hands." Eventually Giordano left with nearly sixty boxes of music, which sit unpacked as yet in the corner of the living room.

Giordano's search for early jazz and dance band arrangements has led him to purchase entire band libraries, including both "stocks" (standard published arrangements) and "specials" (those written for specific bands, usually by a staff arranger or player within the ranks). The latter tend to be more interesting: "Some specials are much superior to the stocks, and some are so bizarre that you kind of wonder what they were doing back then." Giordano has often encountered owners who exaggerate the value of their material, such as one Indiana bandleader who claimed to have several arrangements from the 1920s in Hoagy Carmichael's hand. (He didn't, but Giordano bought the library anyway, and it arrived on his doorstep one day shipped in the band's original traveling cases.) Other times, unexpected treasures turn up, as when Giordano discovered a Harold Arlen arrangement of Gershwin's "The Man I Love" from the mid-1920s; Arlen had also copied the parts, adding jokes and sarcastic comments aimed at individual players.

Giordano's experience in handling vast amounts of music from the 1920s and '30s has given him a unique perspective on the period. Most early jazz enthusiasts can discuss the work of Don Redman and Ferde Grofé, but Giordano can also speak knowledgeably about less well-known arrangers such as Archie Bleyer and Frank Skinner. "Bleyer was an important force in American music," Giordano reminded me, "although most people just think of him as the conductor on the old Arthur Godfrey show. He was a very jazz-influenced person who helped introduce sixth-chords and 'shout' choruses into commerical arrangements." Studying thousands of orchestrations has taught Giordano the history of dance-band arranging, a neglected yet critical aspect of American popular music. He can tell you when saxophones began to edge out string instruments, for example, or when banjo parts first made their appearance in stocks. He can also demonstrate the difference between the hand-held Billy Gladstone cymbals Chick Webb uses on the record "Dog Bottom" ("For years I tried to figure out what made that sound")

BEHIND THE BEAT *(continued)*

Vince Giordano

and the tiny "pop" cymbals Zutty Singleton features on some of the Louis Armstrong Hot 5 sides, as at the end of "West End Blues."

* * *

While his performing and collecting interests reinforce one another, Giordano acknowledges that leading a twelve-piece, 1920s-style band in the '90s can prove frustrating. For one thing, he finds few musicians today familiar with the pre-bebop jazz repertory or able to play it. He expects his Nighthawks to get the sounds of the original music in their ears: "The first important thing is listening to the records. It's like learning a new language, really. You've got to go out there and listen to it, converse in it, and hear the real people talk it. As good as my players are, they often don't have the listening experience. To them it's old music, and many can't tell the difference between Paul Whiteman and Don Redman."

Another challenge is getting the right rhythmic feeling. "In listening to this music," says Giordano, "one thing that impresses me so much is the metronomic abilities that these guys had. I'm sure there were a lot of players back then who didn't have good time and didn't play as rhythmically as the ones that we're listening to. Well, they didn't record. The cream goes to the top. The whole consciousness of keeping this music light, free, and —I hate to use the word—peppy, that's the way these guys performed this music, and that's the only way to interpret it correctly."

Mention tone and Giordano lets out the sigh of one who doesn't want to be reminded: "Vibrato's a big problem. Musicians don't play with vibratos any more, for the most part. It's all a kind of straight, cool sound. That's okay if you're doing post-1945 music, where most of my players started their education and where they make money. It's not okay for this music."

While scholars of early European music get information about performance practice from documents buried in distant archives, Giordano simply walks over to his turntable: "When you listen to these records, the feeling and tempo of the times is so evident in what these guys are playing." His voice picks up tempo and volume. "Back then, people were so excited! Radio was new and, wow, electrical recordings, and sound with film—oh, my God!" Now it drops back down. "People today don't get that excited about things. We're living in different times. We've walked on the moon. That lust for life, which to me is evident in those old recordings, is gone. To try to recapture that—it's almost better to start playing Mozart, because we don't know what those guys sounded like. Unfortunately, I have the records. I *know* how it's supposed to sound."

Unfortunately, too, the audience for the music Vince Giordano loves is quite limited. Even in New York, a city of some eight million, it's hard to get one hundred people to come out one night a week to hear the Nighthawks at the Red Blazer Too. And while society dates were plentiful during the Age of Reagan, the economic crunch of the '90s has meant fewer people giving lavish parties and holding $1000-a-plate benefits.

To keep his band afloat, Giordano has been forced to take an unprecedented step: "The most recent addition to our organization is a man who plays guitar—*electric* guitar—and sings contemporary music. It's totally ridiculous, because the fellows in the band have no music for this. They improvise little riffs and stuff like that. It's been a hard decision for me to do, but I have to make a living."

Giordano believes there's one American city that might be kinder to a musician with his interests: "New Orleans is still known as the cradle of jazz, and people all over the world think of it as a place of early jazz and popular music. Friends of mine who've gone down there tell me you don't have to be in the closet, so to speak, liking this music. You can play Dixieland or traditional jazz down there in the best sense of the word. It seems in New York and other places that playing this music is a sort of novelty, like riding a carousel."

For the time being, though, Giordano has no immediate plans to move. He hopes business will improve and wants to tackle various repertory projects: recreating the Ted Weems band of the 1920s, for example, or reviving the work of forgotten composer-arrangers like Alex Hill, Will Hudson, and Willard Robison. He also has conducted an exhaustive investigation of Leroy Shield (or Shields)—who wrote music for the "Our Gang," "Little Rascals," and Laurel and Hardy series—and looks forward to recording the results.

As the afternoon draws to a close, Giordano leads me to a room with an old Edison cylinder machine. While most musicians these days are recording on compact disc, Giordano's orchestra cut its first cylinder not long ago. He winds up the player and out of the horn comes the scratchy sound of the Nighthawks' theme song, Leroy Shields's "The Moon and You." For the next few minutes, as the vocalist croons, backed by swooning saxophones, sweet violins, and peppy syncopations, the spirit of a distant age fills the darkened room.

[To keep up with current activities of Vince Giordano and his Nighthawks, write to be put on his mailing list: Vince Giordano, 1316 Elm Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11230.]

REGARDING RECORDINGS II

Harry Partch's place in American music has been difficult to evaluate because of the inaccessibility of his work. Excellent new recordings of two of his biggest pieces are a milestone in breaking the log jam. One is ***The Bewitched*** (CRI CD-7001), the other ***Revelation in the Courthouse Park*** (Tomato 2696552).

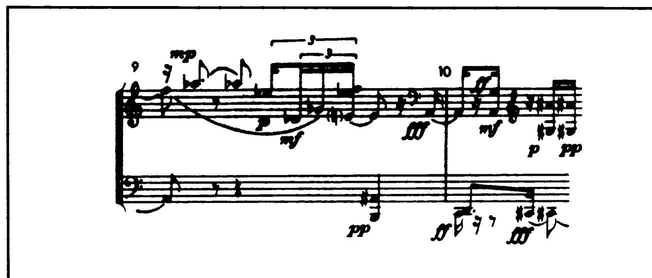
The CRI compact disc of *The Bewitched* is a reissue of a recording of the original production at the University of Illinois in 1957, with John Garvey conducting. The remastering on CD is so good as to sound like a new recording, and the performance—which was coached by Partch himself—is definitive. Tomato's *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* is a first recording, out of the 1987 production by the American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia (under Eric Salzman as artistic director), with Danlee Mitchell as music director/conductor in a performance that is thoroughly professional and excitingly true to Partch's original intentions.

The central idea behind *The Bewitched* is the self-entrapment of contemporary humanity in delusions of its own making, which create a need for primal truth (represented by a witch) to free mortals from their unconscious dilemmas. Freda Schell's energetic performance of the witch's part lends great strength to the recorded version. Partch's broad sense of humor is communicated in the music, and the performance has ample virtuosity.

Revelation in the Courthouse Park (1960), derived from Greek drama, is based in part on Euripides' *The Bacchae*. Partch focuses and to some extent simplifies the complex ideas of the ancient playwright in a work that says, loudly and clearly, that censorship of the arts is both foolish and dangerous, especially to the censors, and that Dionysian joy in life is an essential ingredient of any true religion. Partch's equation of Dionysus with a pop-music idol is a telling sociological comment; the pseudo-Freudian psychology of the work, though, may be laid at least as much to Euripides as to Partch. Contemporary American and classical Greek action-sequences, running parallel, underline the relevance of Euripides to our own time and allow Partch to express both sides—ancient and modern—of his musical nature.

Both of the new CDs must confront a vexing problem in issuing Partch's works—most of them, anyway—on recordings: the convergence in them of several arts to form a whole. The CRI disc of *The Bewitched*—in which dance is a principal component—includes Partch's notes with his vision of the theatrical whole (but we must envision for ourselves the sculptural presence of Partch's instruments). Tomato's package of ***Revelation in the Courthouse Park*** includes Partch's libretto (though the performers' fine diction all but precludes the need for it); it cannot, though, make up for the lack of stage action (particularly the wrenching contrast between the American and the Greek sequences), choreography, decor (including the marvelous instruments), costumes (especially masks), and the excitement provided by a live audience. Nevertheless, the musical elements of the Philadelphia production are strong and telling—so much so that for the first time since the 1961 premiere (which I attended) I was convinced by Partch's libretto, and of the total sense that can be made out of the work's difficult mixture.

Of all the "American experimentalists" Partch is perhaps the least accurately perceived. The time for this to change is long overdue. These two CDs can go a long way toward helping achieve this goal. —*Ben Johnston*



John Adams conducts American Elegies is a recent release by Elektra Nonesuch (79249-2) that is fascinating not so much for its overall mood (which as one would expect is somber, at times lugubrious) as for the composers represented on it. It can safely be assumed that never before have the names Charles Ives, Ingram Marshall, Morton Feldman, John Adams, and David Diamond been uttered in one breath, let alone music by them gathered on a single disc.

Taken separately, however, some of the works are not all that fascinating—specifically, those by Diamond and Marshall. The elegiac quality of Diamond's *Elegy in Memory of Maurice Ravel* (1938) emanates not from his music as such but from the language of the work, which is that of Americana of the late 1930s and '40s and now seems dated and imbued with a certain sentimentality. Marshall's *Fog Tropes* (1982) is innocuous, demanding only a small investment of attention on the listener's part. (In contrast, Feldman's *Madame Press Died Last Week at Ninety* [1970] is a beautiful work whose tantalizing shifts of timbre demand active participation.)

Adams's *Eros Piano* (1989) is a fifteen-minute piece for piano and orchestra written in homage to Feldman and Toru Takemitsu. Every aspect of this work speaks with subtlety: the orchestration (Adams has never been more attuned to color), the solo piano writing (which calls to mind Debussy and, surprisingly, Messiaen), and the manner in which the work progresses (the melding of adjacent sections is sublime). Paul Crossley is the piano soloist; as usual, his playing is first-rate.

The disc is filled out with works by Ives—*The Unanswered Question* and orchestrations by Adams of *Five Songs*. *The Unanswered Question* receives a careful but harried performance by Adams and the Orchestra of St. Luke's; compare Adams's 4:49 reading to Michael Tilson Thomas's 7:13 (on CBS MK-42381). And the orchestrations are a mixed bag. Those of *Cradle Song*, *Thoreau*, and *Down East* achieve a quiet splendor, but in *At the River*, Ives's dissonances are not exploited to their fullest, and *Serenity* is rendered in such a colorless manner that the voice-and-piano version is more enticing sonically. (It also, like *The Unanswered Question*, is rushed.) Dawn Upshaw, who won a Grammy last year for her recording of Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, is the singer. She has a lovely voice, and her performance is admirable, but again, as with Adams's orchestrations, only the surfaces of the songs are revealed; their inner levels remain hidden. —*Jason Stanyek*

REGARDING RECORDINGS II *(continued)*

Reports of the death of **Columbia/Princeton-style uptown music** have been greatly exaggerated. At the very moment when some critics are happily welcoming the demise of "academic serialism" and, in its place, the rise of a "new romanticism," Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen, and others of their ilk are receiving more, and better, performances than ever before. No longer can they complain, as Schoenberg once did, that their music is not modern, just badly played. If serial music really is passé, the news (happily for us) has apparently not reached the composers and performers represented on two recent CDs.

One is by the **Juilliard String Quartet** playing Roger Sessions's Quartet No. 2, Stefan Wolpe's String Quartet, and Milton Babbitt's Quartet No. 4 (CRI CD-587), the other by the **Group for Contemporary Music** in performances of chamber works by Charles Wuorinen (New World NW-385-2)—his Sonata for Violin and Piano, Third String Quartet, and *Fast Fantasy.* Idiomatic, powerful, expressive performances are often made possible in part by a close relationship between composer and performers. On their CD, the Juilliard Quartet plays one work they commissioned (by Wolpe) and another (by Babbitt) that is dedicated to them. On the Group's CD, Wuorinen's Violin Sonata is played by its dedicatees (Benjamin Hudson and Garrick Ohlsson), and his *Fast Fantasy* is performed by its dedicatee (cellist Fred Sherry) with the composer himself at the piano. To some, this bond between composers and performers might suggest that contemporary composition lives in an unhealthily hermetic world. But whether or not this is true, the bond leads to performances of extraordinary conviction and immediacy, which realize the composers' best intentions.

Of the six works performed here, Babbitt's quartet is probably the most difficult, both for performers and listeners. As in all of his music, things happen with great rapidity and seem to come at you from all directions. Every note is packed with crucial information (pitch, dynamic, register, articulation, etc.), so one can take in only a small amount on a first hearing, or indeed on any single one. One picks up intervallic threads only to lose them again almost immediately. Finally, one is carried along by the shimmering, glittering, and constantly shifting musical surface. As in their performances of the Wolpe and Sessions quartets, the Juilliard performs Babbitt's with grace and style, making light of its extreme technical demands. Their playing is equally at home amid the quicksilver flashes of the Babbitt and the long lines of the Sessions and, indeed, is most impressive throughout this CD.

Wuorinen's music has received a great deal of attention in recent years, and deservedly so: it is immensely appealing, with an expressive range from the delicately witty to the searingly profound. The performances by the Group for Contemporary Music are lively and energetic. The musicians convey a palpable sense of identification with the emotional life of the music (extending, in Fred Sherry's case, to audible impromptu sighs and groans).

—*Joseph N. Straus*
(Queens College, C.U.N.Y.)

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

Two recent and impressive books deal with song lyrics in country music: Jimmie N. Rogers's *The Country Music Message: Revisited* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press; $20 [cloth] or $11 [paper]) and Dorothy Horstman's *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy* (Nashville: The Country Music Foundation; $24.95). To many, the lyrics seem to be the most distinctive feature of the genre, and jokes abound about the subjects needed for inclusion in a country song. Yet there has been little systematic study of the nature and scope of popular country-song lyrics, and little attempt to investigate the world of Nashville songwriters. Occasional panel discussions at local meetings and infrequent interviews and articles in the venerable monthly *Country Song Round-Up* have shown that these songwriters, jokes notwithstanding, know exactly what they are doing and can discuss it articulately. The songs they write are indeed formulaic, more so perhaps than songs in other genres, but the formulas are more complex and subtle than detractors of country music might suggest.

Jimmie Rogers, presently a communications professor at the University of Arkansas, attracted much attention in 1983 with a book entitled *The Country Music Message.* His book, and many public lectures and presentations by him, surveyed the "themes or ideas" found in the fifty most popular country songs in each year from 1960 to 1980. This was a period when the music went through several revolutions, including the urban-cowboy movement, the "outlaw" movement, and the "new sensibility" heralded by young shaggy writers like Kris Kristofferson. Yet one of Rogers's more startling finds was that in spite of all the attention paid by journalists and historians to these movements, they didn't really have that much impact on the songs that were the biggest hits of the era; these continued to be cast in predictable molds and expressed in established themes.

Now Rogers has expanded his earlier work in *The Country Music Message: Revisited,* which extends the survey period to 1987 and considers an additional 350 songs, bringing the total surveyed to around 1,400. Rogers's basis for choosing the songs is the top fifty records on *Billboard*'s year-end hit charts; he thus works from an objectively defined body of data and no one can accuse him of card-stacking or choosing texts to fit his theories. His results are intriguing. The "message" ("What the Folks Have to Say") consists of four major themes: "Hurtin' Love" (such as George Jones's "She Thinks I Still Care"), "Happy Love" (such as Buck Owens's "Together Again"), "Cheatin' Love" (such as Conway Twitty/Loretta Lynn's "After the Fire is Gone"), and "Livin'," songs about "Lifestyles" (such as Dolly Parton's "In the Good Old Days [When Times Were Bad]"). Of the last category, Rogers notes: "These songs describe the way a person has lived (the 'good old days' songs), the way he or she is living (the 'I'm just me' songs), or the way he or she wishes or plans to live (the 'one day at a time' songs)."

Buttressing his study with quotes from over ninety song lyrics, as well as personal interviews with major figures such as Willie Nelson, Rogers creates a succinct, well-argued account of country lyrics as they are today. His book is at once a model and a challenge for further research.

A fitting companion to Rogers's study is the new edition of Horstman's *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy,* the definitive collection of country lyrics. Originally published in 1975, it is now revised and expanded to include 31 new song texts, for a total of some 330. Like Rogers, Horstman uses her revision to take into account some of the changes that have occurred in country music in the last decade.

The subtitle of the volume explains its method: "Classic country songs and their inside stories by the writers who wrote them." For each of the 330-odd songs included, we get a brief paragraph about the song's composition plus the lyrics of the song. Unlike Rogers, Horstman surveys the entire range of country music, starting with Will S. Hays's "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" of 1871, performed by Fiddlin' John Carson on one side of his famous "first" country record of 1923. She divides the music into fifteen categories ("Songs of Death and Sorrow," "Prison Songs," and so on) and introduces each section with a perceptive essay.

There are three problems with Horstman's new edition. The first is that, in spite of a discography of in-print versions of the songs, it is still impossible to tell exactly who had the hit version of a particular song, or when. A second is that there is no strict rationale for the inclusion (or exclusion) of songs: those included are not necessarily even the biggest hits in any quantitative sense (such as gold-record certification or chart position or even ASCAP-BMI summaries). And the third is that the attributions of some of the songs are based on dated research. Recent scholarship has cast serious doubt, for instance, on Sam McGee's authorship of "When the Wagon Was New" (it was probably the Masters Family) or Jimmie Davis's of "You Are My Sunshine." (And Bill Monroe's classic "Uncle Pen" is given in a garbled version in which the tune "Boston Boy" is rendered "Folsom boy.")

Nevertheless, Horstman succeeds in presenting a cogent cross-section of country music lyrics, and her new edition will doubtless follow the lead of the original one to become a basic reference.

BOOK NOOK III

FINALLY!—AND SUPERLATIVELY!!

Britton to Lowens to Crawford—sounds like a great double-play combination. It was: it has resulted in one of the most monumental works of scholarship in American music, ***American Sacred Music Imprints 1698-1810: A Bibliography*** (American Antiquarian Society; $160). But the baseball analogy is not really a good one. All the third man in a double play has to do is stretch and catch; in the case of this bibliography, the third man—**Richard Crawford**—worked alone for some twenty years, before completing the task with this massive book of more than 800 pages.

Allen Britton began the project, way back in 1947, and was joined by Irving Lowens in 1950; their joint efforts continued for nineteen years. Then Crawford took over, at their invitation, in 1969. His research involved examining every one of the 500-odd American sacred-music imprints published in the 112-year period between 1698 (the 9th edition of The Bay Psalm Book) and 1810—in fact, almost every available *copy* of every one—in order to "record the contents, musical and otherwise, of every edition, and every variant issue, of every tunebook in the bibliography."

To say that *American Sacred Music Imprints 1698–1810—"ASMI"* hereinafter—is magisterial is to understate things. A bibliography is a bibliography, is it not? Well, no, not in this case. As Crawford puts it in his preface, in explaining ***his*** approach to the work as opposed to that of the earlier collaborators in the project: "They were concerned . . . with tunebooks as bibliographical items. I was more inclined to see them as carriers of musical repertory." He also viewed them as significant cultural artifacts. His concept of the finished work was driven by these views, and this led to an immense broadening of the content of *ASMI* and an equally immense lengthening of the time needed for its completion. Thus, although on the title-page Britton and Lowens are given pride of place as instigators of the bibliography, and co-authors, the finished work is really Crawford's.

Crawford modestly says of his introduction—half a hundred pages of elegant prose—that "while not a formal history, [it] seeks to provide a historical framework for considering the tunebook as a part of American musical culture." Its nine sections focus on "the agents . . . whose combined efforts brought these tunebooks into being": Compilers and Compiling; Composers and Composing; Poets and Sacred Poetry; Teachers and Teaching; Performers and Performance; Publishers and Publishing; Engravers and Engraving; Printers and Printing; and Sellers and Selling. These are flanked by a Prologue and a Conclusion ("Tunebooks in Early American Culture").

The bibliography proper, the heart of *ASMI*, is arranged in sections ordered alphabetically by the names of compilers—a sensible arrangement since most early American sacred music was published in collections gathered and seen through the press by individual compilers. At the head of each compiler's section we find a biographical note on him, with documentation of the sources from which it derives. (This is the first of many user-friendly inclusions: never have I seen such a ***generous*** bibliographical work.) Then, each collection of that compiler (arranged alphabetically by title), and each edition of each collection, are described. What will perhaps come to be called "*ASMI* numbers" are assigned to each separate edition, with variant issues of single editions being identified by letter-suffixes added to the edition-number. The numbers run from 1 to 545D (for the fourth variant issue of the third edition [*ASMI* 545] of ***The Young Man's Instructive Companion***, *ASMI* 543 and *ASMI* 544 being the first and second editions of that anonymous collection, a "bibliographical conundrum" Crawford untangles for us in a preliminary note more than two pages long).

The bibliographical descriptions in the entries themselves are staggeringly complete. It would be tedious even to outline here all the "fields" that are filled with greater or lesser detail, depending on the particular book being entered. You can guess most of them, perhaps. Some, though, you might not:

> *Item:* Besides transcribing the complete title-page of a tunebook, *ASMI* gives us—often in full—the compiler's customary prefatory statement, which usually explains "the purpose of the book or [provides] significant musical or other information."

> *Item:* Crawford not only identifies first printings of tunes, and first American printings, but names the tunes in those categories—having first checked the compiler's claims against the repertory.

> *Item:* Entries give the number of "Core Repertory" pieces in each tunebook—its inclusion of one or more of the hundred-odd "favorites" of the repertory, the most frequently reprinted works of early American psalmody, as identified and edited by Crawford in his earlier seminal collection ***The Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody.***

Most generous of all is Crawford's inclusion of no fewer than five appendices and two indices. Appendix 1 gives the items of the bibliography in chronological order. Appendix 2 is a list of sacred sheet music, 1790–1810 (duplicating entries in the Sonneck-Upton and Wolfe bibliographies of, ostensibly, secular early American music but thus making the present work truly comprehensive). Appendix 3 is "an alphabetical arrangement of composers and sources to whom music is attributed" in the bibliography, the sources being cued with cunning economy. Appendix 4 summarizes the Core Repertory, with an alphabetical list of the tune-titles in it and other helpful information. Appendix 5 is "A Geographical Directory of Engravers, Printers, Publishers, and Book-Sellers," organized by state and by city-within-state. (There's a lot of new geographical clarification in the book.)

As for indices: Besides a general index of fifty-six double-column pages, Crawford includes an "Index of Prefatory Statements"—no less than an index of the ***ideas***, as well as the subjects actually mentioned, in the tunebook compilers' prefaces. The first four headings in this extraordinary inclusion will suggest its nature: Acoustics; American composition ["*See* Musical style"]; Cities, counties, countries, locales, states, towns ["*See* General Index"]; Compiling of tunebooks [with eight subheadings].

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BOOK NOOK IV

A CLASS ACT

The inaugural publication in the Smithsonian Library of American Music (a series of scholarly music-editions) is ***The Music of Stephen C. Foster*** (2 vols.; Smithsonian Institution Press; $95). Its editors, Steven Saunders and Deane L. Root, have set a high standard for the series. So has the press, in a pair of books that are beautifully produced in every regard (down to bindings sewn cleverly to permit keeping the volumes open on a piano rack).

Saunders, principal music editor of the publication, worked under Root as "advising and reviewing editor." They prepared the edition basically from materials in the richest lode of Fosteriana that exists: the Foster Hall Collection of the Stephen C. Foster Memorial (which Root heads up) at the University of Pittsburgh. In the background, too, lay the unique Foster first-edition facsimiles, the *Foster Hall Reproductions*, one thousand boxed sets of which were distributed free, to as many libraries, in the mid-1930s. The new edition is vaguely reminiscent of that collection in being fundamentally made up of reproductions of 19th-century imprints of sheet music by Foster. (In fact, more often than not, for the new collection *Foster Hall Reproductions* copies were re-photographed, they having the advantage over original imprints of not having suffered "an additional half-century of deterioration from climate and acidity.")

The editors can claim that this is a scholarly critical edition inasmuch as they have "taken into account all existing sources . . . and have edited and emended these sources to present a musical text reflecting the composer's intent." The editing and emending have been done by retouching the reproductions—but "such alterations [of either] the music or the text have been identified, either on the page or in the critical reports." These "reports" (a slightly unusual term for "critical commentary" or "critical notes") describe the bibliographical status of each work, its sources, and the decisions behind its presentation in the edition. Each report documents up to eight "fields" for a work: title; publisher; copyright or publication date; author of text or musical source of works arranged by Foster (as in his collection *The Social Orchestra*); sources; variant readings; editorial emendations; and note "on the history or publication of [the] work and information helpful to collectors of first editions." (Minor criticisms: a legend for the abbreviations used in the reports would have been welcome, and the term "system" in them really means "staff.")

The photoreproductions of the music imprints are exceptionally clean and crisp. The retouchings are hardly noticeable, and editorial additions—such as bracketed accidentals or dynamic indications, or slurs marked with slashes—are designed carefully to approximate the original print's typographical style. An enlightening and readable introduction precedes the musical edition proper (which presents the works in chronological order); following that, in each volume, are the critical reports and a helpful index of proper names, titles of works and their sources, institutions, and first lines of songs and choruses.

All in all, an important *opera omnia* of a major figure in American music—the second one ever, following that of William Billings—and very much a class act. —*H.W.H.*

REGARDING RECORDINGS III

BRONCO-BUSTING GERSHWIN

A new recording of George and Ira Gershwin's ***Girl Crazy***, first in a series of Gershwin recordings sponsored by the Lenore Gershwin-Library of Congress Recording and Publishing Project (Elektra Nonesuch 9 79250-2), pleases and teases.

Girl Crazy, high-octane Gershwin, opened on 14 October 1930, as the country was skidding toward economic hard times, and ran for 272 performances. Budding film actress Ginger Rogers and boffo talent Ethel Merman found stardom in it, Merman bringing down the house with "Sam and Delilah," "I Got Rhythm," and "Boy! What Love Has Done to Me!" The score is chock-full of other splendid tunes and snappy lyrics, among them "But Not for Me" and "Embraceable You." Even the more show-bound tunes are terrific ("Cactus Time in Arizona," "Land of the Gay Caballero").

For this recording, producer Tommy Krasker and his assistants Larry Moore and Keith Wiggs wisely ignored the 1954 New World Music piano-vocal score in favor of more authoritative sources: Robert Russell Bennett's original orchestrations (from which the piano-vocal score was loosely fashioned), Gershwin holographs from Ira's private collection and the cache rediscovered in 1982 in a Secaucus warehouse, a precious typescript of the book, copyists' piano-vocal arrangements of songs, promptbooks. Moreover, original-cast members were interviewed and vintage recordings were consulted (in particular, recordings of *Girl Crazy* songs by original-cast artists, piano recordings by George Gershwin, and the soundtrack of the 1932 film version). Krasker, Moore, and Wiggs restored the score; Moore and Russell Warner edited the orchestrations; and Paul Trueblood spruced up the chorus parts.

The research paid off. The recording is a pip. There are pleasant surprises galore. A few examples: counter-melodies and orchestral filigree (only hinted at in the score) in "Embraceable You" and other songs; sensible disposition of dances (splendidly orchestrated) and chorus sections in extended numbers; the male quartet arrangement of "Bidin' My Time" (not the score's corny barbershop version) and the song's harmonica and ocarina interludes; in-synch tune and lyrics in "Bronco Busters" (impossible to sing in the score); "hot" breaks that fill in the score's dead spots (especially in "I Got Rhythm" and the entr'acte); and Frank Gorshin's reprise of "But Not for Me," which recreates Willie Howard's original performance with imitations of the singing styles of Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, and Maurice Chevalier.

The recording's cast, headed by Judy Blazer, Lorna Luft, and David Carroll, is uniformly excellent. John Mauceri's conducting is energetic. The star of the recording, though, is the orchestra: a small but vigorous string section (no lush mush of '50s revivals here!), pianist Dick Hyman leading a peppy rhythm section, solid brass, percolating reeds that rumble and wail, and "hot" sidemen who rip up the place, as the likes of Goodman, Krupa, Miller, Teagarden, and Jimmy Dorsey—in the Red Nichols band—did in the original production.

Who could ask for anything more? I could: I suggest a new, critical edition of the score (in piano-vocal and full orchestra

(continued on page 15)

TOP OF THE POPS *(continued)*

Porter's transmogrification of Bob Fletcher's original for "Don't Fence Me In" dramatically demonstrates his technical flair; almost every element in the rather staid, trite source is used in Porter's revision, but wonderfully loosened up with internal rhymes and a certain surreal humor—"Gaze at the moon till I lose my senses" has no corresponding sentiment in the original. True, we can hear the music, jingling and trotting along, and this greatly helps. The more of the music you can hear, the more you are apt to enjoy reading oodles of Cole Porter's lyrics; but even where the silence of your lonely room remains obdurate, something magical is apt to creep

Like the beat beat beat of the tom-tom
When the jungle shadows fall,
Like the tick tick tock of the stately clock
As it stands against the wall,
Like the drip drip drip of the raindrops
When the sum'r show'r is through.

* * *

Cole Porter's 100th is not the only important round-number birthday we celebrate in this issue of the Newsletter. The musical snippets spotted here and there are also intended to signal significant anniversaries of their composers. Respectively, these are Miriam Gideon's 85th, Alan Hovhaness's 80th, Milton Babbitt's 75th, and Earle Brown's 65th—all celebrated this year.

SUPERLATIVELY *(continued)*

The American Antiquarian Society has matched Crawford's generosity of inclusion with great generosity of production: the volume is brilliantly designed and handsomely printed, with liberal margins and a remarkable airiness considering the density of the contents. Certain space-saving techniques (which help to keep the book's price from a stratospheric level) are used cleverly and without seeming to cramp the text. Running heads on both verso and recto pages are cued to the individual entries, thus providing yet another friendly mode of access to the contents of this magnificent book.

—*H.W.H.*

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BOOKS AND RECORDINGS IN BRIEF

The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Great Lyricists of Philip Furia (Oxford University Press; $22.95) is at once a fascinating and frustrating book. Fascinating, because Furia, a professor of English and American Studies at the University of Minnesota, offers us for the first time a knowledgeable, scholarly, and thoroughgoing study of the poetry (*sic*) of American pop-song lyrics during the "Golden Era" of the 1920s and '30s—one that reveals, in very close analyses, their subtlety and linguistic sophistication. Frustrating, because, probably due to the high cost of permissions to quote copyrighted commercial music, he includes not a single musical example; thus, to really savor much of his discussion of text-music relationships (and there is a lot of it), you must already know the songs by heart. This means, unfortunately, that youth—the very readership who could profit most from the book—will not be well served by it.

Victor Yellin has kept us waiting for quite a while for a book on a composer he much admires, George Whitefield Chadwick: now we have it in ***Chadwick: Yankee Composer*** (Smithsonian Press; $35). It is a solid life-and-works study, aided significantly (as Yellin self-effacingly admits) by unpublished material provided him by Steven Ledbetter. And it is informed throughout with Yellin's piercing intelligence and mordant wit, and by his interest in matters that were also, he avers, of abiding concern to Chadwick: "musical theater, American diction, and popular melody." Yellin offers an original opinion of Chadwick and his American contemporaries as essentially ***amateur*** composers, having to earn their daily bread by other duties: "[A]ny consideration of Chadwick's music must take into account the effects of amateurism as well as . . . academicism. The way one earns one's living cannot be divorced from one's manner of expression. . . . Chadwick's creative output must be judged realistically as the work of an artist oppressed by destructive demands on his time and psyche."

The **Nonpareil Wind Band,** led by virtuosos Mark Gould (trumpet) and Sam Pilafian (tuba) and conducted by Timothy Foley, have an absolute winner in ***A Grand Sousa Concert*** (EMI CDC-7-54130-2). The band is superb in about twenty Sousa marches, plus some dances and fanfares. The conducting is terrific, the tempos precisely on the mark, the music editions—by Sousa scholar Frank Byrne—unimpeachable. Besides all-time masterworks such as ***The Washington Post, Manhattan Beach,*** and ***The Stars and Stripes Forever,*** the late (1929) ***Foshay Tower Washington Memorial*** gets its first recording, and an exact replica of the Liberty Bell—uncracked, however—lends its voice at odd moments to ***The Liberty Bell,*** turning it into a real hoot. . . .

GERSHWIN *(continued)*

formats) and publication of the show's book, by Guy Bolton and John McGowan—not in a bowdlerized update but with shtick and story intact. Without the printing of score and book, *Girl Crazy* remains an artifact not to be performed but only listened to. But I'm not grumbling too loudly: these new Gershwin recordings help restore part of the fragile tradition of uniquely American musical theater.

—*Wayne Schneider*
(Brown University)

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