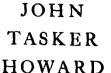


FLUENCES, BROADWAY AND JAZZ ECHOES ARE ALL CON-SIDERED FOR THEIR EFFECT ON OUR SERIOUS COMPOSERS.

John Tasker Howar





WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ARTHUR MENDEL



Our Contemporary Composers

AMERICAN MUSIC IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY





THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

NEW YORK



Howard Hanson Constant Champion of the American Composer (See page 74.)

COPYRIGHT 1941 by John Tasker Howard

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review to be printed in a magazine or newspaper

FOURTH PRINTING, FEBRUARY 1946

To R. H. H.

PREFACE

first book, Our American Music. That volume dealt with our historical development through three centuries, and after treating of the background and the lives and works of our earliest and nineteenth-century composers, discussed the music of our contemporaries, to 1930.

In the single decade since that time, so much of significance has taken place, so many new composers have appeared, viewpoints and conditions have changed so materially, that the need for a supplementary and companion volume has already become apparent; for a book dealing exclusively with recent and present-day American music and its composers—in short, with Our Contemporary Composers.

Anticipating this need, the author started work on such a volume several years ago, intending that it be ready for publication in 1938 or 1939. Illness delayed his progress, however, and although recovery is now complete, this incapacity was of such duration that it was thought wiser to seek aid in finishing the book, rather than to delay its completion and publication for

too long a period.

For this purpose the author sought the assistance of his friend and colleague, Mr. Arthur Mendel, who has borne a considerable share of the writing in the last four chapters, mostly from notes and material which the author himself had previously assembled. Through long association and through frequent consultation, Mr. Mendel is thoroughly acquainted with the author's viewpoints and opinions, and has been willing to present them rather than

vii

his own. For this, as well as for his labors, the author extends his sincere thanks.

In the matter of opinion, however, while the personal viewpoint of the author is of course essential to any work that aims at discussion of trends and idiomatic tendencies, he has felt in many cases that his personal opinions should be supplemented by, and even subordinated to, the best critical attitude of the present day towards its own music. Hence, quotations from reviewers of the daily press are frequently inserted, particularly those following première performances of important works. The research worker of the future may have rare sport from learning how we have overpraised our then-forgotten composers, and derided and belittled our Mozarts and Wagners.

As for the content of this book: an earnest attempt has been made to render it as comprehensive as possible, to include all those who have made themselves known for works in the larger forms. With the exception of Charles T. Griffes, who was so in advance of his time that he belongs to the present day, it has seemed superfluous to include lengthy discussion of composers who had passed from the scene before Our American Music was written, and whose lives and works are fully treated in that volume. Consequently, such men as Edward MacDowell, Horatio Parker, and others, are mentioned only for their influence on more recent musicians. In the field of light music, the same is true with Victor Herbert and John Philip Sousa.

It has also seemed unwise to lengthen these pages with detailed discussion of composers who are known exclusively or principally for shorter works—songs, teaching pieces, etc. The American song and its composers are treated fully in such books as William Treat Upton's Art Song in America. Hence, such estimable writers as Oley Speaks, Geoffrey O'Hara, Wintter Watts, and others, are not represented here. Some of the Broadway songsmiths are included, it is true, but in most cases for the effect their work is having on the nationalist expression of our symphonists rather than for their actual songs.

There are many whom we should like to thank for helpful co-operation in preparing the material for this volume. Our gratitude goes particularly to the composers who have answered the detailed and rather impertinent questionnaires which were sent them. These have been most helpful in gaining the composers' own viewpoints towards their work, and for showing what they are seeking to accomplish.

JOHN TASKER HOWARD

Glen Ridge, N.J., January, 1941

CONTENTS

I.	From Yesterday to	Тора	AY	•	•	•	•	•	3
2.	BRIDGES TO THE PAST.		•	•	•	•	•	•	10
3.	SAFE AND SOUND .		•	•	•	•	•	•	23
	Henry Kimball Hadl	ey	•	•	•	•	•	•	23
	Deems Taylor .		•	•	•	•	•	•	27
	John Alden Carpente	er		•	•	•	•	•	35
	Daniel Gregory Maso	o n		•	•	•	•	•	40
	David Stanley Smith.			•	•	•	•	•	45
	Charles Wakefield Ca	adma	n	•	•		•	•	47
	Sons of Harvard .		•	•	•	•	•	•	53
	Ernest Schelling .		•	•	•	•		•	62
	Richard Hageman					•	•	•	64
	From West of the A	Allegi	nenies			•			65
	Women Composers		•	•		•	•		72
	Howard Hanson		•	•		•	•	•	74
	Leo Sowerby .	•	•				•		80
	Albert Stoessel.			•			•	•	82
	Douglas Moore				•	•	•	•	85
	Seth Bingham .			•		•	•		90
	Abram Chasins			•	•				91
	Samuel Barlow	•	• .	•	•				92
	Werner Janssen						•		94
	Bernard Rogers								97
	Horace Johnson	•			•	•	•		98
	J ·· · ·								-

	٠	٠	
v	1	1	

CONTENTS

	Unnald Manufa								
	Harold Morris.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	99
	Randall Thompson		•	•	•	•	•	•	109
	Composer Performer	'S	•	•	•	•	•	•	111
4.	Unfamilian Idioms	•	•	•	•	•	•		114
	Pioneer Free-Thinke	rs	•	•	•	•	•		115
	Roy Harris .	•	•	•	•	•	•		132
	Aaron Copland	•	•	•		•			145
	Louis Gruenberg	•		•		•	•		150
	Emerson Whithorne		•	•	•	•			155
	Walter Piston .	•	•	•	•		•		159
*	Quincy Porter.	•			•	•			161
	Richard Donovan						•		162
	Richard Hammond		•						163
	Lazare Saminsky	•				•	•		164
	Frederick Jacobi		•			•	•		167
	Roger Sessions.		•			•			169
	Philip James .		•	•			•		171
	Bernard Wagenaar		•		•	•	•		174
	Werner Josten.			•	•	•	•		176
	John Duke .		•		•				178
	Harl McDonald		•			•	•		179
	Arthur Shepherd				•	•	•		181
	Some Other Middle	-West	erners	; .	•	•	•		183
	Nicolai Berezowsky								184
	Otto Luening .				•				186
	Ernst Bacon .		•						187
	Exotics by Birth or C	Choice							188
	Marion Bauer.	•	•	•			•		192
_	Namasaana								207
5.	Newcomers .	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
	Juilliard Alumni	•	•	•	•	•	•		208
	The Eastman Grou	p	•	•	•	•	•	•	214

	CONT	ENT	S				xiii
	From the Curtis Institute.		•				220
	From Other Schools and Te	eacher	rs .	•			224
	Dante Fiorillo	•	•	•	•	•	228
6.	Experimenters		•	•			237
	Scientific Innovators		•	•	•		238
	Unicorn and Lion			•	•	•	24 I
	Atonalists		•	•	•	•	248
	"New Music"	•	•	•	•	•	250
	From France		•	•	•	•	252
	The Clever Ones	•	•	•	•	•	256
7.	FOLK-SONG AND RACIAL EXP	RESSI	ons .	•	•		267
	From Indian Sources .	•	•	•	•	•	268
	The Anglo-Saxon Heritage	•	•	•	•	•	270
	Negro Composers	•	•	•	•	•	277
8.	Broadway and Its Echoes.			•	•		284
	Jazz	•	•	•	•	•	286
	"Swing" and its Performers		•	•	•	•	290
	Broadway Composers .	•	•	•	•	•	296
	Jazz in the Concert Hall .	•	•	•	•	•	304
	Further Echoes of Broadwa	y .	•	•	•	•	313
9.	Today and Tomorrow .	•	•	•	•		321
	Philanthropic Foundations.		•	•	•		324
	Composers' Organizations.		•	•	•	•	326
	Music During the Depression	on .	•	•	•		329
	The Federal Music Project	: •		•	•		330
	Other Institutions in the 19	30's .		•	•		332
	Radio and Sound Films .			•	•		334
	ASCAP and Payment for	Perfo	rming	Rights	•		335
	Grand Rights			•	•		340
	The NAACC						342

•	
XI	V

CONTENTS

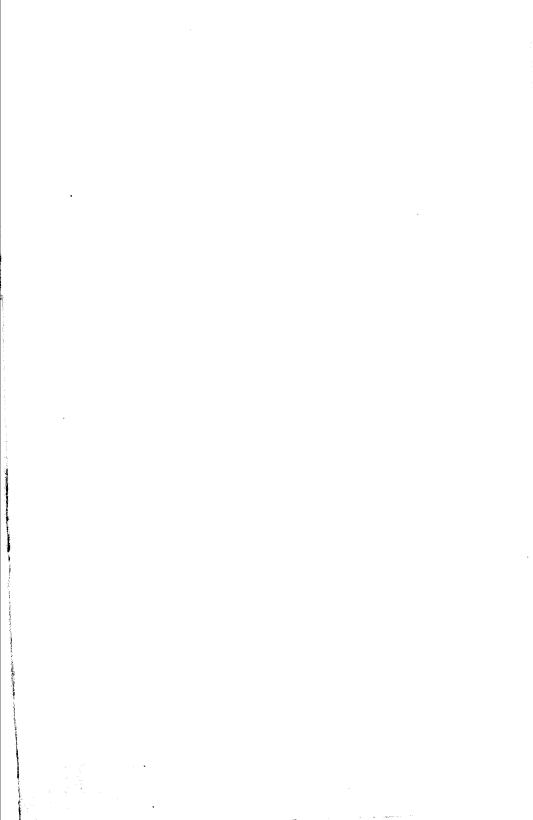
Perf	ormances by	Major Major	Orche	stras	•	•	•	•	343
Rece	ent Recruits		•	•	•	•	•		345
APPEN	DIX:								
ı.	A Selected	List of I	Books :	Relatir	ng to	Conte	mpora	ıry	
	American I	Music	•	•		•	•		349
2.	Recorded V								
	List of Con								
	Born .	•	•	•	•	•	•		372
4.	Orchestral	Works V	Which	Have	Rece	ived t	he Ea	st-	
	man Schoo	l Publica	tion A	ward	•	•	•		376
5.	Orchestral								
	liard Public	cation A	ward	•	•	•	•		377
6.	National B	roadcasti	ing Co	ompan	y Co	mmiss	ions a	nd	
	Prizes .		•	•	•		•	•	378
7.	Columbia 1	Broadcas	ting Sy	ystem	Comn	nissior	ıs .		379
8.	Composers	Who H	ave R	eceive	d Gu	ggenh	eim F	el-	
	lowship .		•	•	•		•		381
9.	Composers	Who H	ave Be	een Fe	llows	of the	e Ame	:ri-	
	can Acade	my in R	ome	•	•	•	•	•	382
10.	Pulitzer T	raveling	Schola	rs in	Music	•	•	•	382
11.	Works Iss	sued by	Societ	y for	the.	Public	cation	of	
	American	Music	•	•	•	•	•	•	383
12.	Works Co	mmission	ed by	the L	eague	of C	ompos	ers	385
13.	Works Ho	nored by	the Na	ational	Fede	ration	of Mu	ısic	
	Clubs		•	•	•		•	•	388
14.	American	Works I	Perform	ned at	the I	Festiv	als of	the	
	Internation	nal Societ	y for C	Conten	porar	y Mu	sic .	•	389
Index							•		393

ILLUSTRATIONS

Howard Hanson	•	•	•	•	•	•	Fro	ntis	riece
George W. Chadwic	k		•	•	•	•	•	•	16
Deems Taylor.		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	17
John Alden Carpent	er	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	48
	•			•	•	•	•	•	49
Roy Harris .		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	144
Aaron Copland	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	145
Vittorio Giannini		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	176
Samuel Barber.		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	177
Charles E. Ives		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	244
John Powell .		•		•	•	•	•	•	272
William Grant Still		•		•	•	•	•	•	273
Jerome Kern .		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	304
Coorne Garchwin						•	•	•	305

Our Contemporary Composers

AMERICAN MUSIC IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY

our composers have produced, particularly in recent years, the following pages are ample testimony. But it is not alone in size and bulk that these works are noteworthy; a large number of them are marked by the distinction and the individuality of their composers, and many of them seem to voice the spirit and temperament of America.

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 stage 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. To admit that we have produced no Beethoven or Wagner is not to belittle our musical product; as a nation we were in our musical infancy (perhaps we should call it our prenatal stage) when these giants were active, and since their time Europe itself has not produced their equal. Now that the world is eagerly awaiting a new musical Messiah, America is as likely to produce him as any nation of the Old World.

Nor is it a confession of present-day mediocrity to admit that in past years American composers leaned heavily on European models. That they should have looked across the Atlantic is thoroughly understandable; our nineteenth-century composers studied abroad, principally in Germany, at a time when Continental Europe was acknowledged to be the wellspring from which all musical tradition and progress flowed. Moreover, our racial roots

were not in the soil of the American continent, but in various nations of Europe.

The history of American music has been sufficiently treated elsewhere ¹ not to need recounting here. This volume is to be concerned with American composers of the present day, and the degree of success with which they have interpreted their native—or in some cases, adopted—country. Suffice it to say that periodically over the past three centuries, native elements in our music have been overwhelmed by wholesale immigrations of foreigners and foreign ideas—principally after the American Revolution in the late eighteenth century; in the years around 1848, when German refugees fled the Central European revolutions; and, in our own century, after the World War.

For many years Americans were content to tolerate such a state of affairs. The fact that a native or resident composer could write music that was "correct," and sounded well, was in itself sufficiently remarkable to constitute a creditable achievement. So the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw America producing a number of serious composers, writing in the large as well as the smaller forms, but almost without exception having little that was individual to say for themselves. There was a notion, too, that music-making must be a formal and polished affair.

We had John Knowles Paine (1839–1906) and Dudley Buck (1839–1909), and the various members of the Boston group who followed them, and who are discussed in the next chapter of this volume. There had, it is true, been individualists during the nine-teenth century: Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869); Stephen Foster (1826–1864), who contented himself with simple folk-songs; Ethelbert Nevin (1862–1901); and finally, Edward MacDowell (1861–1908), who was unique in being the first American composer to win recognition abroad for his works in the larger forms. But these men were indeed exceptions, and for that reason their names stand out in bold relief.

¹ J. T. Howard, Our American Music (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1931).