

SONNECK SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. III, Number 1

March, 1977

Editor: Nicholas E. Tawa

Sonneck-Society Conference

Place: Williamsburg, Virginia

Date: Friday, 15 April - Sunday, 17 April

Theme: The Centennial of the Phonograph's Birth.

Plans are still tentative. Some planned sessions are:

1. Friday afternoon: "The Recording of Folk Music in America, 1890-1970." Participants include Joe Hickerson, Library of Congress Archives of Folk Music, and Richard S. Spottswood, Editor of the Library of Congress Bicentennial Folk-Music Recordings.

2. Friday evening: Candlelight Concert, directed by Jack Darling.

3. Saturday morning:

A. "Making Recordings Today." Panel chaired by H. Wiley Hitchcock. Other members will include record-industry officials, like John Hammond of Columbia Records.

B. "Making Recordings Yesterday." A demonstration and explanation of actual record making (cylinders, acoustical discs, etc.).

4. Saturday afternoon:

A. Business meeting and elections.

B. Auction of Musical Americana (copy of the original Sonneck Bibliography, a Father Kemp, an 1872 Jubilee Singers, etc.).

Note. Any contributions of things to be auctioned off are welcome. The profits will go to the Publication Fund. Please help.

C. "Bands of the 1890s." Discussion session on Sousa, and other band leaders and their bands, by Paul Bierley, Raoul Camus, and others. This session will be followed by a reconstruction of a typical band concert of the 1890s, to be held in the Sunken Gardens.

5. Other sessions that are shaping up for Sunday and other days include:

- A. "Urban Folk Songs."
- B. "Mrs. Amy Beach." Paper and Concert.
- C. Dinner, plus dinner-music.

Notice to Members: There may be possible openings remaining in the program. Do you have something to offer? Please write to:

Mr. Arthur Schrader
Music Dept., William and Mary College
Williamsburg, Va. 23185

Item on the 1976 Conference

Raoul Camus has sent the Queensborough-Conference Booklet to 92 music libraries listed in Pavlakis' American Music Handbook. If you know of any other institutions who should receive it, please let Raoul know at the Music Dept., Queensborough Community College, Bayside, N. Y. 11364.

Note

Those members who have recommendations to make concerning possible meeting places for future conferences should write to President Irving Lowens. Welcome are suggestions on possible broad themes for the conferences. Equally welcome are suggestions on music and more limited subjects that should be aired. It would also be most helpful, when you write, to recommend those persons most capable of dealing with a specific topic.

The direction in which a society such as ours moves is influenced by the kinds of commentaries its officers receive from members. The more specific your advice, the easier it is to act. Nor is there any limit as to topic or format. American music covers a vast territory; it lends itself to a variety of presentations. To quote William Billings, none of us in the Sonneck Society, we hope, think ourselves "too wise to be taught, nor too old to learn; but be always ready to receive instruction from anyone."

Nominations

On the next page is a communication that we received from Alan Buechner concerning the election of officers at the upcoming Conference. Please read it carefully and reply to Alan as quickly as you can, since he and the rest of the Nominating Committee must meet within a month to decide on names.

Memo to: Members of the Sonneck Society
from: Alan Buechner
re: Nominations for Officers

At the close of the Queensborough Conference President Lowens announced that the next election of officers for the Sonneck Society would be held at our forthcoming Williamsburg Meeting. He asked me to form and chair a Nominations Committee whose responsibility would be to prepare a slate of candidates for the various positions. Accordingly, I have asked Rita Mead of Brooklyn College and John Graziano of City College to serve with me on this committee and they have graciously consented to do so.

Your committee, mindful of its own limitations, is most anxious to receive input on this subject from as many members as possible, so that it can come up with a strong slate. If you would kindly take a few moments to think about this matter and to communicate your thoughts, we would be most grateful. You may rest assured that all communications will be kept strictly confidential and will be shared only with members of the committee. Your letters should be addressed to me at my home: 12 Bryce Avenue, Glen Cove, New York 11542.

In closing I would like to share with you our best thoughts to date. In random order they are:

1. Basically, your committee is looking for "work-horses" rather than "honors-seekers," for it is the former who are needed to keep our fledgling society flying now that it has gotten off the ground.
2. In all likelihood there will be two names proposed for each post and the President will undoubtedly entertain additional nominations from the floor.
3. Members should understand that all positions in the society are automatically open. Incumbents, if they wish to be re-elected, must first be re-nominated, preferably by several members who are convinced that their re-nomination is warranted on the basis of service rendered to the Society. It follows that, if a present incumbent does not wish to be re-nominated or does not expect to have the time necessary for his or her duties, he or she would do the membership a great service if that information is communicated to the Nominations Committee well in advance of the election. The Committee, for its part, will determine the availability of nominees as nominations develop.

4. The present officership of the Society is as follows:

President Irving Lowens
1st Vice President Cynthia Hoover
2nd Vice President Vivian Perlis
Secretary Jean Geil
Treasurer Neely Bruce

Members at large:
Nicholas Tawa
Arthur Schrader
Gilbert Chase
Nicholas Temperly
Richard Crawford
Thornton Haggart

5. Members are reminded that the Sonneck Society is too small and impecunious an organization to provide for election by mailed ballots. Attendance at the Williamsburg Meeting is essential, for it will be at that event and that event only wherein their wishes can be implemented.

Cordially yours,

Alan Buechner

Some Recent Articles and Book Reviews

- Anderson, Simon. "The Unofficial Bands of the American Revolution." Music Educators Journal (December 1974), pp. 26-33.
- Cowen, Frances Perry. "Ye Olde New England Choir of Boston on the Chautauqua Circuit, 1915-1930." The American Music Teacher, 25 (Nov.-Dec. 1975), 12-13.
- Denisoff, R. Serge. "Massification and Popular Music." Journal of Popular Culture, 9 (Spring 1976), 886-94.
- Ellison, Ross W. "John Wyeth--Early American Tunebook Publisher." The American Music Teacher, 25 (Sept.-Oct. 1975), 22-24.
- Ellison, Ross W. "The Piano Sonatas of Alexander Reinagle." The American Music Teacher, 25 (April-May 1976), 23.
- Erley, Walter A. "Music in Centennial Times." The American Music Teacher, 25 (Jan. 1976), 17.
- Haar, James. "Randall Thompson and the Music of the Past." American Choral Review, 16 (October 1974), 7-15.
- Harman, Dave R. "The Musical Language of Carl Ruggles." The American Music Teacher, 25 (April-May 1976), 25-27, 31.
- Jackson-Brown, Irene V. "Afro-American Sacred Song in the Nineteenth Century: A Neglected Source." The Black Perspective in Music, 4 (Spring 1976), 22-38.
- Johnson, H. Earle. "Henry C. Lewis's Musical Magazine." Notes of the Music Library Association, 32 (Sept. 1975), 7-14.
- Kamin, Jonathan. "Parallels in the Social Reactions to Jazz and Rock." The Black Perspective in Music, 3 (Fall 1975), 278-98.
- Krenok, Ernst. "Teaching Composition in America: Reminiscences." The American Music Teacher, 24 (Feb.-March 1975), 6-11.
- Larsen, Arvid M. "William Smythe Babcock Mathews, American Music Scrivener." The American Music Teacher, 25 (Nov.-Dec. 1975), 15-16, 18.
- Maultsby, Portia K. "Black Spirituals: An Analysis of Textual Forms and Structures." The Black Perspective in Music, 4 (Spring 1976), 54-69.
- Moore, Mary R. "The Street Musicians of San Francisco." Music Educators Journal (Dec. 1974), pp. 42-45.
- Patrick, James. "Musical Sources for the History of Jazz." The Black Perspective in Music, 4 (Spring 1976), 46-53.
- Parthun, Paul. "Tribal Music in North America." Music Educators Journal (Jan. 1976), pp. 32-45.
- Pleasants, Henry. "America's Impact on the Arts: Music." Music Educators Journal (May 1976), pp. 43-51.
- Sims, D. Maxine. "An Analysis and Comparison of Piano Sonatas by George Walker and Howard Swanson." The Black Perspective in Music, 4 (Spring 1976), 70-81.
- Southern, Eileen. "America's Black Composers of Classical Music." Music Educators Journal (Nov. 1975), pp. 46-59.

- Stolba, K. Marie. "Music in the Life of Thomas Jefferson." The American Music Teacher, 25 (April-May 1976), 6-8, 12.
- Tawa, Nicholas E. "The Ways of Love in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Song." Journal of Popular Culture, 10 (Fall 1976), 337-51.
- Terri, Salli. "The Gift of Shaker Music." Music Educators Journal, (Sept. 1975), pp. 24-35.
- Thompson, Randall. "Requiem, Notes by the Composer." American Choral Review, 16 (October 1974), 16-32.
- Walgren, Carol. "Paul Creston: Solo Piano Music." The American Music Teacher, 24 (April-May 1975), 6-9.
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Yankee Transcendoodle

Joseph Byrd and Company, via Takoma Records, has just produced the recording Yankee Transcendoodle, an electronic recreation of American music, as if viewed through a somewhat crazed piece of colored glass. The recording is not "Authentic." It is, however, a happy-natured romp through American musical periods. The selections range, also, from the overwhelmingly melodramatic to the quietly sentimental. Billings, Root, Sousa, Cohan, and others parade before us in Californiakikal transformations. You now have an alternative to pink elephants, pink Fantasies for Patriotic Synthesizer. For more information or a record purchase, the address is: Takoma Records, P. O. Box 5369, Santa Monica, Ca. 90405.

Dictionary of Opera in the U.S.A.

Dr. Jocelyn Mackey writes: "I am editing a Dictionary of Opera in the United States, to be published by Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn. In addition to articles on composers, librettists, and works, there will be articles on historical periods (Revolution to present), Regions (including major companies), and articles on such topics as Radio, Movies and TV, Awards and Prizes, Opera Workshops, and American Subjects in Foreign Operas. I am seeking people who have done special work in any aspect of opera in the United States to contribute articles, advice, and/or assistance." Please write to Dr. Mackey, 803 Riverside, Muncie, Indiana, if you have something.

News from the Smithsonian

The Smithsonian Institution has announced the release of Duke Ellington 1938, the latest recording on the Smithsonian Collection label produced by the Institution's Division of Performing Arts. The two-record album features a selection of 32 outstanding recordings made by the Ellington orchestra in 1938. Selections were

chosen by Gunther Schuller, and include such well-known works as "The New Black and Tan Fantasy" and "Pyramid." Mr. Schuller also contributed the liner-note essay for this tribute to Ellington.

The recording is available through the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 1641, Washington, D. C. 20013.

Center for Southern Folklore

The Center for Southern Folklore announces the availability of The American Folklore Films & Videotapes: An Index, a comprehensive listing of over 1800 films and videotapes on American folk traditions. This includes a Subject Index, with broad categories such as "Folk Music-Instruments (Accordion, Dulcimer, Fiddle)" etc.; also, Film and Videotape Annotations--for example, "Fiddler's Grove . . . a documentary record of the performances and participants in the Old-Time Fiddler's and Bluegrass Convention held in Union Grove, North Carolina in the spring of 1973." The cost per copy is \$15. Write to: P.O. Box 4081, 1216 Peabody Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

A Bicentennial Tribute from Abroad

The Oesterreichische Musik Zeitschrift has just released a special issue in English devoted to music and musical life in the United States as a Bicentennial tribute. Among the contributors of articles on various subjects are Ernst Krenek, Elliott Carter, John Eaton, Gunther Schuller, Julius Rudel, Barry S. Brook, Irving Lowens, Robert Breuer, and Boris Schwarz. Copies may be purchased from the American agent: Theodore Front Musical Literature, 155 N. Vicente Blvd. Beverly Hills, Ca. 90211.

Homespun America

Alan Lewis, of Brattleboro, Vermont, has informed us that the recording Homespun America (Vox Box SVBX 5309) is now available, and that the performances are excellent. This three record set includes nine songs of the Hutchinson Family, as well as instrumental music representative of mid-nineteenth-century New Hampshire. Mr. Lewis is enthusiastic over the selections and recommends the recording to the entire membership.

A Book by Lester Levy

There has recently been issued a fourth book by Lester Levy, Picture the Songs, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

The book contains reproductions of 100 lithographed song-sheet covers of the nineteenth century, each having to do with a well known artist or an event of some contemporary importance. Each has an accompanying article relative to the picture. The artists include James McNeil Whistler, Winslow Homer, and 50 others. The period of the illustrations runs from 1826 to 1895.

Jingles

To those of you who may not be aware of it, recently published is the book Great Songs of Madison Avenue, edited by Peter and Craig Norback, and issued by the New York Times Book Co. for \$7.95. Harold Schonberg has reviewed it as follows: "What piece of music has been heard by more people than anything else? It is not the Beethoven Fifth. . . . No. Rather it is, perhaps, "My Beer is Rheingold, the Dry Beer." Or "Winston Tastes Good The point is that all of these jingles inundate the American and even the foreign ear. Day after day they are drummed into the conscious and subconscious" Mr. Schonberg goes on to say that serious studies in areas such as this are neglected but needed. He is pleased that the Norbacks "have brought together the words and music of 115 jingles." However, he is unhappy that "the Norbacks have not treated the subject with the awful solemnity that it deserves. There is no critical apparatus except for a short introduction." Nor is there and discussion of individual jingles, how they came into being, or for that matter who wrote the lyrics and the music!

Nevertheless, we must be grateful that some one has taken the trouble to issue such a book at all. Mr. Schonberg claims the music is amazingly "American" in sound, and obviously has something "that has captured the imagination of the megamillions of listeners they [the jingles] are constantly beseiging."

[Editor's note: It is refreshing to find at least one book published in the past year that is so different from the usual spinach and cabbage served up by so many other writers. Yes, the publication leaves much to be desired. But it does help to remind us of how much we still have to explore in American musical culture and of how tiresome it becomes to see the same old titles on the same old subjects by the same old people issued year after year.]

Louisville Recordings

Mr. William Loring has informed us that the Louisville Orchestra, under Jorge Mester, has issued three recordings of American music as their Bicentennial contribution. Ls-753 has on it Chadwick's Euterpe overture, and Converse's Edymion's Narrative and Fliver Ten Million; Ls-754, Foote's Francesca da Rimini, Bird's Carnival