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MODERN
AMERICAN
MUSIC.

BY

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G.L.M.

Williamsport, Pa.
January, 1953

PREFACE

Modern serious music in America is a relatively new aspect in our culture. Its character and growth presents an interesting study. The writer has undertaken to present in terms easily understood, the more significant features of modern music as well as the activity in our country which seeks to advance it.

As one might expect in such a paper, a brief study of the foremost creators of modern music is included.

Because of the swift moving nature of the contemporary musical scene, it is quite possible that the writer has overlooked a rising star on the musical horizon who will come to a place of great prominence in the future. Such an omission is in no sense dictatorial.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT MUSIC IS

What is Music? "To the prosaic, it is an acoustic phenomenon; to to theorists, a problem dealing with melody, harmony, rhythm; and to those who really love it, the spreading of the soul's wings, the awakening and fulfillment of all dreams and yearnings."[1] Music is in its very essence and down to its very roots an expressive art. It is wordless poetry. Painting is occasionally called frozen dancing; architecture, frozen music. Schumann once said that the aesthetic of all the arts is the same; only the medium differs.

"Music, however, is a living language; or rather, good music is. It is composed by human beings, and human beings do have to adapt themselves to shifting conditions, no matter how much they resist them at first."[2] If music failed to change it would soon be as dead as that of the Greek and Latin ages. But because of the fact that music is a living language, we have the trend in music that is called modern.

Because music is also an art of communication, it is of social importance. The degree of this importance is in direct proportion to the position music occupies in contemporary life.

"Finally, music as a social force communicates the deepest aspirations of man in ways that defy verbalization or pictorialization."[3]

There may be music without culture, but there can never be true culture without music.

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1 Kurt Pahlen, Music of the World, A History, p.7.

2 John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, p.2.

3 Ibid., p.106.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC IN AMERICA

> I pity Americans because they have no light, no song in their lives. They are but children in everything pertaining to art.
>
> - Chaliapin
> 1908

In the 18th and 19th centuries when European music was flowering forth, America was largely concerned with the basic work of pioneering and economic expansion; and it is little wonder that music, as well as all the arts, led rather a pitiful and meager existence during that time.

> It is often said that morals are merely a matter of latitude and longitude. The arts, too, are profoundly influenced by their own geographical backgrounds, but in their case the time element also plays a very important role. A country like Italy, that was undoubtedly an artists' paradise in the fifteenth century, is today as completely devoid of all artistic sense as a manufacturing town in northern England. Whereas we ourselves, who during the last hundred years have eaten our way across the continent with as little regard for beauty as a swarm of locusts, may well be the artistic center of the world within another century or so.[1]

As Kurt Pahlen has pointed out:

> Mighty and momentous are the changes taking place in the world of today. Nobody knows whither they may lead. At any rate, youthful America is destined to play a leading part in world development. Here in the land of still unlimited possibilities, a new civilization, a new cultural epoch, may crystallize and take shape. May it lead us back to the true sources of life. May music exercise its exalted mission in connection with the world's rebirth which we seem about to witness. Far, far back in human history, there were times when music stood in the center of life, when it was an intermediary between natural and supernatural phenomena, when it was the sister of religion, and the corner stone of all education, And, ah, they were happy times....[2]

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1 Hendrick Willem Van Loon, The Arts, p.12.

2 Kurt Pahlen, Music of the World, A History, preface.

"This age of ours has two conspicuous features: it presents simultaneously the widest and most incompatible contrasts and it is also hampered by too great an inheritance from the past."[3]

As Daniel G. Mason remarked when observing American music; "American music is a branch of the Great European tree, but it has already produced sufficient fruits to deserve study on its own merits."[4]

> However, the history of the rise and progress of musical art in the United States must be a story of assimilation rather than creation. The American people have no historical background, no foundation of homogeneous racial elements and geographical environment of thought, no original technical explorations and no inventions in forms or styles.[5]

Another reason why America has remained so sterile in musical creation is that those who have been born or reared in one of her traditions seem to have remained so largely ignorant of the others.

As Mr. Howard has said:

> The time for an apologetic attitude towards our music has passed; we may as well be rid of our inferiority complex altogether, for we have arrived at a state in our development where a judicious recognition of our limitations does not require, or even tolerate, any admission that our composers are inferior to their foreign colleagues.[6]

Regardless of the nationality of any composer, as soon as he gets over the feeling of inferiority, he will proceed to cultivate his own music in his own way and achieve unrestricted fertility.[7]

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3 Alfred Einstein, A Short History of Music, p. 244.

4 Guido Pavnain, Modern Composers, p. 239.

5 Frank Mather, Jr., and others, The Pagent of America, XII p. 319.

6 John Tasker Howard, Our Contemporary Composers, p. 3.

7 David Ewen, Music Comes To America, p. 135.

The composer in the United States definitely has several advantages over composers of other countries. "In this country there have been few barriers of custom or culture to divide the people. And it is this community of thought and unity of experience that give American popular music its peculiar character and vitality."[8]

Again there are no problems of flaming nationalisms, no necessity to wave on high the shaky torch of patriotic propaganda. "Because of its youth and enthusiasms and the fact that is possesses a culture-eager, rather than a culture-weary, spirit, an evolution is possible in this country which, without waste of time, using atonality and all the modern ideas, might produce a really new art."[9]

> After more than four hundred years of American music, from the conquest to our days, the Indian ingredient has disappeared from it almost entirely. As a matter of fact, genuine American music ceased to exist with the invasion of the Europeans. Only in our time, did America grow strong and independent, become conscious of its origins.[10]

> Had the early colonists possessed an instrumental technique and musical culture, it is quite possible that American music might not have had to wait on the last decade of the nineteenth century, and that in the time in which creative energy first came to the community, a part of what went into literature might have gone into composition.[11]

Music in early America was subservient to the church. The Pilgrims and Puritans of the 17th century did not approve of music except for singing hymn tunes. In fact, music was forbidden as a trade in New England; new songs were considered sacrilegious. Hence, with "trade" music out-

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8 Howard D. McKinney, Music and Man, p. 321

9 Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music In History, p. 871.

10 Pahlen, p. 352.

11 Paul Rosenfeld, An Hour With American Music, p. 33-4.

lawed, it is almost certain that the settlers used their voices not only in church but also in the fields, at home, and in the taverns.

At first, Colonial America accepted everything; music, styles, and musicians from Europe (the latter found the public very interested in their talents). But after 1720, there was a steady increase in the number of musicians in America. During the first adventure in the art of composition, early Americans came under the influence of the Teutonic forms and styles, and, by the end of the 19th century, two dominate traditions could be found in American music: one was from Germany and the other from France.

Although the major stimuli for American music have come from Europe:

> there has been no real transfusion of minds - merely a number of economic and material contacts. European musicians exchanged their music for dollars, but they did not create a new school of music on the other side of the Atlantic by doing so. Tendencies, which in Europe were rapidly judged, condemned, and forgotten, in America became serious artistic movements. After the war European composers, like poor relations, trooped across the Atlantic; they received their money and offered in exchange artistic theories - generally damaged goods, which the Americans would have done better to refuse.[12]

By 1901, the American public was ready to buy its music culture; but it was too timid, too uncertain of itself, to foster a culture of its own. For much the same reason, the American composer was without honor. If American works were introduced, they were met either with outright hostility or else with general boredom.

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12 Pavnain, p. 252.

Before long, America realized that it was about ready to give birth to a culture of its own and that it was necessary to cut its ties with European tradition. The European artists now coming to the new world found that they had to adapt themselves to the American culture instead of the reverse.

> Since 1914 musicians of every country on earth have flowed in upon us in an unending stream. The music of the whole world has battered our ears. For us, the only ones with wherewithal to pay the piper, the habitable globe has danced and sung.... In short, American music from 1914 to 1928 is the Music of Indigestion.[13]

It must not be forgotten, however, that with the coming of the first World War, America gained in the musical world by leaps and bounds. Not only was Europe busy with the war and cleaning up the destruction; but it must also be remembered that many composers and conductors came to this country to escape from the same war.

Concentration became more and more difficult to achieve during the first quarter of the 20th century, for traditions began to multiply with alarming rapidity. But now 20th century music in the United States has become a fact; it has its own laws, an organic growth of its own, and finally, it vividly reflects the evolvement of a new culture.[14]

We must not forget the composers who gave American music a "push" with their own compositions. Among these was a New Englander, Edward MacDowell. Many say he is the first American to deserve the name of composer, but his music amounts more to an assimilation of Eurpoean motives, figures, and ideas than to an original expression.[15]

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13 David G. Mason, The Dilemma of American Music, pp. 11-2.

14 Pahlen, p. 377.

15 Rosenfeld, p. 487.

A Pennsylvanian, Charles W. Cadman, although famous for his Indian music, has written several symphonies. Some of his works are: _At Dawning_, _Thunderbird Suite_, _A Witch of Salem_, _Oriental Rhapsody_, _American Suite_, and _Symphony No. 1_.

In 1925, no American composer was better known abroad than John Philip Sousa (1854-1932). "In fact, Sousa's music was considered as 'typically American' twenty years ago as is jazz today."[16] Although Sousa has written many other works, he is remembered mainly for his marches.

These three men are not the only American composers who have played a prominent role in the development of music in early America; not only were there many other composers, but there were also the conductors, the music critics, and the financial supporters that played no small part in American music.

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16 Marion Bauer and Ethel Peyser, _How Music Grew_, p. 487.

INTERESTING FACTS

First music printed in America was from the Bay Psalm Book in Massachusetts in 1640.

First public concert in Boston in 1731.

James Hewitt (1770-1827) - one of the first to be active in American music. He served in various musical capacities, such as: organist, conductor of orchestras and bands; later a publisher.

The first U. S. composer to write on a large-scale for performance by a symphony orchestra was John Knowles Paine (1839-1906). Some of his first works were played by one of the great pioneer American orchestras under the direction of Theodore Thomas in 1876.* John K. Paine was also the first professor of music at Harvard University. When President Eliot became head of Harvard, music was made part of the college curriculum with Professor Paine at the head of the department.

1821 - first performance of a Beethoven Symphony on U. S. soil.

1845 - Leonore, first American opera by William H. Fry.

For a history of early American concerts, the reader is referred to O. B. Sonneck's Early Concert Life in America, printed by the Musurgia Publishers, 1949.

* There were orchestras before Thomas' time, but the only group that was in degree permanent was the New York Philharmonic, a band whose members played together more for the love of it than for any artistic results they achieved, or for any notable support they had from the public.

CHAPTER III

THE WHY OF MODERN MUSIC

All great music has at one time been modern. But the greatness only becomes increasingly evident the farther it advances from its own time. Hence, a just perception of the period in which we live is notably difficult for our generation to achieve.

> But we are gradually coming to realize that, broadly speaking, the first quarter of the twentieth century is one of those periods in history when the spirit of mankind realizes that what has been done in the past is not sufficient and that a new wisdom and a new beauty must be sought elsewhere.[1]

Most of us admit the world is changing, so, whether we like it or not, we know that our mode of life will also have to change to correspond to the world around us. Although there are a few non-conformists, the majority of us are broadminded and practical enough to accomplish this growth in the material aspects of our culture, it seems a bit unnecessary to disturb ourselves with changes in the non-material aspects of which music is one.[2]

> If music is a living art, which I believe it to be, then it must change with the times. The changes are so slow, they sometimes do not appear in our brief lifetimes. The great trouble is that quite properly every serious young composer, like a true artist, believes his work should be performed and he fails to realize that every great composer starting out had difficulty having his early works performed. Having elected to adopt the life of a composer, one must also accepts[sic.] its inevitable disappointments and heart-aches, i.e., failure to hear his music performed whenever he wants.[3]

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1 Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, <u>Music In History</u>, p. 814.

2 John Tasker Howard, <u>This Modern Music</u>, p. 2.

3 Personal letter written by Donald Steinfirst to the author, Dec. 12, 1952.

Civilized human beings are by nature too complacent to like violent changes, and older generations have always lamented the passing of "the good old days." But then on the other hand, it is human nature to fly off on a tangent now and then to question the need of doing things as they have always been done. Someone will always try to break tradition, regardless of how firmly it is established, if for no other reason than to see what will happen.

As stated previously, musical art is a expression of life and nature: it follows their evolution. Just as each country has its own particular aspects of life and nature, so has it a national coloring in its music.

"Music is almost always an expression of the age in which it is written. If it isn't, we may be sure that the composer himself belongs spiritually to another age, or that he patterns his works after the music of earlier composers, unconsciously or perhaps deliberately."[4]

We live in an age full of unrest, uncertainty and dissatisfaction; hence, in modern music there is agitation, speculation, and experiment. And, although there is no clear-cut, well-defined course to be followed, there is a passionate striving for a new basis

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4 Howard, p. 7.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY, NEW, AND MODERN MUSIC

One of the differences in discussing contemporary, new, and modern music is in terminology. Contemporary music consists of whatever is written by contemporaries of the person using the term. New music is that particular type or style appearing for the first time, which, because of its essential qualities, experiences the great opposition of its conversion into merchandise. Modern music is subject to fashions as in clothing; it is that part of our contemporary music which emerges from the whole by a visible deviation from tradition in its material, its style, or in some other essential feature.

David J. Bach has gone farther and has defined contemporary and modern music thusly:

> Contemporary music is a portrait of the present as seen through the lens of the past and as painted in oils whose qualities have already been thoroughly tested; modern music is a prophecy - an art still suffering from growing-pains, destined to attain the full stature at some future day, when it will yet be recognized as springing from our own.[1]

Often the musical layman finds contemporary music lacking in melody, but the listener's ability to perceive melody is often confused with the actual existence of melody, since many ears are not able to recognize the presence of unconventional melodic patterns. "One reason why these melodies are not more readily discernible as such is that more frequently than not asymmetric phrase-lengths or breath-spans are the norm rather than the exception."[2] This is the horizontal aspect; in the vertical

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1 David J. Bach, " A Note on Arnold Schoenberg," Musical Quarterly, XXII (January, 1936), 10.

2 William Schuman, The Arts in Renewal, p. 73.

aspects of the melody, there are intervals of unusual size and very irregular rhythms.

Modern writers have often been criticized for turning to modernism because they have proved incapable of creating interesting work in the old style. Why shouldn't they? Water seeks its own level! If a composer feels that he can be more successful in writing moder music, why should he continue along the old paths and be a failure?

> There are far too many possibilities in the suggested revolutions of modernism to be worked out in a generation or, perhaps, even in a century. Composers who seek to wield all the new weapons at once are likely to become entangled, and so fail in communication, the operative end of their striving.[3]

> The commonest argument in support of ultramodern music of the type that rather grates on the average ear is that every great composer was considered a heretic in his day, and that no progress in art has ever been made without overcoming extreme opposition. This is true enough. But it is utterly illogical to say that because every great composer has had to overcome opposition therefore every composer who meets with opposition is necessarily great.[4]

> It is perhaps not too much to say that the emergence of the contemporary school of serious American Composers is one of the most important musical facts of our century. Aside from its importance as a matter of musical pride, it is important because a new and vital music has sprung from a geographical area that previously had been comparatively barren in this field.[5]

When asked to explain the difference between contemporary and earlier music, Virgil Thomson replied:

> The difference between contemporary music and earlier music would take a book to explain. Half the book would be needed to explain that many of these differences are entirely illusory. Contemporary music

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3 Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music In History, p. 831.

4 Sigmund Spaeth, Music For Everybody, p. 63.

5 Schuman, p. 88.

will of course, be found to have produced popular classics. Every epoch does. Just which works are these will be is anybody's guess. Many modern works that are already popular will lose their popularity, though some will not. Also certain works little played now will later come into their own. Betting on futures is not my game, since I am not a publisher. Writing music is like giving parties. You make it as good as you can at the time you are doing it. Making it memorable is not the main objective. You merely try to make it interesting and worthy.[6]

---

6 Personal letter written by Virgil Thomson to the author Dec. 2, 1952.

CHAPTER V

LISTENING TO MODERN MUSIC

All the books that have been written on the understanding of music agree on one thing at least; you cannot develop a better appreciation of an art merely by reading a book about it. Therefore, if you want to understand music better, you can do nothing more important than listen to it; for music, whatever sound and structure it assumes, remains meaningless noise unless it touches a receiving mind. But the mere fact that it is heard is not enough: the receiving mind must be active if a transition from a mere acoustical perception into a genuine musical experience is to be accomplished.

> As we hear more music and learn more about art in general, we will come to realize that it is always the simple and sincere things which last. It is the cheap and tawdry and exaggerated ones that are bound to change. This is inevitable: the very fact that they are lush and over-exaggerated makes us impatient to get on to something else, once the novelty has worn off.[1]

We, in the present-day world, really have no excuse not to understand music, for there is the ever-increasing availability of good music on radio and phonograph, not to mention movies and studio presentations.

We, as ordinary music lovers, have a great advantage over the critic, especially when listening to modern music. We may say that we dislike something and no one will care; the critic, on the other hand, voices his opinions which are filed for future reference. A few years later the same composition may be presented for the second time, but upon this hearing, it may be warmly received by the listeners. We have forgotten

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1 Paul Hindemith, A Composer's World, p. 14.

what we said years ago but the critic's words are still there in print. The critic must now "gladly" / or he may be "forced" to reverse his earlier criticism of this composition.

The listener who approaches modern music must put aside the idea that it will give him the same emotional reactions that he gets from Beethoven or Mendelssohn; he must remember our age is not the age of our grandfathers, not even of our fathers. Our music reflects what has been going on about us; if it doesn't picture these things, it is dishonest and false.

> Virgil Thomson has gone so far as to claim that modern music is easier for the layman to understand than old music. In an article on "Understanding Modern Music" he writes (N.Y. Herald Tribune, January 4, 1942): "There is no reason why anybody in the music world, professional or layman, would find himself in the position of not understanding a piece of twentieth-century music, if he is willing to give himself a little trouble.... The art-music of the past, most of all that eighteenth and nineteenth century repertory know as 'classical' music, is, on the other hand, about as incomprehensible as anything could be. Its idiom is comprehensible, because it is familiar....[2]
>
> ...For unless we listen to our new music, it will not exist. When music is not performed, it is merely a set of symbols on paper.[3]
>
> There are just two things that the music-lover who wants to enjoy modern music need do. First, he must realize why it is what it is; why the composers of every age have written differently from those who preceded them. Secondly, he must acquaint himself, if only superficially, with a few of the methods used by modern composers to make their music different from eighteenth-and nineteenth-century music.[4]

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2 John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, p. 16.

3 Ibid., p.19.

4.Ibid.

Several conceptions of the value of any particular music have been suggested to be:

1. music we personally like as individuals;
2. music liked by a large number of music lovers;
3. music liked by experts, musicologists, musicians, and writers who have given much time and thought to the study of music; and
4. music like by large numbers over a long period.[5]

Regardless of the reader's attitude toward music, each and every one of us has the "freedom of response."

"There is no question of right or wrong here - it is simply a question of individual response. For a person to say that certain music is good, and other music bad, is an attempt at mental and spiritual dictatorship."[6]

---

5 Leopold Stokowski, Music For All of Us, p. 43.

6 Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERFORMANCE OF MODERN MUSIC

A poor interpretation can change the whole complexion of the music and completely distort the composer's intentions. Therefore, a great deal of the effect which music has upon the listener is due to the manner of its interpretation.

Since the orchestra is perhaps the principal means by which modern music is presented, it is with this medium that we are primarily interested.

> That American music is neglected by our orchestras is a complaint that is less valid today than it was twenty years ago or so, when it filled many columns in musical periodicals, but it still turns up occasionally, and with some justification. No doubt there were conductors as well as critics in those days who felt that the American music available to them was simply not good enough for performance.[1]

> A vast amount of orchestral music is being written in this country today. A not inconsiderable portion of it is worthy of performance. In this portion are some works that deserve and require more or less frequent repetition. Until those who guide the destinies of our orchestras - conductors, managers, boards of directors - remove the obstacles standing in the way of performances of such works and repetitions of those performances, our much vaunted and truly remarkable nation-wide musical activity will not reflect a healthy, creative musical life.[2]

Modern music may be said to be unpopular, for people tend to like what they know, and, as the concert and opera organizations have their regular repertory, new music is allowed only that room left after the obligations to the usual repertory have been fulfilled .

Unfortunately, some conductors include American works on their programs from a sense of duty. When this is the case, it is not surprising that

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1 Nathan Broder, "American Music and American Orchestras," Musical Quarterly, XXVIII (October, 1942), 488.

2 Ibid., p. 493.

they expect to be praised for their patriotism by including American music in their repertoire. It is to the credit of many contemporary program builders, for they are happy and eager to present modern music on the strength of its musical worth alone.*

> Evidently, most of those who attend concerts want to listen to music which is familiar to them. I believe that by insisting in repeating works which seem to bring a new message, works of "importance" the public will follow us. What makes a conservative public is a conductor who plays over and over conservative programs.[3]

Another reason why modern American music is not being heard so often may be found in the fact that a conductor born and bred in Europe will naturally have a greater sympathy for European compositions; there are few native-born American conductors as the head of major orchestras although this has been changing in the last few years.

> In my opinion, the reason newer music is not given a wider hearing is the present tendency to force unattractive music which has been written in contemporary times upon the public, virtually ignoring contemporary music that is attractive and worthwhile. This is accomplished by a steady and relentless campaign of sneers waged by the proponents of ugly modern music, labelling all music not in their mold as "popular", and so on. The net result has been to disgust the general public with the ugly product, and leave no room for the worthwhile product. In other words, the public is expected to pay for something it does not want, and it is not allowed to make its own decisions.[4]

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* See letter received from Eugene Ormandy, page 88.

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3 Personal letter written by Vladimir Golschmann to the author November 26, 1952.

4 Personal letter written by William Grant Still to the author December 1, 1952.

Because most of the orchestras operate in the deficit, they often refuse to take the chance on modern music and instead repeat selections that are "old-standards."

> The 'contemporary music' of every period has been ahead of the public, except for a small group of listeners and musicians whose curiosity and enthusiasm have led them to make a real contact with it, and to insist on its value. In former times when music was supported largely by patrons - i.e. when it did not have to depend on box-office receipts - this was so noticeable. Even in Eurpoe where opera houses, symphony orchestras, etc., are sustained through government subsidies, it is not as noticeable as it is here. Under such conditions musicians play new music as a matter of course, and since new music is performed more frequently, the larger public catches up with it more quickly. This is a very rough generalization; but if you are really interested you might give some attention to the economics of the 'music business.'
>
> Since 1920 two tendencies have become very pronounced; first, private patronage has become virtually a thing of the past; secondly, the musical public has grown, chiefly through the radio, to enormous proportions: from a few thousands mostly in the larger centers to many millions scattered throughout the Western World (America and Europe have to be considered together). This great public has been slower in accepting contemporary music, because of its size, if for no other reason. At the same time, performers tend to become discouraged also for the reason that it is more difficult and more expensive to play, than more familiar music; performers have to have rehearsals, and to pay royalties, to cite only two items.[5]
>
> No orchestra can live that plays only the music of dead composers. As a matter of fact, no orchestra ever essays so radical a policy. The public objects to modern music, naturally, because modern music, however great intrinsic musical interest it may present, simply can never complete an edification with the hallowed past. But the same public that objects to hearing modern music objects far more vigorously to being deprived the privilege.[6]

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5 Personal letter written by Roger Sessions to the author, Dec. 6, 1952.

6 Virgil Thomson, Music Right and Left, p. 3.

The Louisville Orchestra has found one way of staying out of the "red." Instead of having the "big-named" soloists, and the like, they grant composers commissions to write special works for first performance and, in many instances, invite the composer himself to conduct the performance.[7]

"High-school orchestras are a particular tempting market, for there are thousands of them, and since they are made up of twentieth-century youngsters, they are interested in twentieth-century music."[8]

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7 William Schuman, The Arts in Renewal, p. 85.

8 John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, p. 165.

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8 John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, p. 165.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMPOSER

Ever since American composers have had the courage to renounce Europe's wet-nurse function and really be American, they have had to put up with all kinds of captrous claptrap* about the degree of that Americanism.[1]

The American composer is faced with the difficulty of an over-abundance of material and not a lack of it. "Confronted by a flood of influences, both old and new, he will, consciously or not, select the type of raw material that he can work into faithful expression of himself, both as an individual and as an American."[2]

On June 2, 1941, Aaron Copland wrote:

> In the last five or ten years it seems to me that we American composers have become more self-reliant. Speaking for myself, I know that I no longer feel the need of seeking out conscious Americanisms. Because we live here and work here, we can be certain that when our music is matûre it will also be American in quality. American individuals will produce an American music, without any help from conscious Americanisms. There doesn't seem to me to be any short-cut to that end.[3]

An inter-relationship exists between the composer and his economic existence. In everyday life, the majority of American composers who live

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* captrous - hard to please; finding fault. claptrap - showy but cheap.

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1 Sigmund Speath, At Home With Music, p. 40.

2 Dorothy Slepian, "Polyphonic Forms and Devices in Modern American Music," Musical Quarterly, XXXIII (July, 1947), 325.

3 Oscar Thompson (Ed.), Great Modern Composers, p. 46.

entirely by their pens are bachelors. It is virtually impossible for the serious composer to live from royalties and performance fees for his music.

Because of rental libraries, the performance fees are much lower than if copies were bought for each performance. For instance, the rental of an orchestral score and parts commands a fee of perhaps one or two hundred dollars. The composer has probably spent six months to a year in creating it; then the cost of copying the music would be in the neighborhood of one thousand dollars to be paid by either the composer or his publisher. Hence, the copyist often earns more from a symphonic work than its creator. As stated before, there would be a limit on the sale of scores when they may be secured from the rental library.[4] For instance, in 1938, when Stravinsky was asked to put a happy ending on Petrouchka, he replied that he would for $10,000.

> The composer's demands are far from being exorbitant. Take "Petrouchka" again. The suite arranged from this ballet is one of the most popular in modern orchestral repetory. Performance rights, plus the rental of the score and about 100 parts, came to only $75. That is the fee to first rank orchestras; others can get the suite for $50, since royalties are scaled to capacity to pay. Yet in the course of a season this much admired work will be presented only once or twice by 2 or 3 leading organizations; other orchestras are deterred by the price. But when the suite is played, the conductor will probably get between $500 and $2,000 for his 'interpretations," the concert manager about $300, and the owner of the hall about $500. M. Stravinsky divides his $75 among the publisher, the agent and himself.[5] [Very few get this much; it is more often only $30 to $35 instead of $75.]

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4 William Schuman, The Arts in Renewal, p. 78.

5 Minna Lederman, "Composers in Revolt," Nation, CXLVI (February 12, 1938), 181.

> The works of the serious composer that sell in quantity are usually those special compositions which he has designed for use in the schools. Here the market is extensive, but even so, a choral piece that enjoys the very large scale of say twenty thousand copies a year will not yield a staggering amount in royalties. If it sells for twenty cents, a fair average price for a short choral work, it would yield its composer 2¢ a copy, provided he did not have to share with the writer of the text. Two cents times twenty thousand equals four hundred dollars. And this scale of twenty thousand, it should be pointed out, is most unusual.[6]

Our top-flight composers rarely earn more than the school teacher and usually not as much. Hence, even the United States is no utopia in an economic sense, for if the present-day composer is not dying of heart-break and hunger, he has nevertheless to earn his living in other ways than through his God-given gift. By being forced to crowd his days with trifling duties to maintain a living, he not only kills his time and energy, but also stifles his creative impulse.[7]

The majority of composers supplement their writings by becoming engaged in commercial music work such as writing for the movies, or by lecturing, editing, or teaching.

Despite the passage of private patronage practices,* composers are still able to continue their work if they receive a fellowship. A few enjoy income from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers which collects performance fees for the use of concert music, in addition to its extensive licensing of radio broadcasts. "Another source of income is the practice recently adopted by certain publishing houses of offering their most successful composers an annual retainer,

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* See page 19, letter received from Roger Sessions.

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6 Schuman, p. 78.

7 Serge Koussevitsky, "American Composers," Life, XVI (February 12, 1938), 62.

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6 Schuman, p. 78.

7 Serge Koussevitsky, "American Composers," Life, XVI (February 12, 1938), 62.

either as a bonus or as an advance against royalties."[8]

FILM MUSIC

In addition to the advancement of music made by radio, television, theater, and phonograph records, the film industry has done much for music. The music of the cinema is usually written to serve as a background but nevertheless it is often very important. Strictly musical pictures, which so often portray the life of a great composer, provide pleasant listening to many people. Again, music plays a dominant role in the filming of musical revues, cabaret scenes, and music-hall acts.

As Ernest Krenek says of writing for the films:

> One needs no mechanical means of transmission to rattle off music in kinetic-mechanistic fashion. All that is needed for that purpose is the feeling and imagination possessed by the average interpreter. It is rather the complete freedom of expression, so rare today, which would be secured by the definite identification of the score with the sound picture.[9]

"The problems of the movie composer are unique, for he must limit and restrict his music to the direction and speed of the stories for which he composes, and this direction and speed are constantly changing."[10]

Hence, it may be concluded that modern music not only forms an integral part of the sound film but on occasions it must be allowed to dominate the picture, to perform merely an atmospheric function, and, must frequently be intermixed with natural sound and speech.[11]

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8 Schuman, p. 79.

9 Ernst Krenek, Music Here and Now, p. 241.

10 Howard D. McKinney, Music and Man, p.66.

11 Paul Rotha, Documentary Film, p. 213.

> Because screen music must always follow the rhythm of action of the story, it is doubtful whether much music written for the movies will command serious attention and interest when performed apart from the picture. It simply lacks the continuity and logical development of music written for the concert hall. Movie music that is written to be given concert performance requires a complete rearrangement of its conception and form.[12]

It may be interesting to note that the musical score for a film has often been arranged into a Suite by the composer. Following are a number of suites by Virgil Thomson and Aaron Copland, and the movies from which they were taken.

Virgil Thomson:

The Plough That Broke The Plains, 1936. (Taken from the music for the film by the same name, produced by Pare Lorentz.)

The River from the film by the same name in 1937.

Suites No. 1, and No. 2, taken from Louisiana Story, produced by Robert Flahtery, 1948.

Aaron Copland:

Music For Movies (An orchestral Suite in 1942); Contains: (1)New England Country Side from The City; (2)Harley Wagons from Of Mice and Men; (3)Sunday Traffic from The City; (4)Story of Grovers Corners from Our Town; (5)Threshing Machines from Of Mice and Men.

Children's Suite from The Red Pony in 1948. Contains: (1)Morning on The Ranch; (2)The Gift; (3)Dream March and Circus Music; (4)Walk To the Bunkhouse; (5)Grandfather's Story; (6)Happy Ending.

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12 McKinney, p. 67.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN MUSIC

Modern music is often the distortion of the conventional in music; it has the tendency to deny the value of all traditions and to upset all the formulas.[1]

Harmony plays a big part in contemporary music. The harmonies used produce an effect in musical color but do not themselves have a function beyond this. This is in contrast to the conventional use of harmony wherein the harmonies used follow logical progressions.

Our ears are so accustomed to hearing melodies constructed from tones of the accompanying harmony, that we would naturally be startled to hear melodies and harmonies of separate tonal entities being sounded together. However, the playing in two keys at the same time, preferable only half a tone apart, is one of the common tricks of modernism. This often creates what may seem to be the most hideous dischords possible. Harmony may be distorted by a complete disregard of technical relationships or pleasing sounds; this is in relation to the Schoenberg theory that anything may be made to harmonize with anything.[2]

"Dissonance is not a harmonic value but, as it appeared in Wagnerian times, is used to prick the ear on occasions."[3]

> If it were not for dissonance, music could be an altogether insipid affair. Listening to it would prove monotonous and cloying, just like reading a novel in which all the characters are annoyingly good, and everything connected with the plot of Utopian. The pleasant things of life are pleasant in contrast to

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1 Sigmund Spaeth, At Home With Music, p. 256.

2 Ibid.

3 Adolofo Salazar, Music In Our Time, p. 330.

> the unpleasant, and it's because bad things exist that we enjoy the good ones.[4]

This balance of consonance and dissonance may have been true for the works of Wagner and Brahms in the 19th century, but the balance has changed considerably since then as dissonance has gained some harmonic value in the 20th century. It may be used because dissonance can stand alone better than consonance, or, dissonance may be used if for no other reason than the fact that consonance has been so frequently used in earlier music.

Not only do we need seasoning in our food, but we must also have some in our music to make it interesting and enjoyable. Hence, dissonance is quite important for it has been said that DISSONANCE IS THE "SALT AND PEPPER" OF MUSIC!

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4 John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, p. 39.

PART II

COMPOSERS OF ORIGINALITY USUALLY START WITH MANY MORE ANTAGONISTS THAN PROTAGONISTS. THE ANTAGONISTS MAY BE SINCERE MEN WHOSE JUDGMENTS ARE THE RESULT OF INVESTIGATION: OR THEY MAY BE THOSE WHO WOULD DENY NEW MUSIC ITS FREEDOM - ITS RIGHT TO BE HEARD.

William Schuman
The Arts in Renewal
Page 71

CHAPTER IX

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG AND ATONALITY

> When von Hindenburg appointed an Austrian corporal chancellor of the Reich at the end of January, 1933, Arnold Schoenberg knew that his days in Germany were numbered, for the Nazis had long since announced their program in respect to the arts and had made it clear that the spokesmen of modernism (especially those who were Jewish) were not wanted. Without waiting to be dismissed from his position as professor of composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin, he moved in May to Paris, and then to the United States, where he arrived on the last day of October, 1933.[1]

During the winter of 1933-34, he taught composition at Malkin Conservatory in Boston and on one occasion, conducted the Boston Symphony in a program including some of his own music.

Because of an asthmatic condition, he and his family moved to Los Angeles in 1934. It is often wondered why he did not write for the movie industry while on the west coast, but here he realized he would not be his own master and would have to sacrifice integrity of his style in order to obey the producers' dictates.

In the summer of 1935, he accepted the Alchin chair of composition at the University of Southern California and remained there for a year. In 1936, he was appointed Professor of Music at UCLA where he remained until his death in 1951.

Schoenberg lectured without notes and used as his models: Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. "In all the basic classes he taught students to use traditional, tonal means - only advanced composers in graduate seminars were allowed to write atonally and there only if they so desired."[2]

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1 Walter H. Rubsamen, "Schoenberg in America," Musical Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1951), 469.

2 Ibid., p. 472.

> Schoenberg's friendship with Gershwin until the latter's untimely death in July, 1937, was one of opposites, yet each composer had the greatest respect for the other's abilities and talent. Schoenberg esteemed Gershwin as one who naturally expressed the feelings of the masses in music while the younger man studied the elder's works and listened avidly to whatever Schoenberg recordings he could obtain; yet it does not appear that either influenced the other's style.[5]

Anthony Leonard Richard has made the statement that Schoenberg is either music's most hopelessly misguided fanatic or her supreme martyr. Hugo Leichtentritt has this to say of Schoenberg: "This Viennese musician is the boldest artist of our century. Not satisfied with adding certain new characteristics to the music of his time, he resolved to create a new basis for music, to overthrow the existing state of music, and to build up by himself a new art."[6] This new art was Atonality.

Atonality literally means "no key." It removes the one keynote center by creating twelve independent centers with new tonal and chordal relationships.* In practice, atonality appears to imply the removal of any feeling of the dominance of tonality and is best exemplified in the music of Schoenberg and his disciples.

"The exponents [Berg, Ruggles, Schoenberg, Weiss, and others] of atonality resent the term. They claim their music is not lacking in tonality; far from it, it has <u>twelve</u> tonal centers instead of only one. It should, they say, be called 'twelve-toned,' rather than 'atonal' music."[7]

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* However, a real definition of atonality, consistent with the active facts in modern composition, is impossible.

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5 Rubsamen, p. 479.

6 Hugo Leichtentritt, <u>Music, History, and Ideas</u>, p. 257.

7 John Tasker Howard, <u>This Modern Music</u>, p. 102.

L. O. Symkins, in an article on Arnold Schoenberg and his music, has gotten around the use of "Atonality" - he calls the twelve-tone system of writing music, Dodecaphonic music. He first compares the difference between the old-fashioned chromaticism and the twelve-tone music. "In classical music, chromatics are used as passing tones from one diatonic degree to another. In twelve-tone music, all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are equally important." He then takes the Greek word for twelve, dodeca, and forms the work "dodecaphonic" which means - "pertaining to twelve sounds."[8]

Schoenberg's first attack on the conventional system was on building chords; instead of using thirds to form them, he uses fourths. He implied that something new must be discovered in order that the music of tomorrow may be good. He was thoroughly convinced that a time would come when audiences would find dissonances natural, and that the harmonic phenomena that would result from these dissonances, quite intelligible.

It may be wondered why dissonance is wanted; in the first place, pleasant sounds are objectionable because they can not stand alone as well as dissonance can. Again, dissonance may be wanted if for no other reason than the fact that common triads and perfect cadences have been used so frequently in classical and romantic music.

Schoenberg based each piece, not on a repeated theme but on what he called a tonreike - an arrangement in some arbitrary order of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale.[9]

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8 L. O. Symkins, "Arnold Schoenberg's New World of Dodecaphonic Music,"Etude, (September, 1950), 12.

9 McKinney and Anderson, Music In History, p. 842.

His music may be distinguished by two practices: atonality and the twelve-tone technique. The latter was evolved by Schoenberg on an atonal and mathematical basis to replace the antiquated ideas of tonality, cadence, and modulation.

> The tone-row constitutes the sole foundation of the entire composition. In a dodecaphonic piece of music, this tone-row usually appears in four transformations: (1) original; (2) intervallic melodic inversion; (3) retrograde or reverse motion, also called "crab" even though real crabs walk sideways and not backwards; (4) melodic inversion of the crab. All four of these forms can be transposed to begin on any of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale, adding up to 48 transformations in all.[10]

For mysterious reasons, a strict twelve-tone composition doesn't allow for the repetition of a tone in the basic formula. Hence, the first rule of atonality is that all the tones of the twelve-toned scale must be sounded before any of them are heard for the second time. This eliminates the possibility of anyone tone becoming more important than the others. This may be seen by studying this example from Schoenberg's <u>Quintet for Wood-winds</u>, Op. 26. The numbers refer to the four transformations mentioned above.

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10 Symkins, p. 12.

It seems strange that although Schoenberg was in America, the public did not seem curious to hear what the music of the real leader of revolutionary modernism was like. Of all modern composers, he is the one who has exerted the greatest influence on young artists in all musical countries. The entire musical world acknowledges him as the real father of the modernistic movement, but still his music is seldom heard. "Like Moses, he has led musicians to the frontiers of the new land, but it has been reserved to the others to exploit the new fields profitably."[11] He is far greater because of his inquiring mind than because of the music it has produced. Others seem to have profited more from his ideas than he himself did, for they have led to the discovery of possibilities for striking harmonic and melodic effects and new constructive features.

> During his years in America Schoenberg caused quite a stir in the ranks of his disciples by laternating between the twelve-tone and the traditional (tonal) methods of composition. Apparently he sometimes reverted to the earlier style to show that he was just as capable of writing tonally as otherwise, perhaps in response to the oft-heard accusation that the atonalists resort to unadulterated dissonance in order to cover up their lack of technique in working with traditional means; or because the tonal pieces in question were intended for a less sophisticated, general public; or because he desired to put into practice what he had been teaching to many classes of students - harmonic analysis, counterpoint, fugue, and the elements of composition, all according to traditional methods.[12]

Of his pupils and disciples, Alban Berg seems to have carried on his master's traits, but he died too early to do much. Berg is noted primarily for his atonal opera, Wozzek.

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11 Leichtentritt, p. 261.

12 Rubsamen, p. 470.

> Ruggles /an American atonalist/ like Schoenberg has a tendency to construct his works on formulas. He will tell you that he never doubles a note in his harmony, nor repeats a note nor its octave in the melody nor in the inner parts, until the passage of seven to nine different notes has taken place.[13]

Atonal music written with extreme care avoids combinations which would be pleasing to the ear of the man who likes his music sweet.

> Therefore, 12-tone composition in its strict form is possible only if the composer is quite indifferent as to the sound effects of his tone calculations and accepts any combination of sounds as they happen to present themselves in consequence of the ingenious engineering job he has done. Everything would be in perfect order if one were largehearted and unprejudiced enough to call <u>any</u> sound effect produced by logical action good and correct.[14]

Ernest Bloch has made this statement concerning this type of music:

> I am convinced that the theory of atonalism in itself is an anomaly where genuine music is concerned - a theory, frankly, as impractical as it is fundamentally stupid. To imply that a twelve-tone scale is a collection of intervals with no natural gravitation toward tonal centers, and that this complete neutralization of melodic laws will have a creative result, is to emasculate musical thought and render it completely fruitless.[15]

This is the view of only one individual. As Mr. Symkins points out:

> Dodecaphonic music is a new language. In order to appreciate poetry in an unfamiliar tongue, one must learn its grammar and idiomatic usage. Dodecaphony will cease to be cacophony when the listener will take the trouble to learn its laws and customs.[16]

Even in darkest Hollywood, the uncanny potentialities of this new technique of composition is beginning to be exploited to create an atmosphere of mystery and suspense on the sound track.

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13 Paul Rosenfeld, <u>An Hour With American Music</u>, p. 103.

14 Leichtentritt, p. 260.

15 McKinney and Anderson, p. 829.

16 Symkins, p. 14.

CHAPTER X

AMERICAN COMPOSERS

America, the melting pot, finds in several of its composers a voice representative not so much of the traditional European musical cultures, as of a new element brought to the United States by those assimilated peoples who have articulated only with the second generation. "That second generation, having before it the American scene and no other, has not reverted to the old countries for its speech, musical or otherwise."[1]

> Fifty millions, producing one significant composer, can only mean, that after years, decades, and perhaps a century this one composer will finally be recognized as the musical apex of his epoch, but that tens of close runners, hundreds of camp followers and competitors, and thousands of miniature contributors had to do their share to make the great creator possible.[2]

CHARLES IVES

Charles Ives was born in Danbury, Connecticut, October 20, 1874. Educated in the Danbury Public Schools, at the Hopkins Preparatory School in New Haven and at the Yale University, he received his first musical instruction at the age of five when his father began teaching him piano, harmony, counterpoint, instrumentation, appreciation, and musical curiosity. (His father, George E. Ives, received recognition from both President Lincoln and General Grant, when he served as bandmaster in the latter's army. He had also studied acoustics and had experimented with quarter tones.)

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1 Oscar Thompson (Ed.), Great Modern Composers, p. 41.

2 Paul Hindemith, A Composer's World, p. 183.

At New Haven, Charles studied organ with Dudley Buck and while attending Yale University, he studied composition with Horatio W. Parker, John C. Griggs, and Harry Rome Shelley.

Upon graduation from Yale in 1898, he did not follow composing as a vocation but instead entered the insurance business where he remained until 1930. He then retired from the business activity because of cataracts of the eyes and a weak heart, and is presently composing, editing, and revising his earlier compositions. Although he did continue to compose while in the insurance business, he did it for the mere pleasure and as a hobby and not for money or fame. Consequently, he was able to write as he pleased.

He became so accustomed to the slightly off-pitch singing of the village choir and of the uncertainty of both melody and rhythm shown by the village band, that these factors formed the basis of an actual musical technique. These were eccentricities of modernism long before the term was well know.

> Probably Charles Ives has made more (and more successful) use of folk material than any other American composer. This astonishing man, whose musical techniques predated Schoenberg and Stravinsky by a full decade, made prodigious use of the music surrounding his Danbury, Connecticut, childhood, especially the hymns he heard sung not only on Sundays but during the whole week.[3]

As the other modern composers were still writing in the more or less conventional styles, he arrived at his own conclusions absolutely uninfluenced by the works of others.

> Long before his works reached the public, he was trying ideas which later turned out to be poly-

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3 Paul Moor, "The Search of a New Music," Theater Arts, XXXIII (June,1949), 40.

> and multi-rhythmic, polytonal and atonal experiments, but before the day of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, seemed eccentric and contra-musical.[4] (Because his vocal and instrumental music is based on polytonality, it is almost impossible to perform.)

One of his first compositions, written at the age of 20, was Song for Harvest Seasons, a musical setting of a stanza of an old hymn for voice, cornet, trombone, and reed organ, each in a different key.

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER

John Alden Carpenter was born February 28, 1876, in Park Hill, Illinois. His first contact with music came at the age of five, when his mother began to teach him piano. Then having attended the Park Ridge Public Schools and graduated from the University High School of Chicago in 1893, he entered Harvard University where he studied under John Knowles Paine. He received his B.A. degree in 1897, with the highest honors in music. The next few years were spent in the study of advanced composition both here and abroad.

After the death of his first wife, Rue Winterbothan, in 1931, he married Ellen Waller Border, January 31, 1933. Three years later he retired from the vice-presidency of the George B. Carpenter and Company, which his father started, and has been composing in his home since.

Carpenter may be remembered for his ballet music, Skyscrapers, and Adventures in a Perambulator. He believed that: "The underlying idea is to reflect in music the primeval rhythmic movement of American life; to

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4 Marion Bauer, Twentieth Century Music, p. 278.

snatch from the social reality its vital essence, the inner movement, and to re-create it in sound, while retaining the forms of ordinary life."[5]

John Alden Carpenter died April 26, 1951.

ERNST BLOCH

Although Ernst Bloch was born in Geneva, Switzerland, July 24, 1880, he is considered to be an American composer. He came to America in 1916 as conductor of the Maud Allen troupe, but the sudden bankruptcy of this company left him stranded with neither friends nor resources for money. Some musicians hearing of his plight, combined their efforts to bring him recognition and in December, 1916, the Flonzaley Quartet performed his B. Minor Quartet with great success. In the next few years, he gained fame as a conductor; often conducting his own works which also made him known in America as a composer.

Although some of his important works had been written before his arrival here, America was the first to give wide recognition to his genius, and it was from here that his fame spread across the Atlantic. (Almost all of his works have been published by American firms.)

Bloch did not come from a musical family but he did start playing the violin at eleven. Soon afterward he vowed to devote his life to composing music. However, this was later interrupted for a time, when he acted as traveling salesman for his father's clock business.

In 1917, after his arrival in America, he joined the staff at David Mannes School, in New York, as teacher of composition.

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5 Guido Pavnain, Modern Composers, p. 244.

In 1920, he was appointed to direct the newly founded Cleveland Institute of Music. Despite the conflicts of his high ideals with expediency and practicality, he held this post for five years.

In 1926, he went to California and became head of the San Francisco Conservatory.

He has paid tribute to both his homelands. For that birth, he composed Helvetia, a symphonic fresco in 1929. For his homeland of adoption, he composed an "epic rhapsody" - America in 1925. The score for this composition won the Musical America prize of $3000 during the season of 1927-28 and shortly afterwards was played simultaneously by several of the leading orchestras.

Since 1944, Bloch has lived at Agate Beach, Oregon, devoting his full time to creative work, except for giving short summer courses at the University of California in the music of Bach and Beethoven.

DEEMS TAYLOR

Deems Taylor was born in New York, December 22, 1885. After attending Ethical Culture School and the New York University, he became a war correspondent for the Sunday Tribune in 1916-1917.

His first public success was his symphonic poem, The Siren Song, which won first prize in the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1913.

He attracted attention as a composer in 1922, with his Through The Looking Glass Suite. In 1926, he wrote his first serious opera, The King's Henchman, with libretto by Edna St. Vincent Millay. It received fourteen performances in three seasons and set a record for an American opera at

the Metropolitan until it was overtaken and passed by his Peter Ibbetson, February 7, 1931. This work received sixteen performances in four seasons.[6]

Taylor has been the author of many books and has acted as commentator for many musical programs.

BERNARD ROGERS

Bernard Rogers, son of a middle-class tradesman, was born in Yorkville, New York City, February 4, 1893. When he was thirteen, his family moved to New Rochelle. He made his first creative efforts in painting at the age of twelve. He was also given piano lessons but showed no real interest in music. A few years later, upon hearing Frank Damrosch conduct a Young People's Symphony concert, he knew that music would be his vocation.

The elder Rogers, afraid that his son might become "the usual square peg in a round hole" without a specific vocation, asked if the architectural firm of Carrere and Hastings would accept his son as an office boy. Although Rogers stayed with the firm two years, he was never fully content.

While with the firm of Carrere and Hastings, he studied music with Arthur Farwell, then the supervisor of the symphony concerts in Central Park. Upon Farwell's departure from New York, he continued his studies with Hans van der Berg and later studied with the German-trained Percy Goetschins at the Institute of Musical Art in New York.

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6 Oscar Thompson (ED.), The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, p. 1863.

In 1918, he earned the Pulitzer Travelling Fellowhip for his first orchestral work - To The Fallen. He went to Paris but returned the following year having accomplished little.

While on the staff of Musical America, he met Ernst Bloch (Bloch had just arrived in the United States), who accepted him as his first American pupil.

Toward the end of 1923, he met Lillian Soshin, who became his first wife. They were divorced in the early '30's and he married Anna Thacher, one of his students. She died a premature death in childbirth and he then married Elizabeth Mary Clark, August 27, 1938.

In 1925, Rogers again went to Europe, accompanied this time by his wife, and by a friend of his from Musical America, Charles Rodda. From 1927 to 1929, he composed in England on a grant from the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. It was in England that he completed his first purely impressionistic work, the tone poem - Fuji in the Sunset Glow.

In 1929, he settled down at Juziers, France, to spend a summer working with Nadia Boulanger; there he completed his first choral work, The Raising of Lazarus, with text by his wife.

Earlier, while working for Musical America, Rogers had met Dr. Howard Hanson. (The latter had performed Rogers' Soliloquy for Flute and Strings at one of his early American Composers concerts.) When Rogers returned from Europe in 1929, Hanson invited him to join the faculty where he has remained in the capacity of teacher of composition since.

"In Roger's harmony, one is often reminded of the emotional quality of certain madrigalists, Gesualdo and Monteverdi in particular."[7]

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7 David Diamond, "Bernard Rogers," Musical Quarterly, XXXIII (April, 1947), 208.

In The Supper at Emmaus, Rogers manages to accomplish in the art of music what an artist like Rouault achieves in his painting.[8]

> The rhythmic life in a score by Bernard Rogers is nearly always dependent on a very extensive though simple use of percussion.... It is a style of rhythmic virtuosity wherein rhythmic patterns virtually flow on endlessly in long uninterrupted phrases without specific or regular strong beats to emphasize the termination of the phrase-lengths. Within these phrases, the most subtle variations take place.[9]

In 1945, he finished his Symphony No. 4, and in 1946, his Amphitryon Overture. It is said that Rogers is a master of orchestration.

WALTER PISTON

Walter Piston was born in Rockland, Maine, January 20, 1894. He had little music until after his family moved to Boston - here he began his study of violin and piano.

Until he was 26, he tried different vocation - a draftsman, artist, and the like. Then he wavered several years between being a painter or a musician. During this period of uncertainty, he continued his study of the violin. When the United States declared war, he volunteered for service in the Navy Band, learning to play the saxaphone in a matter of days.

In the fall of 1920, although 26 years of age, and married to the painter, Kathryn Nason, he became a freshman at Harvard. While there he did not follow the new trends of the time, but applied himself to his studies and graduated summa cum laude.

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8 Diamond, p. 219.

9 Ibid.

After graduating from Harvard, he went to Paris on a John Knowles Paine Fellowship but was refused admission to the Conservatorie because he was 30 years of age. He then turned to Nadia Boulanger and by this time was completely won over to new music and, following all the performances of recent works, studying scores, and the like, was soon able to master many of its techniques. His first works were then played in Paris.

He returned to Harvard in 1926, and in 1945 became assistant professor of music and chairman of the division of music.

His works may be divided into those written before 1938, the year of Carnival Song and The Incredible Flutist, and those written after 1939. "If in the first period he is occupied with integrating and assimilating modern techniques, in the second there is an urge towards directness and simplicity."[10]

In spite of advanced harmonic combinations, he is always direct and to the point. He respects convention in the formal design of his structure, and is exceedingly fond of imitative counterpoint, and also of the canon and fugue of the eighteenth century. In his books, he dwells on problems of rhythm, especially on rhythmic change of harmony; he also points out the relation of strong and weak progressions to strong and weak beats.

In 1945, Slonimsky said: "In the constellation of modern American composers, Walter Piston has now reached the stardom of the first magnitude. He has not exploded into stellar prominence like a surprising

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10 Elliott Carter, "Walter Piston," Musical Quarterly, XXXII (July, 1946), 357.

nova, but took his place inconspicuously, without passing through the inevitable stage musical exhibitionism or futuristic eccentricity."[11]

WILLIAM GRANT STILL*

William Grant Still is the most widely recognized Negro composer of today. Born May 11, 1895, in Woodville, Mississippi, he studied music in Little Rock, Arkansas, at Wilberforce University, Oberlin College, and at the New England Conservatory of Music. His principal composition study was with George W. Chadwick at Boston and Edgar Varese at New York City.

After serving in the U. S. Navy in 1918, he resumed his musical studies under Varese, the noted French modernist, as mentioned above. He won the Guggenheim Fellowhip in 1934 and held it for two years. He has also been the recipient of the Harmon Award, Rosenwald Fellowship, and has received commissions from CBS, Paul Whiteman, and the New York World's Fair of 1939.

He learned to orchestrate by playing many instruments in professional orchestras, and by orchestrating for W. C. Handy, Don Voorhees, Sophie Tucker, Paul Whiteman, Williard Robison, and Artie Shaw. For several years he arranged and conducted the Deep River Hour over CBS and WOR.

Still's first works, From the Land of Dreams, Journal of a Wanderer, and Darker America, were severly criticized. Hence in 1925, he decided definitely to devote himself to the development of the Negro-idiom and treatment of Negro subjects in his programmatic works.

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* Still became the first colored man to conduct a major symphony orchestra in the United States when in 1936 he directed the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in his own compositions in the Hollywood Bowl.

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11 Carter, p. 359.

His three larger works, Africa, Afro-American Symphony, and Symphony in G Minor, form a trilogy. The first two have been widely played.

Since 1935, he has been active in both radio and film. He has also written several stage works and a cantata. The latter, And They Lynched Him On A Tree, with text by Katherine Garrison Chapin, was first performed under the baton of Arthur Rodzinski at the stadium concerts of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, June, 1940.

HOWARD HANSON

Howard Hanson, born October 28, 1896, in Wahoo, Nebraska, received his first introduction to music through his mother. He attended the Swedish Luther College in Wahoo, Juilliard Institute of Musical Art in New York, and Northwestern University. In 1916, he was appointed Professor of Theory at the College of the Pacific, Stockton, California, and in 1919, became dean of the Conservatory of Fine Arts there.

From 1921 to 1924, he attended the American Academy in Rome. Upon his return to America, he received the appointment of director at the Eastman School of Music.

> Hanson's style is best classified by the much-used term, conservatively modern. He believes in the constate expansion of harmonic, melodic and rhythmic idioms, but his innovations have their roots firmly planted in the soil of the classics.[12]

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12 John Tasker Howard, Our American Music, p. 524.

Hanson's personal harmonic technique is derived from the constant use of the higher natural overtones found in 9th, 11th, and 13th chords.

> In the more American works, the chords are often full of notes as they can be and are enriched by orchestral or choral color and warmth. To many an ear the dissonance created by these many-limbed chords stands out prominently. Perhaps this comes from the fact that the composer does not resolve his harmonies in the canonical way,* even to other dissonant chords, but simply moves directly to another chord of similar complexity in free sequence.
>
> In the more Nordic passages [being of Swedish descent, his music often reflects Nordic tendencies], these harmonies are often presented in spread position with some of the chordal notes omitted, the result being a series of superimposed fourths or fifths, producing the stark bleakness, the rugged strength that is so unmistakable Hanson's.[13]
>
> Another characteristic of Hanson's harmony is a predilection for raising the sixth degree of the minor scale, thus making the subdominant triad major instead of minor.[14]

(Hanson's <u>Merry</u> <u>Mount</u>)

Lento

P

> The use of the raised sixth degree leads him to the minor triad on the third degree, instead of the augmented triad which one would expect, giving a decided modal character to the writing. In fact, the augmented

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* Pertaining to a canon, a contrapuntal form in which two or more parts in succession take up the same melody.

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13 Burnet C. Tuthill, "Howard Hanson," <u>Musical Quarterly</u>, XXXVI(April,1936), 146.

14 Ibid., p. 147.

> triad, so much in favor with those who affect the whole-tone scale, plays little part in Hanson's harmonic scheme; neither does the usual sequence of tonic and dominant, nor the authentic cadence. Different keys follow one another without modulation and yet without often giving the feeling of abruptness. The leading-tone is flattened but leads no less unfalteringly and immediately to the tonic close.[15]

Although Hanson has written a number of compositions, he is known more widely as one of the most active conductors and propagandists for American music now living. At the Eastman School of Music, he is very enthusiastic and highly interested in progressive musical activities.

On the campus of the University of Rochester, he has started a laboratory for composers. Here new works by the modern composers are rehearsed and played. After hearing them, the composer may make corrections and then receives "good-hearted" criticism from the conductor and other musicians and officers of the Eastman School.

On July 29, 1935, Dr. Hanson sent a letter to the Music Editor of the New York Times in which he set forth the definite policies they were following in their composer's laboratory. They were as follows:

> (1) that the choice of works shouldn't be confined to any one 'school,' but should be as catholic as possible;
> (2) that the works shouldn's be 'read' but carefully rehearsed and performed before an audience; and
> (3) that the concerts be given free to the public to eliminate any 'box-office' influence in the experiment.[16]

Hanson believes that every race must write its own music, and that truly American music must come out of the life of America.[17]

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15 Tuthill, p. 147.

16 Gertrude Norman and Miriam Shrifte, Letters of Composers, p. 375.

17 Howard, TMM, p. 33.

VIRGIL THOMSON

When writing an article on Virgil Thomson, P. Glanville-Hicks was supplied with the following autobiographical sketch:

> I was born (Nov. 25, 1896) in Kansas City, Missouri, grew up there and went to war from there. That was the other war. Then I was educated some more in Boston and Paris.* In composition I was a pupil of Nadia Boulanger. While I was still young I taught music at Harvard and played the organ at King's Chapel, Boston.** Then I returned to Paris and lived there for many years, till the Germans came, in fact. Now I live in New York, where I am Music Critic of the Herald Tribune.
>
> My most famous works are the operas, Four Saints in Three Acts, and The Mother of Us All, (both texts by Gertrude Stein), The Plow That Broke The Plains, and The River, (films by Pare Lorentz), though there are also symphonic and string quartets and many other works in many forms. I have made over a 100 musical portraits, too, all of them drawn from life, the sitter posing for me as he would for an artist's portrait. I have appeared as guest-conductor of my own works with the New York Philharmonic Symphony, The Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Louisville Orchestras.[18]

In his belief that music's prime function is to be entertaining, and to provide relaxation, Thomson is closely allied with the Gebrauchsmusik movement, which literally translated means - the "music for use" movement.[19]

As a composer, he is probably one of the most controversial figures on the American scene; as a critic and writer on the musical life of our time he is internationally read and appreciated. He has a definite style but

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* A graduate of Harvard in 1922, he lived in Paris from 1925-1932.

** Associated with church in earlier years - he was a professional organist and choirmaster in Kansas City before World War I. After the war, he became organist at King's Chapel and conductor of the Chapel Choir.

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18 P. Glanville-Hicks,"Virgil Thomson," Musical Quarterly, XXXV(Aprl,1949), 210.

19 Howard, TMM, p. 171.

it is almost impossible to put one's finger on any detail of harmonic, melodic, or rhythmic procedure that it entails. The personal element lies in the emotional content rather than in its terms of expression.

> Of the two environments, Missouri and France, that conditioned the evolution of his musical personality, it becomes apparent with the passing of time that the former goes deeper than the latter, or rather that his American heritage has remained the substance of his expression and his long association with France has provided the means.[20]
>
> Of all the forms in which Thomson has created, one that has used to the full his extraordinary powers of objectivity is the documentary film. It is a form he loves, for it is epic, its themes deal with the general, the common ground of experience rather than the particular or the personal, and it is above all a poetic form whose poetry must work hand in hand with functionalism in the highest sense.
>
> The understatement and plainness of Thomson's musical idiom is here a particular advantage, for by the very inclusions of dissonance, extremes of rhythms or cacaphony, effects of great contrast or drama are immediately available.... Transition from a state of cheerfulness to one of sadness will be accomplished by the simple case of a minor key; or the difference between hope and despair, construction and destruction, will similarly be achieved by major-minor shifts, or by a "work-song" and a deluge of dissonance.
>
> His use of multiple reference also is most effective in the film scores. In the scenes of the exodus from the Dust Bowl in "The Plough That Broke The Plains," he will quote the hymn tune, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow," while the scenes depicting an ocean of logs rolling down a river will be whimsically accompanied by quotations from "There'll Be A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," all within the texture of his unmannered but entirely individual musical frame.
>
> In the score for "The River," the virgin forest pictures are accompanied by a high soaring pastoral melody sounding above, and flowing down to join a consonant harmonic texture.
>
> A subsequent shot of the devastated and denuded forest

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20 Glanville-Hicks, p. 210.

> lands is accompanied by the same tune, its intervals madly askew, and flowing into a chaotic dissonant harmonic travesty of its former accompaniment.
>
> In the film scores he reserves a different treatment of dissonance for different kinds of situations. For industrical noise or catastrophies, blocks of cacophonic harmony, just noise, will be used. For the people's struggles or catastrophies involving people, dissonance will arrive contrapuntally, themes identified with people or causes maintaining an identity through its dissonance.[21]

ROGER SESSIONS

Roger Sessions was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 28, 1896, and shortly after his birth, the family moved back to their native Massachusetts.

His first musical training came at the age of five with piano lessons. In 1911, he entered Harvard at the age of fourteen. Three years later he came into contact with the moderns of his day when he bought works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Scriabin. He was graduated from Harvard in 1915 and had planned on studying with Ravel in France until the war interfered. He then went to Yale Music School where he worked with Horatio Parker.

The first major influence in Session's life was Ernst Bloch. The latter gave him his first sense of the connection between the material he studied and the music he wrote, and the first inkling of the real musical bearing of harmonic and contrapuntal study.

He taught at Smith College from 1917 to 1921. He then became Bloch's assistant and taught theory at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1921 to 1925. In 1924, he went to Europe and upon his return, resigned from

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21 Glanville-Hicks, pp.221-2.

the Institute. With financial assistance from his father, he returned to Europe for eight years. He returned several times to the United States during this period. On one occasion in 1927, the Boston Symphony under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky presented his Symphony in E Minor. Again, during a visit in 1928, he and Copland collaborated to begin the Copland-Sessions concerts. In 1933, on his return, he re-established himself in America rapidly, taking teaching posts at Malkin Conservatory, Boston Conservatory, Boston University College of Music, and at New School for Social Research in New York.

His first major work was done in 1923 for the drama club at Smith College. This Black Maskers Suite was later successfully performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski in 1933.

It is evident in his music that he has a keen sense of form and a real appreciation for the value of melodic lines. His harmonization is polytonal and he used counterpoint with skill. He has often been regarded as one of the most gifted and serious American composers.[22]

Sessions now lives in Berkeley, California, with his second wife and their two children. He holds the post of Professor of Music at the University of California where, as a result of that institution's enlightened policy, he has found ample time to compose.

HENRY COWELL

Henry Cowell, the friend of all modern tendencies and the tireless proponent of all modern works was born at Menlo Park, California, March 11, 1897. His ill-health as a child resulted in the most informal type of

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22 Bauer, p. 283.

education conceivable. He studied violin for awhile but gave his instrument away at the age of eight. At twelve, he was too poor to own a piano so he began to "practice" mentally several hours a day until at the age of fourteen, he had saved enough money to buy a ramshackle old piano which led to experiments resulting in discovery of tone-clusters and original tonal effects.

He soon decided composing was his destiny and proceeded to follow it. Having attained his early education principally through self-study, he did not learn the rules of harmony and when composing, paid little attention to them. He did attend the University of California, 1914-17; the Juilliard Institute of Musical Art, 1914; The Institute of Applied Music in New York City, 1919-20. He later studied at the University of Berlin as the holder of a Guggenheim Fellowhip which he won for a study of comparative musicology in Berlin (1931-32). In 1931, he also induced Professor Leon Theremin to construct an instrument for the execution of all sorts of complicated rhythms, which they dubbed the "rhythmion." "From 1 tp 16 sounds in a given time-interval are made by this instrument, at the pitches which correspond to their metric frequency in the overtone series."[23]

His early fame came from the use of the term "tone-clusters" and from his employment of them in his music. One of his contributions to music is the theory of tone clusters: literally substituting dissonant combinations for individual tones, and securing them from the piano by playing with the flat of the arm and even with the whole forearm.[24]

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23 Howard, OCC, p. 251.

24 Sigmundy Spaeth, At Home With Music, p. 266.

He is more important for what he has made possible than for his own music: he has seasoned our musical fare and has added color and life to the American musical scene.

Cowell has served in both World Wars: in the first as a bandleader and in the second as the senior music editor for the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information in New York City.

ROY HARRIS

On February 12, 1898, in a log cabin in Lincoln Country, Oklahoma, a son, Roy Ellsworth, was born to Elmer and Laura Harris. Because of malaria, the family soon moved to California where as a boy, Roy attended the public schools and studied piano and clarinet.

Enlisting in the army at the age of 19, he served until the end of the war, and soon after his release, attended the Southern Branch of the University of California at night while driving truck during the day.

At twenty-four, he finally decided to devote himself to composition and went to Los Angeles where he studied harmony with Arthur Farwell and orchestration under Modest Altschuler. He soon took a position at the Hollywood Conservatory as teacher of harmony and at the same time worked as a music critic for the Illustrated Daily News in Los Angeles. "He began to compose vigorously and rapidly as if trying to make up for the late start in his chosen career. Instead of testing his strength on short compositions, he plunged at once into larger forms."[25] His Andante For Orchestra was quite successful when it was first performed by Hanson in 1926.

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25 Nicolas Slonimsky, "Roy Harris," Musical Quarterly, XXXIII (January, 1947), 18.

He was twice the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowhhip Award and twice of the Creative Fellowship of the Pasadena Music and Arts Association Award.

Harris went to Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger, who had become a nursemaid for a whole generation of American composers. As a test, he was asked to write twenty melodies in different styles - instead he wrote one hundred and seven. After six months in Paris, he wrote a Concerto for Piano, Clarinet, and String Quartet.

Harris also met a test of personal courage and endurance while abroad when he fell down a flight of stairs and broke his spine. He returned to the United States on a stretcher and later underwent the dangerous Alhi operation where a piece of the shinbone is grafted into the spine.

This accident that retarded the advance of his career by many months, proved to be a blessing in disguise, for up to this time, his composing had been done at the piano and was therefore harmonic. While in the hospital, he turned to composing and found that without the piano he was artistically liberated. He began to write more quickly and his music became more lucid and flowed much more easily.

From 1934 to 1938, he was head of the composition department at the Westminister Choir School and in 1941, was appointed composer in residence at Cornell University. (While at the Westminister Choir School, Harris met and married Johana Beulah Diffey, October 10, 1936.)

Born in the country, he was relatively free, at least in theory, of the European influences which played so strong a part in shaping the culture of our cities. His modernism is distinctly peronal.

> Harris has much of the 'wild and wooly West' in his independent and pioneering spirit. He has worked out his own technic not by accepting the dictum of teachers but by blazing his own trail, by weighing the worth of every time-honored rule and regulation, and by trial and rejection of innumberable suggestions made to him.[26]

He has often been called "an American diamond in the rough"; he has not been lured by the attractions of syncopation, but is nonetheless nationalistic.

> He has a dynamic force, a primitive quality, something of the soil in his music which will probably continue to be characteristically American, in spite of the influence of the sophisticated and self-conscious ways and means of the musical world.[27]

His style is austere, polychordal, and multi-rhythmic. In his musical form, he tries to develop everything from a germ-motive allowing the composition to unfold naturally from the central idea. He harmonizes by means of open fifths and chords used in modern organum fashion.

> Bitonal chords occupy a very important position in the harmonic system of Roy Harris. Curiously enough, the only bitonal chord he never uses is the major triads built on tonics distant by the interval of a tritone, the medieval 'diabolus in musica,' as for instance, C major and F sharp major. Harris leaves it out, not merely because it is a trademark of a certain type of modernism with which he is out of sympathy, but also because it is absent in his organization of tonalities interconnected by modulatory links.
>
> In his music Harris resorts to quotations from folksongs only when the sources are clearly indicated in the title. In his 'Folk Song Symphony,' he appears as a harmonic interpreter of American tunes, which are specifically named in each movement. Similarly, in his Overture, 'Johnny Comes Marching Home,' he builds his music around the Civil War ballad of that name.[29]

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26 Bauer, p. 279.

27 Bauer and Peyser, <u>Music Through The Ages</u>, p. 154.

28 Slonimsky, p. 28.

29 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 25.

Of the Americans of his generation, he has probably been the most successful in his adaptation of folkmusic to suit his ends.

Harris has kept clear of the cults of the modernists, as represented by the atonalists, the polytonalists, and the twelve-tone theorists, and although his music is angular, it is seldom harsh. The sound of it suggests no violent break with the orthodox and traditional.

> The remarkable feature of the Harris vogue is that the composer makes no compromise whatever with the conservative elements in his audiences. He never tries to write music that will be easy for traditionally conditioned ears to listen to; much of his work is difficult and disconcerting at first hearing. His dissonances are uncompromising and caustic, and his structure is involved and complex in spite of his neo-classic learnings.[30]
>
> It was Farwell who gave Roy Harris his first musical training, and it was because the older man recognized a kindred spirit that he sought to interpret his young colleague when he wrote of him several years later in the Musical Quarterly, January, 1932. The opening works of that article were: "Gentleman, a genius--but keep yours hats on."
>
> It would be gratifying to believe that there was a striking significance in the utterance of this exclamation a century after Schumann had hailed Chopin, and it is entirely possible that Harris may prove to be one of the outstanding figures of the 20th century.
>
> There are several factors in his favor. First of all, the wide facile bid for popularity. He has not given the public music easy to listen to, or even pleasant according to accepted standards. He has never hesitated to promote his own interests, nor is he by any means one who hides his light under a bushel, but he has never written music merely to tickle his listener's ears. He has set himself ideals and high-minded standards which he has followed sincerely and without compromise, and yet he has become one of the most widely performed of our composers, and certainly the best represented on phonograph records.[31]

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30 Howard, TMM, p. 156.

31 Howard, OCC, p. 132.

> In theory, he is attempting to do in music what was done long ago in poetry - to free it from limitations corresponding to rhyme, meter, and conventional forms.[32]

> With the possible exception of Aaron Copland's, Roy Harris' works are probably more frequently performed, at the moment, than those of any other contemporary American composer.[33]

GEORGE GERSHWIN

George Gershwin was born in Brooklyn, New York, September 26, 1898. He was educated in the Brooklyn Public Schools and began to study piano with Charles Hambitzer and harmony with Edward Kelenyi at the age of thirteen. At sixteen he was employed by the music publishing firm of J. H. Remick and Company as a song-plugger.

He soon began to write songs of his own; these had an unexpected twist of rhythm, and the tune was such that it attracted immediate attention and soon had everybody whistling.

Swanee was the song that first brought Gershwin real fame, after it was interpolated by Al Jolson in Sinbad. Thus began a career of writing the scores of musical comedies, with the words of the songs generally supplied by his brother, Ira. Although he had several hits, Strike Up The Band (1927); Show Girl (1929); Girl Crazy (1930); Of Thee I Sing(1931); and others, he was not content with the fame and wealth that his lighter music gained him; he was ambitious to become a composer of serious music, one who would take the native elements of his lighter works to the concert hall. He received a change to do such a work when Paul Whiteman asked him

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32 Howard, OCC, p. 134.

33 Donald N. Ferguson, A Short History of Music, p. 480.

to write a symphonic-jazz composition for performance at his Aeolian Hall concert, February 12, 1924. Gershwin composed the Rhapsody in Blue, for piano and jazz-orchestra in ten days. However, he did not score it himself; Ferde Grofe did it for him. After the success of the Rhapsody, he determined to equip himself to make his own orchestrations, and accordingly studied with Rubin Goldmark.

In 1925, commissioned by Walter Damrosch for the New York Symphony Society, he composed Piano Concerto in F. This was followed by An American in Paris (1928), and a Second Rhapsody (1931).

In 1935, using DuBose Heyward's play, Porgy, as a libretto, he wrote a serious opera, Porgy and Bess which is still very popular with audiences everywhere.

> Although Gershwin became one of the most-discussed, and certainly the most widely-played, of contemporary American Composers, the ultimate value of his symphonic compositions is questionable. His musical comedy tunes are sparkling, and ingenious, and invariably clothed in a harmonic dress that lends them distinction. This flavor he carried into his serious music, particularly into the Rhapsody in Blue, but it is doubtful whether his powers of creative development were sufficient to weld his ideas into the integral whole that is necessary to insure a lasting work of art. His use of current jazz patterns was natural and spontaneous, never academically objective, yet he belonged so much to Broadway and its synthetic jazz that he seemed unable to rise above his subjective feeling for it, and to become its master than its slave.[34]

Gershwin died in Hollywood, as a result of a brain-tumor for which an unsuccessful operation was performed, July 11, 1937.

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34 Thompson, TCMM, p. 660.

RANDALL THOMPSON

Randall Thompson was born in New York, April 21, 1899. As an undergraduate at Harvard University, he wrote a great deal of music. In 1922, he won the Rome Prize and went to the American Academy in Rome where he was a fellow from 1922 to 1925. Returning to the United States, he lived in Greenwich Village 1925-26, ready and willing to write anything he could to earn a living. "In this struggle for existence he was clearly experiencing at first hand the problems of making a living as an American; and the effect of these years, it seems has never quite left him. It probably accounts for the pronounced native flavor in a good deal of his music written since that time."[35]

From 1928 to 1929, he was assistant Professor of Music at Wellesley College, receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship in musical composition in 1929. He then started work on his Second Symphony, which was completed in 1931. From 1932 to 1935, he worked on a report that was widely influential in strengthening music as one of the recognized Liberal Arts in American Colleges.

In 1937 he was Professor of Music and Director of the University Chorus at the University of California in Berkeley. In the same year, he received an honorary Doctor's Degree from the University of Rochester. From 1938 to 1940, he was director of the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia.

Thompson wrote a great many choral works between 1927-1937; the strong impetus coming from such positions as guest conductor of various choruses.

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35 Elliot Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson," Musical Quarterly, XXXV (January, 1949), 3.

In 1940, he wrote the instrumental work, Suite for Oboe, Clarinet, and Viola, which had been commissioned by the League of Composers. Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague commissoned him to write the String Quartet No. 1 in D Minor, in 1941. This work won the Coolidge Award for Chamber Music.

> Four qualities exist in all of Thompson's choral music. The first is the invention of lines, which, by their intervals, their rise and fall, and their points of rest, make the singing of them a matter of interest as well as ease. The second is the setting of every phrase of text into a texture of voices that serves not only to sound the words but also to bring out their meaning by a particular choral color. The third is the rhythmic equivalent in music to the natural rhythm of the words when spoken. And the fourth is an organization of phrases, made clear by the use of passing cadences which by their relative strength indicate the different relationships existing between successive phrases.[36]

These four qualities, line, color, prosody, and form, will be apparent after an examination of his choral music as a whole.

THE TESTAMENT OF FREEDOM was composed in honor of the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth. It was first heard on April 13, 1943, at the University of Virginia under Stephen Tuttle. From the time of its initial performance, it has often been heard.

Just as Piston and Sessions are closely identified with neo-classicism, so might Thompson be termed neo-romantic, for while he shows the towering and lofty flights of the German romanticists, he never hesitates to become sentimental, even though he may at times have his tongue in his cheek. In many respects, he is the American counterpart of Erik Satie, the French Satirist.[37]

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36 Forbes, p. 9.

37 Howard, TMM, p. 170.

GEORGE ANTHEIL

George Antheil was born in Trenton, New Jersey, July 8, 1900. He started to compose at the age of twelve. He studied at the Sternberg Conservatory in Philadelphia 1910-1919 and at the Curtis Music Settlement School, 1920-22, and later with Ernst Bloch.

For many years he lived abroad having his first works played there: Zingareska, a symphony in 1922; a String Quartet, in 1926; and also in '26, Symphony in F performed under the direction of Golschmann. In 1924, his Ballet Mecanique was premiered in Paris and soon afterward in New York City. This work was scored for xylophones, electric bells, ten pianos, a player-piano and airplane propeller sound, and an automobile horn.

For two years (1928-29), he was assistant director of music at the Berlin State Theater, the only American ever to hold this post. In 1930, his opera, Transatlantic, was performed at the State Theater in Frankfort- "Among other ingredients, it employed jazz of an old-fashioned type, in the service of a libretto that presented a caricature of American life."[38]

He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1932. Howard Hanson performed his Capriccio at Rochester in 1934. In 1935, his Archipelzao was played on the G-E broadcast and he completed his American Symphony in 1937.

Since 1936, he has lived in California, composing for various motion picture producers, and since 1948, exclusively for Columbia. Some of the films for which he has written have been: Once in a Blue Moon, 1935; The Plainsman, 1936; The Buccaneer, 1937; Angels Over Broadway, 1940; Knock On Any Door, 1948; We Were Strangers, 1949.

He has also written two books: Death in the Dark (1930,) and

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38 Howard, OCC, p. 258.

Everyman His Own Detective(1937,) both of which were written under the pen name of Stacy Bishop. For several years, he was the writer of a lovelorn column, "Boy Advices Girl," which was syndicated in 33 newspapers.

AARON COPLAND

Aaron Copland was born November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York. After taking piano lessons for a number of years, he decided to become a composer at the age of fifteen. His piano teacher, Mr. Wolfsohn, sent him to Rubin Goldmark for harmony instruction. Aaron soon became interested in modernism but with his teacher strongly against modern practices, he turned into his teacher only the exercises by which he was mastering the rules of harmony. When he composed exercises in which the rules were broken, he had to do so without a teacher.

At the age of twenty, he was the first American to be accepted at the Conservatory of Fontainebleau, remaining there for three months. He did remain abroad for three years, studying with Nadia Boulanger. She later came to the United States to play the organ parts of Copland's Organ Symphony when it was first performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitsky.

Returning from Europe in 1924, he was again a first by receiving the Guggenheim Fellowship for one year - an award of $2500. It was renewed again the next year for the same amount, enabling him to spend two additional years in Europe.

In 1941, Copland was sent to South America by the Committee for Inter-American Intellectual and Artistic Relations and consequently became the first composer ever sent by our government on a cultural mission in a foreign country.

At first Copland used jazz and seemed to be one of the few who could make of it something flexible, but after his Concerto in 1927, he severed the direct relation of his music to jazz, and has used it only indirectly since.[39]

His musical style has been molded by his Russian-Jewish heritage, his contact with French music of the twenties, and by jazz and American folksong.[40]

> Aaron Copland has uncovered a number of really extraordinary folk-themes, employing them with considerable success. Unlike the English composers of recent years, Copland will often tamper with a melody, bending and reshaping it till it adapts to his needs.[41]
>
> The music of Copland is the product of a musician for other musicians. Notwithstanding this, it is the kind of music that usually serves the purpose for which it is written; that is to say, it serves the client who has come to solict in Copland's factory a certain amount of music for the theater or for the ballet or for the radio or for a group of chamber musicians.[42]
>
> Copland has something of an advantage over other contemporary composers in that he can set forth his views in works. Articles of his writing have appeared in magazines for a number of years.[43]
>
> With Mexican material or with American material, Copland is always an independent composer, quite beyond any consideration of national music. His nationalism has been largely surmounted; if he is American, he is so by nature, not for the character of his melodies or his rhythms.[44]

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39 Howard, OCC, p. 146.

40 Kurt Pahlen, Music of the World, A History, p. 373.

41 Moor, p. 40.

42 Adolfo Salazar, Music In Our Time, p. 329.

43 Grace Overmyer, Famous American Composers, p. 201.

44 Salazar, p. 331.

The style of Aaron Copland changed so much from the writing of Music for the Theater, in 1925, to Appalachian Spring, twenty years later, that it seems doubtful that both works were done by the same composer. The latter work is Romantic, full of feeling and inspired by a very simple theme. The former uses jazz as a means of expression and delights in dissonance.[45]

Some other characteristics of his works may be described in the description of four of his works:

(1)MUSIC FOR THE THEATRE, composed in 1925; adopts the jazz idiom with many direct allusions to Tin Pan Alley;
(2)EL SALON MEXICO, in 1936; marked by a great simplicity and directness; this work makes use of Mexican folk tunes;
(3)A LINCOLN PORTRAIT, in 1942; is somewhat in the style of modern radio treatment of music, with a narrator and a musical background;
(4)APPALACHIAN SPRING, in 1945; has shown that he can express himself with deep feeling and with real poetry.[46]

Copland's film scores have the rare distinction of being approved by both his fellow composers in the East and by his Hollywood associates. He has written music for several films, some of which are: "The City," "Of Mice and Men", in 1939, "Our Town" in 1940, "The Red Pony" in 1947, and "The Heiress" in '48 and '49. The latter is a direct descendant of Copland's three earlier cinematic scores. ("The Academy Award for the score of 'The Heiress' makes it clear that the acclaim of the world's film center does not depend on an excess of emotional and instrumental lushness.")[47]

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45 Howard D. McKinney, Music and Man, p. 362.

46 Ibid., p. 193.

47 Frederick W. Sternfeld, "Copland As A Film Composer," Musical Quarterly, XXXVII (April, 1951), 161.

SAMUEL BARBER

Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, March 9, 1910. He entered the Curtis Institute of Music as a charter pupil at the age of fourteen. There he studied piano with Isabella Vengerova, singing with Emilo de Gogorza, and composition with Rosario Scalero.

By the time he was twenty-four, he had won several of the most coveted prizes by young composers. In 1928, and again in 1933* he won the Bearns Prize from Columbia University; in 1935, he won both the Pulitzer Prize for music and the Prix de Rome Award; then again in 1936, he won the Pulitzer Prize to become the first composer to achieve it twice.

After his release from the Air Corps in 1945, he was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship and in 1946 was selected by the Music Critics Circles as writing the outstanding American work of the preceding season - Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra.

While a fellow at the American Academy in Rome, 1936, he composed his Symphony in One Movement. This was first performed by the Augusteo Orchestra, under Molivari, late in 1936, at Rome. Artur Rodzinski introduced this work to the United States with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1937, and in March of the same year, with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. Rodzinski has also conducted it at Salzburg and London.

His Essay for Orchestra,** composed in 1937, is a seven-minute orchestral piece which neither tells a story nor represents any extra-musical

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* For his Overture to The School for Scandal.

** Essay - short, compact work in good style and representative of clear thinking, with excellent and logical development of the author's material from his personal point of view.

subject; it is full of poetic feeling and shows great imagination.[48]

In 1942, he wrote his Second Essay for Orchestra.

> In November of 1938, a single honor came to Barber; Arturo Toscanini chose his "Adagio for Strings," and his "Essay for Orchestra," as the first American works to be presented under his direction of the NBC Symphony Orchestra.[49]

> Barber's teacher at the Curtis Institute, Rosario Scalero, laid more emphasis upon counterpoint than upon any other exercises in various styles, insisting upon vital and meaningful inner voices. The beneficial results of this intensive training are apparent throughout Barber's output. His music is seldom static; and even where the harmonies are ambiguous, the contrapuntal texture is alive.[50]

> Traditional procedures are characteristic of all of Barber's music up to about 1939. After that time, however, they begin to be mingled with, or replaced by, methods that can only have arisen in the musical climate of our time.[51]

> Barber belongs among the conservative American composers, more especially in his earlier works, in that he pays considerable attention to this architectonic construction, is not afraid to yield to fluent melodic writing, prefers simplicity to complexity, and is ever in search of a deeply poetic idea.[52]

The influence of war on music may be seen in Barber's two works, The Second Symphony, composed and dedicated to the Army Air Force in 1943, and his Commando March. In the former, the emphasis is an emotional rather than a narrative factor. It is somewhat more astringent and dissonant than any music Barber wrote up to this time. The latter work was com-

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48 McKinney, p. 366.

49 Howard, OCC, p. 221.

50 "The Music of Samuel Barber," Musical Quarterly, XXXIV (July, 1948), 328.

51 Ibid., p. 325.

52 David Ewen, American Composers Today, p. 13.

posed for Military Band in 1943 and was used extensively in American short-wave broadcasts.

Because his music is neither regional nor national and because it is projected with such a sincerity and often with such moving beauty, his music is enjoyed in Europe as well as in the United States; his abundant lyricism and fine poetic speech is appreciated everywhere.

WILLIAM SCHUMAN

William Schuman, born August 4, 1910, New York City, is a graduate of Columbia University. He has been a pupil of Charles Haubiel, Max Persin, and Roy Harris.

In the summer of 1935, he studied at the Mozarteum Academy in Salzburg and upon his return to the United States, joined the faculty of the Sarah Laurence College in Bronxville, New York, where he remained until his appointment to the presidency of Juilliard School of Music in 1945.

On November 10, 1951, the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Eugene Ormandy, presented Schuman's Symphony No. 6, (in one movement). Although Ormandy conducted this new work in Copenhagen the previous summer, this presentation of November 10 represented its premiere in Philadelphia.

At 42, William Schuman has already gained fame in classical music of our time. He has also gained a great deal of recognition as an educator. In the winter of 1951-52, he was working on a comic opera based on the poem "Casey at the Bat," with a libretto by Geremy Gury.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Leonard Bernstein was born August 25, 1918, in Laurence, Massachusetts. While attending Harvard University, he studied with Walter Piston and Edward B. Hill. After graduating in 1939, he was convinced that he should become a conductor and then entered the Curtis Institute. Here he studied piano with Isabella Vergerova, orchestration with Randall Thompson, and conducting with Fritz Reiner.

In 1940-41, he won a scholarship in conducting at Tanglewood. Then in 1942 he was appointed assistant to Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood. In 1943, after being selected as assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra by Artur Rodzinski, he had a chance to prove himself. The sudden illness of Bruno Walter, guest conductor, demanded a substitute. Bernstein's success on that occasion and subsequent appearances revealed his genuine talent.

His first creative work appeared in 1942 - Sonata for Clarinet and Piano. Bernstein himself directed the world premiere of his Jeremiah Symphony with the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra on January 28, 1944. This was later selected by the Music Critics Circle as being the most important new American work of the '43-'44 season.

He has also invaded the field of popular music by writing the scores for several Broadway musical revues, one of which is, "On The Town,"

Although these composers are mentioned as being important in modern music, there may be better ones in the making. As John Tasker Howard has said:

> Well, there they are - the brave, the foolhardy, and the reckless, a salty and peppery stew. Pick out the pieces that tempt your palate. Or leave the whole pot-full alone, if you'd rather. It's a free country, and nobody has to listen to anything he doesn't want to. But remember that everyone has a right to listen to the things you think are crazy or worse. Some of the best people were wrong about Berlioz, Wagner, and Debussy. And, on the other hand, many composers were greeted as heroes in their own time who are forgotten today. Posterity is supposed to do the deciding, and of course, the weight of numbers is on posterity's side. But meanwhile we might as well make up our own minds, since we won't be here to know the ultimate verdict anyway![53]

As H. D. McKinney quotes from Deems Taylor's book, Of Men and Music:

> The great American music of the future will be a music to which America will listen and respond. But it will not be the music of Sitting Bull or Booker T. Washington or even George (Gershwin). It will belong to us because one of us made it; but it will, like all great music, belong to the world. And the world will not be curious regarding the name and address of the composer.[54]
>
> However, we are beginning to realize more and more that in music, as in everyday life, it is good policy to let the dead bury the dead. And some day one of our composers may give us a new sort of symphony that shall have done away entirely with the old eighteenth-century divisions. A beginning has already been made by some of our composers who are graduated out of Tin Pan Alley. When these noble syncopaters finally turn their attention to the more serious forms of music, we may expect great things. And when that happens, that greatest of all syncopaters, Ludewig van Beethoven (what a fine tap-dance could be done on the finale of the

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53 Howard, OCC, p. 266.

54 McKinney, p. 190.

"Kreutzer" sonata!) will undoubtedly lean out of heaven and gruffly shout his "bravo!" and "bis!" Undoubtedly this will again give deep offense to our professional critics, but was anything really good ever written with one eye on the score and the other on the critics?[55]

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55 Hendrik Willem Van Loon, The Arts, p. 503.

CHAPTER XI

INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS FURTHERING MODERN MUSIC

> In American business, production, and distribution are closely linked and have been cunningly calculated to balance each other. But in one field of musical production, that of special performance and festival events, there is a need for closer relationship.
>
> The American public has become far too supine. When reproached for not producing better music, the commercial companies point to the listener statistics and public response by mail and telegram. It is high time that lovers of modern music and of neglected masterpieces should organize to promote their interests co-operatively.[1]

One of the first individuals to help promote modern music was Ole Bull (1810-1890), for when he took over the Academy of Music in New York he offered prizes for American compositions.

Another of the early exponents of modern music may be found in Leopold Stokowski. In 1909, he began to force American music on his audiences and he made it clear that he would brook no opposition or interference of any kind.

Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions jointly organized the Copland-Sessions Concerts which lasted for three years beginning in 1928. These were of interest in demonstrating what a still younger generation of American composers was accomplishing. Later the American Festival of Contemporary Music was launched by Copland at Yaddo, Saratoga-Springs, New York

Of the other men who have "nursed" modern music through its childhood, there is only time to mention a few outstanding ones such as: Serge

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1 "The American Problem of Musical Distribution," Musical America, LXXXII (April 15, 1952), 14.

Koussevitzky, Walter Damrosch, Howard Hanson, and Roy Harris.

As far as organizations are concerned, the first appeared in the form of a school for musical education - The Eastman School of Music in 1921. Three years later, two more were added: The Juilliard Graduate School of New York and the Curtis Institutue of Music in Philadelphia.

In May of 1931, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of Eastman, Dr. Hanson stated in a letter to the New York Times, the aims and methods of the school. He said: "Composition is the most important thing in music, and the composer is the hub of the musical wheel.... As the composer is of prime importance in music, so is the national composer important in the development of a national musical culture."[2]

Eastman sponsors regular series of American Composers' Concerts, where composers from all over the country may hear their manuscript and published works rehearsed and played by a competent orchestra.

Besides the permanent organizations such as the schools, each year there are a number of festivals throughout the country. For instance, Tanglewood, Massachusetts, is the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Here for six weeks each summer, Tanglewood echoes music from morning to night. The Berkshire Festival was established in 1934, with Henry Hadley, American composer-conductor, directing 65 members of the New York Philharmonic Symphony. At Hadley's death, it was decided to invite Dr. Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony to take part.

Friends of the Berkshire Festival are nettled by references to the event as an "American Salzburg." They point out that its combination of summer study and professional concerts is unique. In fact, the

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2 Daniel G. Mason, Tune In, America, p. 125.

comparison, they suggest, might be the other way around.

During the summer, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony offers concerts five nights a week, featuring outstanding soloists and conductors at the Lewissohn Stadium in uptown New York. The Philadelphia Orchestra has its own summer home in Robin Hood Dell, in Philadelphia's own Fairmont Part.

This seems to be the pattern - each major orchestra has it's "summer home" where they continue to hold concerts throughout the summer often with guest conductors. Hence, music appreciation is not a seasonal thing... you can hear it any time throughout the year...if not directly by a major orchestra, you can hear it on the radio, on records, or enjoy it on television.

Donald Steinfirst, Music Critic for the <u>Pittsburgh Post Gazette</u>, has said:

> I do believe that people are becoming more and more aware of current compositions. Here in Pittsburgh, during Thanksgiving week, we had a contemporary music festival in which only new music, i.e., of the last fifty years (and a great deal of it the last twenty-five years) was performed and the audiences did not walk out or scream or hiss, but I believe it was very well accepted as a trend. This is a very good sign considering that this is twentieth century music being played for ears attuned to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. If you want to make a test, just play the most atonal music for a child under the age of adolescence and if he is musically minded at all, he will accept this new music without a quiver.[3]

In an editorial on <u>Our Own Composers</u>, Howard Taubman quotes Leopold Stokowski as follows:

> What the Museum of Modern Art has done for painting and sculpture must be done for music all over the country. Societies (some exist already) for contemporary music

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3 Personal letter written by Donald Steinfirst to the author, Dec. 12, 1952.

> must be founded in the key cities. In the East, it could be Boston, New York Philadelphia and Washington. In the Midwest - Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. In the South - Houston, New Orleans and Dallas. And later other cultural centers all over the United States.
>
> The membership may be small, but will be enthusiastic. The first concerts can be for chamber music, because the expense is small, but the principles of modern music are broadly the same for chamber music as for symphonic. Later concerts for chamber orchestra will expand the reptertoire. As interest grows in the community and the membership increases, symphony concerts of living American music will eventually be possible, and an ever growing and evolving solution will be reached, covering the whole field of contemporary music.
>
> Records should be made available to those living far from large cultural centers, and radio and television performances will follow when the prejudices in some minds are overcome. American can do all of this just as she has achieved similar great results in other fields.[4]

The promotion of modern music through phonograph records is being used quite successfully by the American Recording Society which was established under a grant from the Alice M. Ditson fund of Columbia University to record two hundred years of American music. One of the world's great symphony orchestras, the American Recording Society Orchestra, has made various records under the direction of Dean Dixon, who has been guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic, NBC Symphony, Boston, and Philadelphia Orchestra. These records are being sent, free of charge, to schools and colleges throughout the country. Hence, many people that could not afford to experiment in buying various records of modern music, now have a chance to hear many of the modern composers through the efforts of the Ditson Festival Recording Society.

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4 Howard Taubman, "Our Modern Composer," New York Times, CII....(October 19, 1952), x 7.

CONCLUSIONS

Realizing there are many definite limitations to the study which has been presented here, the author, nevertheless, sincerely hopes that he has helped the reader to a better understanding and appreciation of Modern Music.

For obvious reasons, a large number of specific works which could have been included, have been omitted. Those most frequently performed have been referred to.

After taking much of his valuable time, it is doubtful that the reader feels differently about Modern Music. However, the author would be highly gratified if the subject presented here, were to prompt the reader to realize that Modern Music is merely a reflection of our time and that we shall only turly enjoy this reflection as we sympathetically expose ourselves to it. We need not enjoy all that we hear, but, mature thinking demands that we listen with unprejudiced minds honestly looking for the essential idea within the music. By doing so, we shall find many enjoyable experiences through the growing number of fine scores.

It might be interesting to note in the following appendix, the correspondence between the conductors, music critics, composers, and the author. Of the forty-one letters sent, there have been replies to twenty-four. They are all reprinted here with the exception of one, who requested his to be held confidential.

In closing, the author would again like to thank all those who have made this paper possible; a special thanks to the individuals who have taken time to answer the letters which they received.

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AND

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Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

November 22, 1952.

Dear (name of conductor),

Here at Lycoming College I am doing a research paper on modern music; that is, music that has been written since 1920. Through this study I am trying to discover why newer music is not given a wider hearing.

I am writing to you as a conductor who has championed modern music. Do you think modern music will attain a place in the musical experience of the average person in the way that Beethoven, Tschaikovsky, and Richard Strauss have?

Would you be willing to name several modern composers(and their works) whom you believe to have assumed permanent places of importance?

Realizing you are an extremely busy person, I shall be very grateful to you for a brief reply.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Glenn Miers

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Letters were sent to the following conductors; (*) mark the ones who have replied: Fabian Sevitzky*, Alfredo Antonini*, Alfred Wallenstein*, Vladimir Golschmann*, Dimitri Mitropoulos*, Eugene Ormandy*, Paul Paray*, Saul Caston*, Howard Mitchell*, Thor Johnson*, Charles Munch , Alexander Smallens , Leopold Stokowski , Robert Shaw , Rafael Kubelik , George Szell , Ann Kullner , Antal Dorati .

December 3, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers,

Referring to your letter of November 22nd regarding modern music and the place it will attain in musical history, I can say that modern music will take it's[sic.] place among the masters. Such composers as Prokofieff, Bartok, Copland and Stravinsky are among those who will definitely last.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Alfredo Antonini

December 17, 1952

Mr. Glen Miers
Lucoming[sic.]College
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Miers;[sic.]

Yes, I do believe that some contemporary composers will reach a place in the musical world of the future, such as Beethoven, Tschaikowski, and Strauss. Others writing today might be "stepping stones."

Some contemporary[sic.]whom I consider endowed with great gift are: Dello Joio, Della Piccolo, Samuel Barber, Menotti, Cecil Effinger.

I hope I have answered your questions.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Saul Caston

(Musical Director and Conductor - Denver Symphony Orchestra)

November 26 1952

Dear Mr. Miers:

I truly do not know if it quite exact to say that new or "contemporary" music is not much played... Since the beginning of this season more than half of our programs has [sic] been devoted to contemporary music and the public has reacted splendidly.

I do not follow closely the programs of my colleagues but I know that many of them play much so called "modern music." What may be right to say is that almost always among contemporary composers we see the same names appearing over and over again. There are several great composers among those who belong to our time. Just as they come out of my mind shall I mention: Strawinsky[sic.], Prokofieff, Honegger, Milhaud, Hindemith, Shostakovitch, - Roussel and Schoenberg who died not a long a time ago, - I mentioned a few names, names of composers whose music is often performed; and what about Bartok? This country has men of talents and the names of some of them appear quite often on programs all around the country. Among all these how many will last as long as some of those you mentioned, who knows? But if we think in terms of "our time" - I mean of the last 50 years, and if we realize that Richard Strauss, Debussy, Ravel are played almost as often as "classics" we may conclude that the public has not been deaf to new works.

Evidently, most of those who attend concerts want to listen to music which is familiar to them. I believe that by insisting in repeating works which seem to bring a new message, works of "importance" the public will follow us. What makes a conservative public is a conductor who plays over and over conservative programs. Genius is an accident... To-morrow a new Mozart may come to life. I know not if among our contemporaries anyone will ever be thought of as a Mozart but most of the composers whose names I have mentioned have written what to me is great music. And another man whose importance will grow with years: Alban Berg.

I hope this letter has answered some of your questions.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Vladimir Golschmann

(Conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra)

January 8, 1953

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers,

Thank you so much for your fine letter of November 21st. I regret exceedingly that it has been impossible to get an answer off to you earlier. Your first question is answered in the affirmative. I am thoroughly convinced that out of the thousands of contemporary compositions which are now being created, there will arise a certain number, which, in the future civilizations will embody the finest elements of our current civilization. These predestined works will assume rightful places amongst the immortal compositions of earlier generations. These works of our time will experience cycles of favor and disfavor, just as all master works of past generations have experienced from time to time.

It is extremely difficult to pick out contemporary composers and their works, whose "future" is assured. Nevertheless, I do believe that the following composers have crystallized the highest creative genius of the first half of this century in the following works:

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Barber	Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra
	Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Copland	Appalachian Spring
Hindemith	Mathias Der Maler
Menotti	Dramatic Works
Bernard Rogers	Symphony No. 4
William Schuman	Symphony No. 3
Vaughan Williams	Job
	Symphony No. 5
Igor Stravinski	Ballet Music
Toch	Symphony No. 2
Schonberg	The Hanging Gardens
Bloch	Schelomo
Walton	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
	Concerto for Viola and Orchestra
Britten	Les Illuminations
Sibelius	Symphony No. 7
	Tapiola
Prokofieff	Concerto No. 2 G minor for Violin and Orchestra

There are many, many more, however I hope that these will indicate the course of my logic.

With every good wish, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Thor Johnson
(Musical Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra)

December 19, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers,

I am very sorry to have been forced by an overcrowded schedule to delay answering your letter of November 22. I hope you will find some help for the paper you mentioned in the opinions which follow.

The reason I believe new music is not given a wider hearing is because most contemporary composers have forgotten or never realized that a public exists - and must be pleased. Much evidence exists to prove that most of the music of the old masters was thoroughly enjoyed by the public of their time. Likewise, much of what has been written by living composers within the last fifty years and is today loved by the general public, was acclaimed on its first hearing or shortly thereafter. The theory that a hundred or more years is needed before the public can accept something new is, on the whole fictitious.

Living composers I think may assume permanent place in the repetoire are: (I mention what I consider outstanding works)

Stravinsky	-	Firebird and Petrouchka
Sibelius	-	Several Symphonies
Hindemith	-	Mathis der Maler
Copland	-	Appalachian Spring and other ballets
Barber	-	Symphony No. 1
Creston	-	" " 2 and possibly others
Shostakovich	-	" " 1, 5, 6 and others
Prokofieff	-	" " 5, The Classical Symphony, Ballet works and undoubtedly others
Vaughn Williams	-	Selected works
Villa-Lobos	-	" "

It seems safe to say that future generations will choose a number of composers of our time for their listening pleasure and that the ratio of composers who have survived their time will be maintained by this generation.

With best wishes in your work,

Yours sincerely

[Signed] Howard Mitchell

(Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington, D.C.)

Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Inc.

HOWARD HARRINGTON, MANAGER

MASONIC TEMPLE

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86

3 Décembre 1958.

M. Glenn Miers
Williamsport Pa.

Cher M. Miers.

Je m'excuse de vous répondre en Français, car mon Anglais est encore très pauvre.

Un de nos poètes a écrit : « Une oeuvre ne nait pas chef-d'oeuvre... elle le devient », Pensée profonde, un peu amère, et que l'on devrait souvent méditer.

Beethoven, Tschaikovsky, Richard Strauss (les F[illegible] auteurs que vous citez) n'ont pas été connus, admis, aimés du jour au lendemain.

Bien peu de créateurs ont échappé à cette loi[illegible]

Je fais des voeux pour que nos modernes compositeurs ne la subissent pas aussi dur[illegible]

Veuillez croire à mes meilleurs sentiments

Paul Paray.

(Translation of letter received from Paul Paray)

3 December 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers,

Excuse me for answering in French for my English is still very poor. One of our poets has written:"A work is never born a masterpiece.... it becomes one." A very deep thought; though a trifle bitter one and one which we should ponder often.

Beethoven, Tschaikovsky, and Richard Strauss (the three composers you list) were not known, recognized, loved from one day to another [overnight].

Very few creators have escaped the effects of this law.

I formulate my best wishes that our modern composers shall not suffer its effects as harshly.

Please believe my best feelings,

[Signed] Paul Paray

(Conductor - Detroit Symphony Orchestra)

November 28, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers:

Thank you for your letter of November 21st.

I definitely think that from somewhere among our modern composers will emerge a great master, and it is the duty of symphony orchestra conductors to give well balanced programs, mixing the old with the new, and to give performance to contemporary music in order that the public cán evaluate the **worth** of the pieces played.

I do not have any favorites among the modern composers. We, of the Philadelphia Orchestra, select works for programming on the merits of the composition and not on the name of the composers.

With best wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

[Signed] Eugene Ormandy
(Musical Director of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra)

December 9, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycomin[sic.]College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers:

Thank you for your letter of November 22, which Mr. Wallenstein has asked me to answer for him.

Mr. Wallenstein is very sorry that his extremely crowded schedule does not leave him time enough to answer your questions, as much as he would like to do so; particularily as the subject you have chosen for your research paper is a very interesting one.

With Mr. Wallenstein's regrets and sincere good wishes,

Sincerely,

[Signed] Christiane Ebert
Secretary to Alfred Wallenstei

(Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra)

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JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC
130 CLAREMONT AVENUE
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 4, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers:

I am very much interested in the research paper you are doing on modern music and wish it were possible for me to help you. Unfortunately, any serious consideration of the subject requires, as you say, a "research paper" and I am, at the moment, more interested in reading yours than in writing one. Much as I should wish to be of assistance to you, I am afraid that the heavy commitments I have preclude my doing so at the present time.

Faithfully,

[signature]

WS/gem

November 28, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers:

Thank you for your kind letter.

The reason that a wider hearing is not given to new music is that, as a rule, human beings are afraid to hear or accept any novelty which disturbs their habits and forces them to make an effort. Yet, little by little everything that is worthy does attain a place, as you say, for the average person.

The only trouble is that the average person doesn't live long enough, so it will go little by little from one average person to another through generations, and probably five hundred years from now, the average person, provided he is not too average but has a little thinking left, might be able to enjoy all the things we give them today.

Very sincerely yours,

D. Mitropoulos

Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

November 22, 1952

Dear (name of composer),

Here at Lycoming College I am doing a research paper on modern music; that is, music that has been written since 1920. Through this study I am trying to discover why newer music is not given a wider hearing.

Recognizing an obvious difference in much of the music written since 1920 from that of the Classical and Romantic periods, could you state briefly the reasons for this?

Would you be willing to list eight or ten compositions written since 1920(including any of your own), which seem to bear the mark of permanent appreciation by the average music lover?

Realizing you are an extremely busy person, I shall be very grateful to you for a brief reply.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Glenn Miers

- -

Letters were sent to the following composers; (*) mark the ones who have replied: Leonard Bernstein*, William Grant Still*, Walter Piston*, Henry Cowell*, Bernard Rogers*, William Schuman*, Roger Sessions*, Virgil Thomson*, Henry Brant*, Randall Thompson , Marc Blitzstein , Samuel Barber , Deems Taylor , Roy Harris , Howard Hanson , Aaron Copland , Quincy Porter .

155 East 96th Street
New York 28, N.Y.
December 15, 1952.

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers:

Mr. Bernstein has asked me to write you in reply to your recent letter. Unfortunately, in order to answer your questions, it would take far more time than Mr. Bernstein has at his disposal. In fact, it would require a long article to answer your questions. Mr. Bernstein believes there is enough published material for you to get the information you need for your research paper.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Helen Coates
Secretary to Leonard Bernstein

Mr. Brant merely returned the same letter which the author sent to him, a copy of which may be found on page 89. After each paragraph he has made a comment.

After the first paragraph he had this to say: "In my opinion, not because of any qualities inherent in the music itself. Significantly because many audiences have been subjected to a persistent and skilful anti-modern-music campaign."

After the second paragraph: "To me there is no such obvious difference."

After the third paragraph: "No, because this might give the impression that I consider only a dozen contemporary works capable of a wide and substantial appeal..It would be easier to name 100 works. The term "permanent appreciation" to me is meaningless."

[Signed] HB

169 W 102 St.
NYC
11/29/52

Dear Mr. Miers:

Music since 1920 has mostly occupied itself with incorporating the tonal and rhythmical innovations of the 'teen years into older forms, and of integrating the clàssic ideal of objective perfection with the romantic ideal of expressivity and communication.

My list of appreciated works since 1920 would include:

Symphony of Psalms	-	Stravinsky
Wozzeck	-	Berg
Fourth String Quartet	-	Bartok
General Booth Enters Into Heaven(and other songs)	-	Ives
Rhapsody in Blue	-	Gershwin
Creation du Monder	-	Milhaud
Symphony #5		Schostakovitch

Concerning my own work I can only list things which seem always to please, and for which there has been continued demand over a period of years. These include "Shoonthree" for Band, which continues to be in demand for high-school and college bands all over the country after 12 years(it is called a band classic by R.F.Goldman). American Muse for woman's chorus is in the same position for school chorusus everywhere.

My Hymn and Fuguing Tune #2 for string orchestra ditto, and also for symphonic audiences. It now begins to seem as if my Symphony #5 might grow into a similar catagory. I enclose a letter from a college President whom I have never met - he must be an "average" music lover.

I get a gratifying number of such expressions!

Please return his letter.

Sincerely

[Signed] Henry Cowell

P.S. Naturally I can't tell how my works would stack up with the better known modern "classics".

[Signed] HC

NOTE: The letter to which Mr. Cowell refers is copied on the following page.

(A Letter Sent To Henry Cowell)

Oct. 6, 1952

Dear Henry Cowell:

You will be hearing from David Larson, Chairman of the Music Department, to the effect that we have secured Thor Johnson to conduct the Cowell Symphony. Johnson is making a splendid record as the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and I think there will be many advantages in this arrangement. He has agreed to rehearse the arrangement with his orchestra in advance of its production here in order to assure that all the parts have been properly copied and reproduced. His copyists will also standardize the bowing marks, and Johnson himself will have this much additional familiarity with the work he is to conduct.

Other plans are maturing nicely, and we will keep you informed as progress is made.

Last night I was listening again to your Fifth Symphony, and consider the second movement as great as any music ever written.

With kind regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Samuel D. Marble
President

Wilmington College, Wilmington Ohio.

November 28, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers.-

I regret that I am unable to take the time to answer the questions in your letter. They are not simple questions but have far-reaching philosophical and historical ramifications. I should be unwilling to give them an off-hand and hurried answer.

With best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

[Signed] Walter Piston

Bernard Rogers, numbering the paragraphs in the letter which the author sent him, returned same with the followin comments.

(1) This is very complicated: music has become a large industry; managers are reactionary and dollar conscious; audiences like what they know, or think they know. New music takes more rehearsals.

(2) Music, if it is good, corresponds to the mood and tempo of its time.

(3) This would be pure guess work. A few pieces of Stravinsky and Bartok may last. No one knows.

[Signed] B Rogers

December 2, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers:

Your questions are very difficult to answer. The differences betwen contemporary music and earlier music would take a book to explain. Half the book would be needed to explain that many of these differences are entirely illusory. Contemporary music will, of course, be found to have produced popular classics. Every epoch does. Just which works these will be is anybody's guess. Many modern works that are already popular will lose their popularity, though some will not. Also certain works little played now will later come into their own. Betting on futures is not my game, since I am not a publisher. Writing music is like giving parties. You make it as good as you can at the time you are doing it. Making it memorable is not the main objective. You merely try to make it interesting and worthy.

Most sincerely yours

[Signed] Virgil Thomson

(Thomson is also Music Critic for the New York Herald Tribune)

Dec. 6, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers:

I have your letter of Nov. 21 and would like to help if I could. The subject unfortuantely is a vast one, and is not to be disposed of in a couple of paragraphs, which is unfortuantely all I have time for.

The "contemporary music" of every period has been ahead of the public, except for a small group of listeners and musicians whose curiosity and enthusiasm have led them to make a real contact with it, and to insist on its value. In former times when music was supported largely by patrons - i.e. when it did not have to depend on box-office receipts - this was so noticeable. Even in Europe where opera houses, symphony orchestras, etc. are sustained through government subsidies, it is not as noticeable as it is here. Under such conditions musicians play new music as a matter of course, and since new music is performed more frequently, the larger public catches up with it more quickly. This is a very rough generalization; but if you are really interested you might give some attention to the economics of the "music business".

Since 1920 two tendencies have become very pronounced; first, private patronage has become virtually a thing of the past; secondly, the musical public has grown, chiefly through the radio, to enormous proportions: from a few thousands mostly in the larger centers to many millions scattered throughout the Western World (America and Europe have to be considered together). This great public has been slower in accepting contemporary music, because of its size, if for no other reason. At the same time, performers tend to become discouraged also for the reason that it is more difficult and more expensive to play, than more familiar music; performers have to have rehearsals, and to pay royalties, to cite only two items.

Only on the basis of these facts can your first question be answered. Music since 1920(or 1910, or 1930) has differed from what went before for the same reasons that everything else has been different. Especially since the First World War people's attitudes towards practically everything have gone through decisive changes. Composers have found new means of expressing new attitudes; that is the fundamental fact on which one could elaborate indefinitely. Some composers found this more quickly than others, and it is they - especially Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Bartok - who have influenced every composer that has come after them - even those who have least suspected this.

In regard to your second question, there are certainly more than ten compositions written since 1920 that will endure. It doesn't mean much to speak of the average music lover, however. For one thing, tastes change. When I was a student, thirty-five to forty years ago, Brahms

and Wagner were still considered "high-brow" to say the least - composers, that is, for the intellectual few; Beethoven's later works were considered problematical and were seldom played; Debussy was still "modern" and therefore quite controversial and inaccessible to the average listener. You can see from these examples how times have changed! In those forty years I have seen many reputations rise and fall, others slowly decline, and some grow steadily in spite of apparent obstacles. No music that I can remember occupies the same place that it did then; and most music written in any period fails to outlast that period or even the season in which it is first performed. What has real vitality manages to endure, however unfavorable its reception may be at first or even for a considerable time.

I hope the above may be of some use to you.

With every good wish, yours sincerely,

[Signed] Roger Sessions

3670 Cimarron Street
Los Angeles 18, Calif.
December 1, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

Dear Mr. Miers:

I'm very glad that you have selected this particular aspect of modern music's problems for your research paper, and of course I'm glad to answer your questions concerning it.

1. In my opinion, the reason newer music is not given a wider hearing is the present tendency to force unattractive music which has been written in contemporary times upon the public, virtually ignoring contemporary music that is attractive and worthwhile. This is accomplished by a steady and relentless campaign of sneers waged by the proponents of ugly modern music, labelling all music not in their mold as "popular", and so on. The net result has been to disgust the general public with the ugly product, and leave no room for the worthwhile product. In other words, the public is expected to pay for something it does not want, and it is not allowed to make its own decisions.

2. In asking your second question, you have limited me in two ways. First, to works composed after 1920. There are several composers who lived beyond 1920 whose works I consider important--namely, Sibelius, Ravel, Respighi and Villa-Lobos--but I have no way of knowing at the present time which of their works was composed after this year. Then I assume from the wording of your question that you wish me to state not particularly the works I consider worthy of permanent appreciation by the average music-lover, but the works which have been heard enough by the average music-lover to make him consider them a permanent part of the repertoire. This makes quite a difference! With that in mind, I would say that so far, the only two of my works which would fit into such a list are the "Afro-American Symphony" and "In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy". Among other American composers' works I would name Howard Hanson's "Romantic Symphony", Creston's "Two Chroic Dances", Barber's "Adagio for Strings" and Deems Taylor's "Through the Looking Glass".

I am sure that there are others that some people would consider belong in the permanent repertoire, however, my feeling is that when the condition I mentioned in my answer to your first question is overcome(which I trust and believe will be soon) the entire musical situation will change and many of the much-publicized works we hear nowadays will gradually fall away.

With all good wishes to you, and thanks for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

[Signed] William Grant Still

Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pa.

November 22, 1952

Dear (name of music critic),

Here at Lycoming College I am doing a research paper on modern music; that is, music that has been written since 1920. Through this study I am trying to discover why newer music is not given a wider hearing.

As a music critic, you have reviewed many works by the modern composers. Do you think modern music will attain a place in the musical experience of the average person in the way that Beethoven, Tschaikovsky, and Richard Strauss have?

Would you be willing to list eight or ten compositions written since 1920 which seem to bear the makk of permanent appreciation by the average music lover? I shall not assume that your list reflects your rating or evaluation of these works.

Realizing you are an extremely busy person, I shall be very grateful to you for a brief reply.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Glenn Miers

- -

Letters were sent to the following music critics; (*) mark the ones who have replied: John Briggs*, Olin Downes*, Howard Taubman*, Donald Steinfirst*, Ralph Lewando , J. Fred Lissfelt*.

December 18, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers,

I am afraid your interesting letter of December 4th asks me more questions on matters of modern music than I could answer in the brief space of a letter. Nor could I easily inform you accurately as to the eight or nine compositions written since 1920 which seem to bear the mark of permanent appreciation by the average music lover. There are too many tastes, too many camps, and also too many compositions of varying and debatable significance for it to be possible to pull out a measuring yard in their field.

I am sorry I can't do better for you under the circumstances.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Olin Downes

(Music Critic - New York Times)

On the back of the letter which the author sent to him, Mr. Lissfelt replied:

Bartok will in all possibility survive, both his chamber music and orchestral works.
Hindemith's Mathis der Mahler and his ballet music for St. Francis of Assissi.
Alban Berg's Wozzek and possibly his violin concerto which we recently heard in our festival.
Villa Lobos Bachianas and his songs of Brazil.
Honegger's King David.
Britten's operas. Not so Menotti which are already dated and shockingly imitative but smart for the theater.
Stravinsky of the earlier period not so much later works although his new opera had excellent reviews in Stuttgart and maybe are reflecting something with which we have not yet caught up.
Vaughan Williams Choral works.

. . . . . .

The strangest phenomenon in our contemporary listening is to watch how some of these works are already showing symptoms of endurance and of enduring affection by the public. Schoenberg will endure in the works of his disciples. All Americans are still in experimentive stages and they would slay me for saying none of them will endure as has Stephen Foster, but I would be willing to wager my head on that statement.

I should be interested to read your essay and learn what younger minds are thinking about the subject.

[Signed] JFL

(J. Fred Lissfelt - Music Critic, Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph)

December 9, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Penna.

Dear Mr. Miers:

Replying to your letter addressed to Mr. Briggs, I would call your attention to several articles which appeared in the January 1951 issue of ETUDE. Also, there is to be an article in the January 1953 issue which we believe will hold much of interest to you in your study of modern music developments. This article is entitled "The New World of Sound" by George Rochberg.

With the hope that this information will prove helpful to you.

Yours very cordially

[Signed] Guy McCoy
Managing Editor

(John Briggs - Music Critic)

December 8, 1952

Dear Mr. Miers:

It is simply impossible for me to take the time out at the height of the busy season and to draw up a list such as you ask. Eight or ten works may seem like nothing at all, but if I were to try to set such a list down it would take me hours of conscientious thinking and listeing to formulate one. I regret I must bow out.

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Howard Taubman
Music Editor

(Howard Taubman - Music Editor, The New York Times)

32828

December 12, 1952

Mr. Glenn Miers
Lycoming College
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Miers:

This acknowledges receipt of yours of the 6th and I am very happy to give you whatever help I can.

I must say however that I believe your premise stated in your first paragraph is incorrect. You say, "I am trying to discover why newer music is not given a wider hearing." It is my opinion, after listening to music critically for fifteen years, that new music is given practically all the hearing it deserves and that the road of contemporary composers is no more difficult today than it has ever been.

I don't think it is possible to answer your question as to whether or not modern music will attain a place in the musical experiences of the average person in the way that Beethoven, Tschaikovsky and Strauss have. You have only to read up on your musical history to know that generally music reflects the era in which it is written and that compositiong is way ahead of listeners' appreciation. I am sure that you know,that, for example, Tschaikovsky's violin concerto, which is now performed considered a staple, was a distinct failure when performed contemporaneously. After the first performance of Brahm's D Minor Piano Concerto, now one of the keystones of the literature, two people applauded and the rest of the audience hissed. The St. Matthew Passion of Bach, one of the five or six great masterpieces of all time, in my opinion, lay untouched for one hundred years until it was revived by Mendelssohn. History is studded with similar examples, so I will be a very rash one indeed to say that the music that is being written today will or will not be popular with listeners one hundred years hence.

If music is a living art, which I believe it to be, then it must change with the times. The changes are so slow, they sometimes do not appear in our brief lifetimes. The great trouble is that quite properly every serious young composer, like a true artist, believes his work should be performed and he fails to realize that every great composer starting out had difficulty having his early works performed. Having elected to adopt the life of a composer, one must also accepts[sic.] its inevitable disappointments and heartaches, i.e., failure to hear his music performed whenever he wants.

I do believe that people are becoming more and more aware of current compositions. Here in Pittsburgh, during Thanksgiving week, we had a contemporary music festival in which only new music, i.e. of the last fifty years (and a great deal of it the last twenty-five years) was performed and the audiences did not walk out or scream or hiss, but I believe it was very well accepted as a trend. This is a very good sign considering that

this is twentieth century music being played for ears attuned to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. If you want to make a test, just play the most atonal music for a child under the age of adolescence and if he is musically minded at all, he will accept this new music without a quiver.

I should most certainly not be willing to list any compositions written since 1920 which seem to bear the mark of permanent appreciation by the average music lover. Firstly, I don't believe there is any such thing as an average music lover, and, secondly, I would be forecasting divinity by attempting to look into the future. I have troubles enough with the present and I would not be so rash.

I hope the foregoing is helpful to you and I am with all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] Donald Steinfirst
Music Critic

(Donald Steinfirst - Music Critic, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)