

SONNECK SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. II, Number 1

March, 1976

Editor: Nicholas E. Tawa

Spring Conference of the Sonneck Society

Two Centuries of Music in America

Conference by the Sonneck Society, to be held at Queensborough Community College, the City University of New York, Bayside, New York, May 28 - 30, 1976.

Friday May 28, 1976

10:00 - 11:30

Meeting of the Officers of the Society

12:00 - 1:30

Registration

1:30 - 2:15

Directions and Aims of the Society

Irving Lowens and Gilbert Chase

2:30 - 4:00

Anton P. Heinrich, Gilbert Chase, presiding

David Barron and Neely Bruce

4:15 - 5:45

Howard Shanet and Wilbur Maust

5:45 - 6:30

No host cocktail reception

8:30 - 10:30

The Western Wind, vocal sextet, in a concert of Early American Vocal Music. New England anthems and plain tunes by Yankee singing masters Billings, Morgan, Reed, and Law, are combined in this concert with mostly anonymous Southern folk-hymns, fusing-tunes, and revival songs. Described as "a superb ensemble of six singers," the Western Wind presents "a body of American song that is almost completely unknown to the twentieth century despite its extraordinary loveliness and strong character."
(Washington Star News)

Saturday May 29, 1976

9:30 - 11:00

Symposium: Topics in Eighteenth Century Music

Jon Newson, presiding, with Kate van Winkle

Keller, Richard Crawford, and Nicholas Temperley

11:15 - 12:45

Nineteenth Century Music Collections, Victor Yellin,

presiding, with Arthur Schrader and Alan Buechner

2:30 - 3:30

Recital of American Piano Music, 1780-1810, by

Neely Bruce, including the Battle of Trenton,

Variations on Hosier's Ghost, and selected dances

by Reinagle, and performed on a period piano

3:45 - 5:15

American Piano Music, Alan Mandel, presiding, with

Margery Lowens and Addison Reed

6:30 - 11:00

Liberty Supper (Sonneck Society Banquet), with

Howard Hanson, guest of honor, and Allen Britton,

keynote speaker, featuring a colonial evening of

food and entertainment, with punch reception,

colonial roast beef dinner, thirteen formal

toasts with appropriate musical selections,

A Revolutionary Celebration by the After Dinner

Opera Company, including the complete performance

of Buxom Joan, and ending with country dancing

for all led by James E. Morrison of the Country

Dance & Song Society of America.

Sunday May 30, 1976

10:00 - 11:30

Nineteenth Century Popular Songs, Vivian Perlis, presiding, with Lester Levy and John Graziano

11:45 - 1:30
3:00 - 5:00

Meeting of the Sonneck Society
The Harmonic Society, a chamber orchestra in colonial costume recreating concerts given by Morgan, Flagg, and Steiglitz, with the assistance of the band of the 64th Regiment of Foot, in Boston during the years 1771-74. The program will include works by Arne, Stanley, Filtz, Abel, Gossec, Piccini, Handel, and Lord Kelly.

Notes on Members

1. Professor Robert Copeland of Mid-America Nazarene College, Olathe, Kansas, continues with his work on the music of Isaac B. Woodbury. On January 28, he spoke on Woodbury's work before the Beverly, Mass. Historical Society; a lecture which, regretfully, the editor could not attend. Dr. Copeland has also conducted Dvorak's cantata "The American Flag" with his college's Chamber Choir and the Olathe (KS) Community Orchestra; has directed the Chamber Choir on an eleven day tour with concerts of American choral music (Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Boston); has given public lectures on Isaac Baker Woodbury at the University of Missouri - Kansas City. Current research (in addition to Woodbury): looking for English and American secular cantatas before 1854.

2. The fourth in a series of articles by Mason Martens on "Anglican Church Music in the Colonial Era" has appeared in the November 1975 issue (Vol. 1, No.5) of the Bicentennial Newsletter of the Episcopal Church, produced for the Committee on Observance of the Bicentennial of the Nation by Seabury Professional Services, 815 Second Avenue, New York City, 10017, from whom free copies are available.

3. Nyme Cooke, 18 Belfry Terrace, Lexington, Mass., is now directing the Walden Consort, a choral ensemble specializing in the compositions of early American musicians. Ms. Cooke and the Consort will appear March 20 in Lexington, Mass. In addition to her conducting and lecturing, Ms. Cooke was given National Endowment support to complete her Lexington Harmony: Early American Choral Music, a collection of what she considers to be the most outstanding compositions of the Yankee tunesmiths. Also to be included are detailed biographical sketches of the composers, notes on the historical and musical background, a description of the social milieu and the functions the music served in its day, a discussion of the tunesmiths' musical style(s), notes on performance practice, an annotated bibliography and discography.

Communications

1. From Dr. Charles Kaufman: Charles Kaufman, of Hunter College and the Mannes College of Music, writes concerning his current activities as follows: "At present I have the following in the works: 1) An annotated edition of musical extracts from the Diaries of George Templeton Strong. 2) A study of Owen Wister's musical activities including his compositions. 3) An update on my study of Dr. George K. Jackson. 4) An annotated edition and study of Cotton Mather's writings on music."

2. From William C. Loring: William C. Loring, 394 The Paces, 77 E. Andrews Drive, Atlanta, Georgia, who has examined and written about the music of Arthur Bird, writes: "Mr. Sam Dennison, the Curator of the

Fleisher Collection, has asked me to notify you, as a recipient of my monograph on The Music of Arthur Bird, of the following change in the availability of Bird's works. When about a year ago I sent you a complimentary copy of that explanation of American composers of the 1880's and '90's who might be of interest for Bicentennial Americana programming, the availability of Bird's works, other than by purchase of photocopies from the Library of Congress, was limited. Now, however, Mr. Sam Dennison, Curator, Fleisher Collection of Orchestra Music, The Free Library of Philadelphia, Logan Square, Philadelphia, Pa., 19103 (Tel. 215-686-5313) tells me he has acquired and processed for circulation all of Arthur Bird's works for orchestra and for solo instrument with small orchestra, and most of his chamber music, as marked in the catalog at the back of the monograph with an FC. So, the Fleisher Collection will now welcome your inquiries for scheduling loans of Bird's scores and parts - for free except for mailing and insurance charges as you know - for readings, performances, or recordings. This lending service includes universities, etc. world-wide. It may also be of interest to report that, as a result of the monograph and the Fleisher Collection's service, several organizations are programming some Bird in 1976. The Opus 5: A (Mardi Gras) Carnival Scene (9:30 minutes) is being recorded by one orchestra in January and performed by at least two others this season. The equally typical Opus 6: Second Little Suite (18 min.); Opus 16: Introduction and Fugue for Orchestra and Organ (14 min.); the pastoral Concert Overture in D; the Two Episodes for Orchestra (8 min.); the Serenade and the short dances for string orchestra; and the nonet for woodwinds (6 min.) and the two suites for double quintets of woodwinds and horns (including the Op. 40 Paderewski Prize-winning Serenade) are also receiving attention. Incidentally, as a result of requests, I have had a revision of that monograph and catalog (with times) printed on better stock, and, if you know of anyone who might want one, it is available for \$5.00 from me."

Profile No. 3

It should be of interest to S.S. members to know something of the activities of Dr. Robert E. Eliason. Dr. Eliason, Curator of Musical Instruments, Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan, 48121, is searching for instruments and information related to American woodwind and brass makers before 1875. Publications so far include "Early American Valves for Brass Instruments," Galpin Society Journal, 1970; Keyed Bugles in the United States, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972; and Graves & Company, Musical Instrument Makers, Dearborn: Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, 1975. Publications to appear soon include booklets on J. Lathrop Allen and E.G. Wright, Boston brass instrument makers; Isaac Fiske, Worcester band instrument maker; and Thomas D. Paine, Woonsocket, Rhode Island instrument maker. Articles to be published soon include "Brasses with Both Keys and Valves," "Graves & Company Letters to Marsh & Chase," "An Oboe, Bassoons and Bass Clarinets Made by Hartford, Connecticut Makers Before 1814," and a series of five articles on early American flute makers. The present research project is a booklet on George Catlin, instrument maker in Hartford and Philadelphia, to be followed by one on John and Horace Meacham of Albany, and a directory of known American wind instrument makers before 1875. Any information about early American makers or their instruments would be appreciated.

Profile No. 4

Anna-Marie Ettel, 465 W. Wheelock Pkwy., St. Paul, Minn., says that she has long felt the need for an organization such as the Sonneck Society, especially in the past few years when she was attempting to assemble a collection of 19th century music in somewhat of a vacuum, having found only one other person in Minnesota who shared her interest. She is a church organist, homemaker (Mrs. Michael F. Ettel) and a collector of 19th century popular lithography and music from the period 1830 to 1870. Pictorial covers of music provide a great source for a broad study of the period and consequently for the past 8 or 10 years she has concentrated on music and today has a fair-sized collection, possibly the largest music collection of the pre-Civil War era in the area. The past several years she has been a lecturer for Dr. Johannes Riedel's class in American Popular Music at the University of Minnesota. This past spring she appeared on two programs of Dr. Riedel's 10-hour American Popular Music course, which was offered for credit over the local educational station, Channel 2, KTCA-TV. She also assisted Dr. Riedel in researching a paper on Henry Russell, which will be published soon by the University of Utah.

Correction

In the report on the Yankee Doodle Society, presented in our last newsletter, the name of Dana Chalberg, leader of the American Music Consort, was omitted. Mr. Chalberg may be reached at 2935 11th Street, Santa Monica, Ca., 90405.

A Bicentennial Editorial
(Or, Why I Study American Music)

Most musical people who are concerned with understanding America's musical history agree that an important focus should be on the American society itself and its interrelation with the forces that shaped its culture. As Sidney Finkelstein states, music has "a social frame of reference", and "to place a work of music into the context of its social setting, thus giving a particular clothing to its general portrait, is the only way to understand it completely, for it is this society, with its problems and conflicts, that has engendered the psychology revealed in the musical portrait."

America is a modern society growing old. After two hundred years of experimentation with democratic life, there has arisen an urgent questioning of the quality of that life - its significance in the past, its meaning of today, and its portents for the future. The answers concern not only America but the world, for what America is, the world may become.

Since music, perhaps more than any other art, is a sensitive reflector of the human experience, an imperative need exists for an examination of music's role in a democratically-based society, the American society. There is an equally imperative need to form new premises for evaluating the American musical experience, to avoid value judgements inapplicable to the New World, and to be wary of artificial distinctions between what is perceived to be America's aristocratic, middle-class, and popular musical expressions, since the cultural lines are often blurred and may be inextricable, one from the other.

Moreover, it is the musical requirements of the American people

that should honestly be considered, no matter where the inquiry leads, and no matter what role, artistic or non-artistic, the people chose for their music to play. Within this scheme, the various functions of the musician, as citizen, composer, performer, and teacher must come under scrutiny. For example, rule by the majority and the demands of the many imply a crisis of identity for the solitary creator, who may wish himself an artist only to find himself relegated to the role of an artisan, who may wish to make society give him heed only to find society more forcibly demanding that he heed its needs.

Does this conflict serve a cross-fertilizing purpose, a musical check-and-balance? Is there an essential duality in America's musical experience, a mingling of the points-of-view of not only the artist and artisan but the professional and amateur, the aesthete and sensualist, the person of intellect and sensitivity and the commonplace human who is vulgar, irreverent and impatient with profundity? Is one necessary to keep his opposite on the straight path? So often, it seems, upsetting the balance has permitted a one-sided domination that led to a shriveling up of a real source for America's musical strength.

Finally, until recent times, most of the social and secular musical compositions in which Americans found meaning were uncomplicated and brief. For today's audiences to comprehend and enjoy these works fully, they must understand, as representative of a host of other composers' views, George Root's decision not to engage in "trying to do useless great things" but to attempt to satisfy the "tens of thousands of people whose wants would not be supplied at all if there were in the world only such music as they (the critics) would have." Root felt quality and vitality were to be found in compositions "from the simplest to the highest," from the truly original and new work, to one that "not only delights and benefits the world but is regarded in an important sense as original" by its audience. For him the real test was whether his compositions would be "received and live in the hearts of the people."

Root's humility is attractive; his democratic bent obvious. A little of his spirit must accompany every investigation into and understanding of America's musical history.

- Nicholas Tawa

Postscript to an Editorial

We continue to welcome any information that can be of interest to all members. What are you, or persons known to you, doing in American music? Are there books, scores, periodicals, recordings, or concerts that should be called to the attention of the general membership? Is there significant research we should know about? Do you have a point-of-view, however controversial, concerning American musical culture that you would like to share with others? Write to: Nicholas Tawa, Editor, Sonneck Society Newsletter, 69 Undine Road, Brighton, Mass. 02135.

The Yearbook for Inter-American Musical Research

(Editor's note: This is the first of a series of items, that will be appearing in forthcoming issues of the Newsletter, which will be on periodicals containing articles on American Music.)

The Yearbook for Inter-American Musical Research was founded by Gilbert Chase in 1964 as an adjunct to the Inter-American Institute for Musical Research at Tulane University. The first issue of Yearbook,