

The Maud Powell

◆ SIGNATURE ◆

WOMEN IN MUSIC

*Joy
finzi*

INSIDE

Ursula Vaughan
Williams

Joy Finzi

Jeannette Thurber

Yvette Guilbert

Judith Anne Still

Marnie Hall

Betty Roe

Jeanne Singer

Daughters
of Industry

Winter 1997
Volume 2, Number 1



*Best Love
Ever*

Celebrating American Diversity

Three more reasons to obtain your

Cambria Catalog

William Grant Still

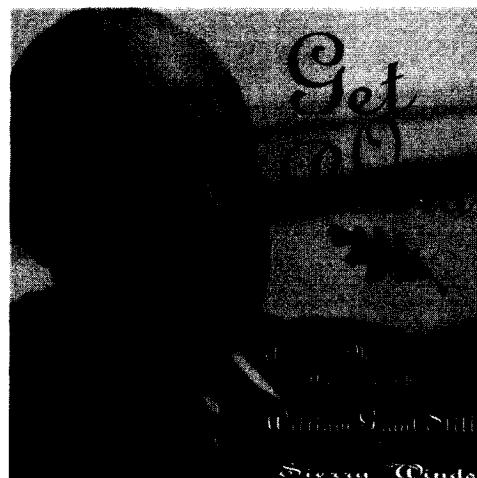
Deon Nielsen Price

Maya Angelou

We are proud to celebrate America's diversity in these fine new recordings

Contact us for our compact disc and historical cassette catalogs

Cambria Compact Discs
Distributed in North America
by **ALLEGRO**
1-800-288-2007

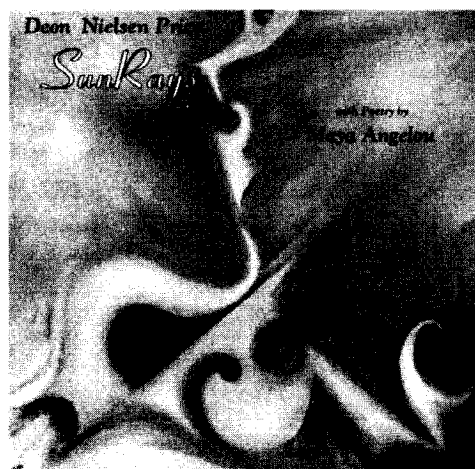


William Grant Still, *American Music for Woodwinds*, The Sierra Winds, includes "Summerland," "Quit dat Fool'nish, two Folk Suites and more

CELEBRATING AMERICAN DIVERSITY
WILLIAM GRANT STILL
SYMPHONY NO. 3 • FESTIVE OVERTURE



A Festive Sunday with William Grant Still, includes Symphony No. 3, "The Sunday Symphony," Festive Overture, Three Rhythmic Spirituals and more



Deon Nielsen Price, *Sun Rays*, Deon Nielsen Price, piano, Darryl Taylor, tenor, with "To the Children of War" based on poems by Maya Angelou

Cambria Master Recordings

Box 374, Lomita, CA 90717 USA

Telephone 310-831-1322 / Fax 310-833-7442

♦ FROM THE PUBLISHER

"The role of the genuine unpretending amateur, the assistant, the befriender of artists, is especially fitted to the cultivated woman....With lady amateurs then will chiefly rest the happy task of preparing...the soil which must foster the young genius of future American art." --from Fanny Raymond Ritter's speech on "Women in Music" at the Association for the Advancement of Women at the Centennial Congress of 1876

Today my mind called up a puckish vision in response to the protests against the proposal to move the sculpture of the early woman suffrage leaders from the basement of the United States Capitol to the Rotunda. A beautiful statue it is not. But those pioneers were beautiful in spirit and it is that spirit which shines through. All of a sudden I saw how the Capitol Rotunda and Statuary Hall would look filled with statues of women and men of every race and heritage whose contributions lay in fields outside politics, yet whose personal courage and vision have made a difference in the quality of our lives—and would make an even greater one if we acknowledged them.

How different our attitudes might be if held up before us were the examples of women like those represented in this issue of *Signature* and of the many men and women whose lives and art they have supported and championed! Children would have role models of each gender and every color to look up to and all the arts to inspire them to look inward to their own creative gifts.

Maud Powell used to give enormous credit to the dedicated work of women for the burgeoning growth of music and music appreciation in America. Women are still the backbone of culture in America, as in much of the world. In this issue, we honor those women, both named and unnamed, who have striven for a better world based on the broader understanding and tolerance that proceeds from the cultivation of the arts.

The American woman suffragists understood the importance of this vision as a natural manifestation and outcome of their fight for suffrage. When women fully claim their own creative power, then and only then will the vision of the suffragists be fulfilled. Perhaps that simple sculpture of three proud women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott—rising from a block of unfinished marble symbolizes the yet unfulfilled promise of their vision.

We can be inspired by those women who have led the way, like those profiled in this issue of *Signature*. And we can be heartened by the many women who are today leading lives dedicated to the cause of art.

Through the efforts of The Maud Powell Society in publishing *Signature*, more and more of these courageous women are emerging from their quiet, nearly invisible status into the light of recognition for all that they do and know that contribute to our cultural well-being in the face of enormous odds. The work of these women lights the way to a civil, courteous society because it illuminates the highest and most profound qualities of human nature found in the power to create.

We are pleased to present these noble figures to you while reminding you that *The Maud Powell Signature* is also a pioneering enterprise created by women to inspire and enlighten women and men with information heretofore hidden, like the suffrage statue, metaphorically, in the basement. This issue reminds us that no artistic enterprise can thrive without the enthusiastic and tangible support of all those who love music and the arts and who understand their intrinsic importance to our lives.

Karen A. Shaffer
Publisher

CONTENTS

Jeanne Singer	5
Three Daughters of American Industry.....	6
Joy Finzi	10
Ursula Vaughn Williams.....	12
The Vocal Point	14
Jeannette Thurber	18
Legacy of Hope.....	22
William Grant Still	23
Betty Roe	26
Have you ever heard of.....	27
Marnie Hall	28

COVER: Joy Finzi
(Courtesy The Finzi Trust)



The Maud Powell

• SIGNATURE •

is a quarterly publication of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education, a non-profit educational organization.

Subscriptions, \$28 yearly, 703/532-2055.

The Maud Powell Signature invites the submission of articles. Please call or write for guidelines.

Contents copyright 1997 by The Maud Powell Society. Contents may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from The Maud Powell Society.

5333 N. 26th Street, Arlington, VA 22207
703/532-2055 telephone 703/532-1816 fax
E-Mail: kshaffer@erols.com

Karen A. Shaffer
Publisher

Pamela Blevins
Editor

Janet S. White
Advertising Sales and Art Director

Karen A. Shaffer
Subscriptions

Susan Serra
Production

Editorial Advisory Board: Jane Ambrose (USA), Christine Ammer (USA), Virginia Bortin (USA), Margaret Campbell (England), Sylvia Glickman (USA), Annette Kaufman (USA), Anya Laurence (Canada), Jo Leighton (Scotland), Karin Pendle (USA), Nora Sirbaugh (USA), Judith Tick (USA).

LIMITED EDITION REPRODUCTION

Maud Powell's Hand

Available for the first time..actual cast of the famous violinist's hand taken by Warren B. Davis on April 6, 1893. Each reproduction is numbered, and measures 11" long by 5" wide, 2 1/2" deep. In white marble or bronze finish.

\$40

shipping included



Please specify finish
Check or money order
only, payable to

Janet S. White
Art Reproductions
75 Webster Street
Worcester, MA 01603
508 756-5618

Leonarda Showcases Women Composers

Article on founder Marnie Hall in this issue of "Signature"

Call or write for free catalog: Mention separate LP catalog if you want it sent too.
Leonarda Productions, Inc., PO Box 1736, New York, NY 10025-1559. Telephone 212-666-7697.

Women Composers – recordings, poster, music. • **CDs of American Music, African-American Composers**, and other "finds." • **Book & Cassettes to integrate women composers** into general music & women's studies courses.

Celebrating Women Composers! a colorful 18" x 24" poster

features a time line of 200 representative women composers from the 9th century to the present day, each listed by country, overlayed on a central image of a french horn superimposed upon a subtly inflected background liberally sprinkled with musical symbols. Bordering the central image is a *Necklace of Facts* which relates particular accomplishments of individual women composers from many countries over the past six centuries. An educational tool as well as an attractive work of art, the poster is the result of a collaboration between two Minnesota artists, internationally-known composer Judith Lang Zaimont and award-winning water-colorist Carol V. Gray. Cost: \$14.95 + \$4.00 (\$5.00 for rush orders) shipping & handling. Satisfaction guaranteed or we'll credit you \$14.95 if returned within 30 days.

Magic in the Attic

An historical musical fantasy by
Lois Core Yopp. For ages 4-94

featuring 'Bach, Beethoven, Vivaldi, Brueghel, Vermeer and Ben Franklin



Bach plays his music
Paintings come alive
An elephant plays the harpsichord
Beethoven sits on the moon and scatters stars
Vivaldi blows a winter wind
Book with CD \$24.95. Book with tape \$19.95.
Add \$4.00 shipping/handling + tax in New York.

First in a series. Coming soon: *Rebels in the Attic* • *The Queen in the Attic*

"*Magic in the Attic* is a work of soaring imagination." David Dubal, pianist and author

Jeanne

Singer

I was amazed and delighted when I received the first promotional mailing for *The Maud Powell Signature*. I could hardly believe my eyes! The first issue was going to feature Elinor Remick Warren and Florence Price, two twentieth-century composers of *melodic and tonal music*. Both of these women have been largely ignored by the "highbrow" arbiters of musical taste and were never "in the loop"—that loathsome term borrowed from politics.

Alas, in music, as in all the arts, politics has much to do with what is in vogue and who receives prestigious recognition. I had a personal interest in both of these composers. Although I never met them, their music had crossed my own musical path and I was curious about their lives and careers. I immediately subscribed to *Signature* and reveled in the fascinating articles about Warren and Price—two very different lives and musical styles yet each woman shared the basic musical language of tonality.

Elinor Remick Warren and I both belonged to the National League of American Pen Women, a venerable organization for professional women in the creative arts. Founded in 1887, it included writers, poets, artists and sculptors but women composers were not invited to join until 1925. This delayed action was typical even of intelligent professional women who subconsciously did not accept other women as "serious" composers.

In 1974, I attended my first National Pen Women Convention. I was appalled that not one note of music composed by a Pen Woman was heard. Instead, music was provided by outside hired musicians who performed standard works composed by men. I had expected to hear music by distinguished Pen Women such as Warren and Radie Britain, but no such luck. The convention featured an impressive art exhibit, poetry readings, displays of published books and live lectures but *no original music*. When I asked "Why?" I got a blank stare. No one had thought of it!

I soon found myself appointed National Music Chair and immediately instigated a new policy: "Henceforth, Pen Women's music will be performed at every convention." Today this policy is taken for granted.

As National Chair, I was also in charge of running various music contests for women throughout the United States. Elinor Remick Warren phoned me several times about the requirements and sent me tapes and scores. I was delighted to become acquainted with some of her music before I sent it on to the contest judges. I also had the opportunity to peruse the music of many others.

A few years later, I administered the NLAPW's newly established "Mature Women's Scholarship Award for Music." This cash award is given biennially to women composers over thirty-five who are not Pen Women. I had pressed for this award. Help traditionally went to young talent. Yet many talented women who temporarily set aside their own creative careers to raise children often need extra help and encouragement after the age of thirty-five to

resume their musical endeavors. The program filled a need and hundreds of scores and tapes from women over thirty-five soon poured in.

As ongoing New York State Music Chair, I initiated and still present annual concerts of Pen Women's music at Lincoln Center and have obtained "Meet the Composer" grants for participating composers. We have given twelve consecutive concerts.

Independently, I compiled and distributed nationwide a series of five half-hour radio programs of music composed by contemporary American women. All in all, I heard quite an earful of the kinds of music women are composing today.

In 1979, composer Judith Zaimont and I organized and produced a week-long festival of women's music from medieval to modern times. I heard dozens of unfamiliar works, most quickly forgotten. But a few composers stuck in my mind. One was Florence Price, of whom I had not heard before but whose music delighted me. It was so fresh, tuneful and very American and it stayed with me for fifteen years.

Recently I was hunting for some American "classical" music with strong general audience appeal to present on upcoming concerts of The Musinger Players, my vocal-chamber ensemble. I recalled Florence Price and tried to find some of her scores. What a chore! Obvious places like the American Music Center and the Lincoln Center Library had heard of her, but no one seemed to have her music or know where to get it. I finally tracked down a modest collection at the University of Arkansas and ordered photocopies of the hand-copied manuscripts in their possession. Practically nothing was in published form. But—happy ending—after deciphering and learning these original scores, we

continued on page 30



◆
Jeanne Singer
is a concert
pianist and
award-winning
composer
living in
New York City.

The nineteenth-century American industrial revolution spawned patrons in every major city who built and sustained artistic and musical institutions that have become the backbone of American culture. The roles of bringing European culture to America and commissioning new works by Americans were taken up mainly by women—wives and daughters of wealthy industrialists who funded projects and institutions that would raise American culture to the level of her material wealth.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER

Isabella Stewart, born April 14, 1840, into the New York aristocracy, and married in 1860 to John L. Gardner of the Boston aristocracy, was celebrated for her flamboyant public life. Her name appeared regularly in the New York society magazine *Town Topics*, where correspondents wrote about her pearls and Worth gowns as well as her love of lions and athletics, music, art, musicians and artists. What they did not share with readers was the cruel tragedy that changed Mrs. Gardner's life and eventually led this spirited and visionary woman to become one of America's great patrons of the arts.

In 1863, Isabella Gardner gave birth to her only child, a boy called "Jackie," who died from pneumonia in the spring of 1865. After Mrs. Gardner nearly died from a later miscarriage, she was devastated to learn that she could have no more children. For two years, she struggled with depression and illness before her effervescent spirit was restored. She



Courtesy Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Mrs. Gardner was photographed by Baron de Meyer in 1906. Her passion for the arts drew writers, composers and painters to her. Among those who benefitted from her friendship were Henry James, James McNeil Whistler, John Singer Sargent and Charles Martin Loeffler.

turned her energies to rearing her three orphaned nephews and once again became involved in Boston's flourishing social circles. In the 1870s she began purchasing rare books and manuscripts, collecting paintings and other "fine" objects and befriending many artists, writers and musicians active in Europe and America.

She was often to be found in the audience of public lectures at Harvard, particularly the inspiring art history lectures of Professor Charles Eliot Norton. There she probably met Bernard Berenson, a brilliant scholar whom she befriended, helping the young man to go abroad where he studied Italian art. Berenson became her trusted art advisor and assistant in the purchase of many of the art treasures housed today in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

Mrs. Gardner's love of music, her passion for art and her ability to recognize talent in others com-

bined to create a remarkable environment that drew the brightest and most gifted young men of the day. Although she possessed no great beauty, "she was so vivacious and her mind was so alert that 'every one who has ever talked with her declares that she is the most brilliant, charming, and attractive woman on earth.'"¹ Those who benefitted from her patronage and enjoyed her friendship include the novelist Henry James, artists John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), James McNeil Whistler, Dennis Miller Bunker and composer Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935).

Over the years, Mrs. Gardner had formed a significant friendship with John Singer Sargent, one of the finest painters of his generation who was also an excellent pianist and a friend of the French composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924). Sargent was admired for his musical gifts and for his ability to play the very difficult piano part of Fauré's *Violin Sonata in A Major* with the Alsatian violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, in the salons of Paris.² When Loeffler immigrated to Boston in 1882 to play violin in the newly-formed Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mrs. Gardner not only invited him to perform at her home but also promoted his compositions.

Loeffler's music was far from conventional. He used odd tone colors and unusual combinations of instruments, such as oboe paired with viola and saxophone paired with viola d'amore, a seventeenth-century, multi-stringed "cousin" of the modern violin and viola. This instrument, rescued from oblivion by Loeffler, was of particular interest to Mrs. Gardner, who often asked him to play the viola d'amore at her public and private concerts.

After her husband's death in 1898, Mrs. Gardner, then 58, began in earnest to work toward the realization of the museum that she and her husband had planned. She purchased land in the filled-in Fens on the outskirts of Boston and scoured Europe for architectural elements—columns, arches, fireplaces, and iron-work—that she had incorporated into the building. She designed the building herself and supervised every detail of its construction, tantalizing the public by keeping her plans for the museum wholly to herself. For its seal, she chose a shield bearing a phoenix (symbol of immortality)

THREE DAUGHTERS *of*

WOMEN WHO AFFECTED THE

and the motto "C'est mon plaisir" ("It is my pleasure"). Gardner herself arranged her collection within its walls.

The museum at Fenway Court (now the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) was officially opened on New Year's night 1903 with a concert of Bach, Mozart, Chausson and Schumann, performed by fifty members of the Boston Symphony under the direction of Wilhelm Gericke.

Mrs. Gardner opened Fenway Court to the public on February 23, 1903, with an all-Loeffler concert to which she invited the music publisher Gustav Schirmer. Mrs. Gardner's success in fostering the relationship between composer and publisher enabled Loeffler to generously make arrangements with Schirmer for the first American publication of Fauré's music.

The day after the 1903 concert, Loeffler gave Mrs. Gardner a birthday present of a viola d'amore made by Tomasso Eberle. Mrs. Gardner reciprocated this gift in 1918 with a Stradivarius violin from Paris that she loaned and eventually gave to Loeffler.

In addition to supporting Loeffler, Mrs. Gardner was a major patron of both the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Kneisel Quartet (1885-1917), comprised of the Symphony's principal players and led by Franz Kneisel (1865-1926), the concertmaster. She continued helping other musicians who joined the Boston Symphony, like the Venetian violinist and opera composer Pier Adolfo Tirindelli (1858-?). She promoted music education by holding and judging an annual piano competition at the New England Conservatory, awarding the winner a grand piano. And she invited many well-known European and American musicians to play at her salon, including Kreisler, Casals, Paderewski, Busoni, the Kneisel Quartet, and Nellie Melba.

During the height of anti-German hysteria in 1917, when the United States entered the First World War, Mrs. Gardner publicly refused to condemn the many German musicians in the Boston Symphony and maintained her close friendship with its German conductor Karl Muck (1859-1940), even after Muck was suspected of being a German spy and forced to resign in 1918. Mrs. Gardner objected to pressure put on Muck to begin every concert with "The Star-

Spangled Banner," arguing that an orchestra leader had the right to choose the orchestra's programs.

From March 25, 1918, Muck was interned for eighteen months at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, but never tried for espionage. He resumed his career in Europe. For years thereafter, Mrs. Gardner was treated cruelly by the press for her support of Muck and endured public hostility for courageously not compromising her faith in Muck in the face of his widespread condemnation.

Although Mrs. Gardner chose in her later years to live quietly on the fourth floor of her home overlooking Boston's Fenway, she devoted her remaining energies and diminishing financial reserves to her museum. In 1919, she suffered a stroke and never walked again. But she never lost her courage. In November 1922, she wrote a friend: "I'm quite an invalid, but cheerful to the last degree. I think my mind is all right and I live on it. I keep up a lot of thinking, and am really very much alive....I have filled [my house] with pictures and works of art, really good things I think, and if there are any clever people I see them. I really lead an interesting life. I have music, and both young and old friends..."³ That same year, Sargent painted a final watercolor portrait, "Mrs. Gardner in White," and on the night of July 14, 1924, the woman once called the "brightest and breeziest woman in Boston," died peacefully.

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum that houses one of the world's greatest art collections, still offers regular concerts. Loeffler's viola d'amore is being played by Joseph Pietropaolo, a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Loeffler's music is finally being revived and recorded. The Viola d'amore Society of America, headed by Myron Rosenblum and Daniel Thomason, continues the work that Loeffler began.

Gardner's life inspired gossip and fiction—Eleanor Palffy's 1951 novel *The Lady and The Painter*—but only one modern biography, Louise Hall Tharp's *Mrs. Jack* (1975). Isabella Stewart Gardner's love of music and art, as well as her determination to realize her dreams, set a fine example for her contemporaries and followers both in America and abroad. Her legacy lives today.

ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the daughter of Albert Arnold Sprague, founder of Sprague and Warner, the largest wholesale grocer of the time in America, and Nancy Atwood Sprague, was born in Chicago on October 30, 1864. A pianist and composer, she was an active amateur musician (she didn't need to play for money) and belonged to many of Chicago's musical clubs. She studied composition, wrote both music and musicological papers, and for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, performed the Schumann Piano Concerto with the Chicago Symphony under Theodore Thomas.

When her husband Frederic Shurtleff Coolidge, an orthopedic surgeon whom she had married in 1891, moved his medical practice to rural Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Mrs. Coolidge, far away from her active musical life in Chicago, had to create her own musical world in this small New England village.

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The impact of her patronage is staggering in its scope and will endure throughout the ages to come.

Coolidge Foundation Collection, Library of Congress



AMERICAN INDUSTRY

COURSE OF 20TH CENTURY MUSIC

She continued her composition studies with Daniel Gregory Mason (1873-1953), Richard Epstein, and Rubin Goldmark (1872-1936), and played chamber music with musicians she invited to her home. She had wanted to study with Loeffler, but he was not taking students.

Coolidge's husband and father both died in 1915, and her mother died the following year. With the fortunes she inherited, Mrs. Coolidge set up a pension fund for the Chicago Symphony, founded the Anti-Tuberculosis Association in Pittsfield, built a music hall at Yale University, helped fund the Third Street Settlement School in New York, endowed medical research fellowships at Columbia University, and helped begin the Bank Street College of Education in New York.

In May of 1916 she established the Berkshire String Quartet, taking Edward De Coppet's patronage of the Flonzaley Quartet (1902-1928) as a model, and began her active musical patronage literally where Mrs. Gardner left off. In 1918, Mrs. Coolidge engaged members of the second generation Kneisel Quartet (the first generation played for Mrs. Gardner) to form the Elshuco Trio and began the Berkshire Festival of Chamber Music at South Mountain. A bronze relief plaque at the Temple of Music at South Mountain gives Mrs. Coolidge the fitting title "The Fairy Godmother of Chamber Music." As if by magic, due to Mrs. Coolidge's influence, people in the Berkshires became so interested in music that by 1936 Tanglewood was established as the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Mrs. Coolidge established festivals similar to South Mountain in England, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Russia that were held in San Juan, Mexico City and Honolulu during World War II.

In 1925, after building the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress and creating the Coolidge Foundation in Washington, D.C., the "Lady Bountiful of Chamber Music," as she was named by Willson Cobbett in his *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, spent time in Italy and formed friendships with the Italian composers Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), whose Association for New Music she supported, and Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), winner of her 1920 Berkshire Prize for his **Rispetti e Strambotti**.

Malipiero's lifelong ambition to edit and publish the seventeen-volume *opera omnia* of the then little-known Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was realized when Mrs. Coolidge funded this enormous undertaking. Completed in 1942, it remains one of the greatest contributions ever made to musicology. After this project, Mrs. Coolidge helped Malipiero publish the work of another unknown, unpublished Italian composer—Antonio

Vivaldi (1675-1741). Neither Malipiero nor Mrs. Coolidge lived to see Vivaldi's *opera omnia* completed, but the value of beginning this work was greater than either of them could have imagined and is largely responsible for the current revival of interest in Vivaldi's music.

Mrs. Coolidge funded high-quality publications, printed on hand-made paper to last for centuries, donated complete collections to her favorite libraries, and arranged music festivals to feature Monteverdi's music along with the music of Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-87), published by the French musicologist Henry Prunières with assistance from Mrs. Coolidge.

In 1944 President Roosevelt wrote: "No one has contributed more to the understanding of music in America and no one given greater encouragement to writers and performers of music in America than Mrs. Coolidge."

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge died in 1953 leaving not only grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but scores of new compositions commissioned from a broad range of contemporary composers including Barber, Bartók, Bliss, Bridge, Britten, Chavez, Clarke, Copland, Goossens, Hanson, Hindemith, Honegger, Loeffler, Martinu, Malipiero, Pierné, Pilati, Piston, Pizzetti, Prokofiev, Ravel, Respighi, Roussel, Salzedo, Schoenberg, William Schuman, Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos, and Webern, to name a few. She also awarded the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge medal each year from 1932 to 1947 for service to chamber music, and donated holographs of all her commissioned music to the United States Library of Congress.

From 1925 until Mrs. Coolidge's death, the Coolidge Foundation presented 1,058 concerts, 243 in the Coolidge Auditorium in the Library of Congress and 722 as an extension series offered in public libraries and schools in cities and towns all over America.

WINNARETTA SINGER, THE PRINCESSE DE POLIGNAC

Mrs. Coolidge's only equal as a patron of music was her exact contemporary, Winnaretta Singer, the second "legitimate" child of Isaac M. Singer, an itinerant American actor who made his fortune as a sewing machine inventor who pooled patent rights in the sewing machine, laying the groundwork for its mass production. Her mother was the French music-lover Isabella Boyer.

Winnaretta was born in White Plains, New York, on January 8, 1865. Her family moved first to England and later to France, where she came of age during the heyday of the female-dominated Paris salons. Her mother, who remarried after Singer's death and became the Duchess of Camposelice, created one of the most active salons in Paris. She owned a double quartet of Stradivarius instruments and instilled her passion for music in Winnaretta, who, for her fourteenth birthday present requested a performance of the **Beethoven Quartet No. 14**, op. 131. Though Winnaretta was a fine pianist and organist, as well as a composer, her formal training was in painting.

After divorcing her first husband Prince de Scey-Montbelair, Winnaretta married Prince Edmond de Polignac, an aging composer of impressive lineage whose fortune had been depleted. Winnaretta had plenty of money, but since in nineteenth-century France women needed to be married to have rights to their own property, this marriage of convenience proved fortunate for both of them. Though the Prince and the Princess each preferred homosexual romantic relationships, their mutual dedication to reviving old music and commissioning new music formed a bond between them that molded the artistic world in turn-of-the-century Paris.

The Princess's friendship with Gabriel Fauré began in 1880, around the same time that Isabella Gardner met Loeffler, and was at its strongest between 1891 and 1894. Much of their correspondence concerns Fauré's collaboration with the poet

Winnaretta Singer, the daughter of sewing machine inventor Issac Singer, lived unconventionally and used her great wealth to promote the careers of many women.

Library of Congress



Paul Verlaine. The Princess wanted them to write an opera, but Verlaine, who at the time was confined to a hospital, could only write of his immediate surroundings. He proposed a *Comedia dell'Arte* about life in a hospital ward called "L'Hôpital Wateau," a subject that was unacceptable to Fauré. The Princess suggested an opera based on the life of Buddha, but as this proved too difficult for Fauré to grasp, the project was abandoned. The Princess's intelligence and understanding of the relation of poetry and music, however, was a great inspiration to Fauré, and he dedicated one of his greatest song cycles, **Cinq mélodies**, op. 58 (1891) as well as **Pelléas et Mélisande** (1898) to her.

The Princesse de Polignac's support of new music only began with Fauré. She supported Maurice Ravel during his trials with the **Prix de Rome** and commissioned his **Pavane pour une Infante défunte** in 1899. Ravel often performed at her salon, sometimes playing for the dancer Isadora Duncan, who began her Parisian career with the Princess's support.

Revivals of old works were very important to the Princess and the Prince, a harpsichordist, and the first performance in the nineteenth century of Rameau's **Dandanus** was given at their salon. After Edmond's death in 1901, the Princess started commissioning more new music. The best known of the many works she commissioned are Stravinsky's **Rénard**, Milhaud's **Sorrows of Orpheus**, Satie's **Socrates**, Weill's **First Symphony**, De Falla's **Master Peter's Puppet Show**, Tailleferre's **Piano Concerto**, Poulenc's **Organ Concerto** and his **Concerto for Two Pianos**. Many works that she did not commission were premiered at the Princess's Salon, including Stravinsky's **L'Histoire du Soldat**.

The Princesse de Polignac provided vital financial support for Diaghilev's **Ballets Russes**, and he, in turn, introduced her to new and talented musicians to promote. The Princess's wide-ranging musical tastes and friendships, particularly her friendship with Proust, are discussed in her only full biography *The Food of Love* by Michael de Cossart and in her memoirs published in 1945 in *Horizon*.

The Princess helped promote the musical careers of many women, including English composer Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), Romanian pianist Clara Haskil (1895-1960), and the famous teacher Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979). Her twenty-year association with Boulanger was highly productive. In 1929, after Diaghilev's death, Boulanger became the Princess's contact in discovering new talent for her to promote. The Princess also attended Boulanger's music analysis classes, where students would sing and analyze Bach cantatas. In 1933, the

Princess began holding "revival" Baroque music concerts that featured parts of Bach cantatas as well as concertos (the Princess was soloist in a Vivaldi organ concerto), with Boulanger conducting. In 1937, the first recording of Monteverdi was made in the Polignac Salon, presumably using the Malipiero edition made possible by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

A COMMON BOND

Isabella Stewart Gardner, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and the Princesse de Polignac were three extraordinary women. Each had the financial means, by accident of birth, to live as she chose and the intelligence to "invest" her wealth in projects that would offer, as their eventual return, some of the greatest contributions ever made to music. Though they may never have met, they may have been known to each other through mutual friends. All these women had their portraits painted by Sargent and were friendly with Ethel Smyth and her sister Mary Hunter. Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Coolidge both opened concert halls with music by Loeffler—**L'archet for soprano, women's chorus, viola d'amore and piano**, op. 26 for the opening of Fenway Court (the Gardner Museum) in 1903, and **Canticle of the Sun** for the dedication of the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress in 1924.

The Princess and Mrs. Coolidge were associated with some of the same European composers and musicologists like Ravel, Prunières, Stravinsky, and De Falla. Both women wrote short memoirs at an advanced age that exhibited strikingly similar temperament, humor, and subject matter.

All of these women were widowed while they were young and were determined to use their inherited fortunes to improve the world, helping not only with work in music, but also with research in medicine—the Princess helped Madame Curie with her experiments in radiology—and working to improve education. In addition, all three of these women have largely been ignored by historians and musicologists. Male patrons like Frederick the Great, Nicholas Esterházy, Count Rasoumovsky, Joseph II, and Archduke Rudolph, though given less credit than they deserve, have at least gained a place in music history. The many women philanthropists are only now beginning to be taken seriously as powerful forces that preserved and revived, molded and advanced music, dance and the fine arts.

Elaine Fine lives in Charleston, Illinois, where she is the classical music director of WEIU-FM and plays viola in the LeVeck String Quartet.

Notes

¹ Morris Carter, *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1963), 33.

² The great violinist Joseph Joachim is reported to have said that "had Sargent taken to music instead of painting he could have been as great a musician as he was a painter."

³ Morris Carter, *Isabella Stuart Gardner and Fenway Court*, 251.

Resources

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 280 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115, phone: 617-566-1401.

Coolidge Foundation Collection, Music Division, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540.

Foundation Singer-Polignac, Paris, France.

Select Bibliography

Axford, Anita E. *The Influence of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge upon the Chamber Music of the United States*. M.M. Thesis, San Jose State College, 1959.

Barr, Cyrilla. "The Musicological Legacy of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge," *Journal of Musicology* 11/2 (Spring 1993).

Bedford, William Charles. *Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the education of a patron of chamber music: the early years*. Doctoral dissertation, The University of Missouri, Columbia, 1965.

Brooks, Jeanice. "Nadia Boulanger and the Salon of the Princesse

de Polignac," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46/3 (Fall 1993).

Carter, Morris. *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1963.

Coolidge, Elizabeth Sprague. *Da Capo*, A paper read before the Mother's Club (Cambridge, Massachusetts) March 13, 1951.

De Cossart, Michael. *The Food Of Love: Princesse Edmond de Polignac (1865-1943) and her Salon*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978.

Kirk, Elise. "A Gift of Love Through Music, The Legacy of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge," *Performing Arts Annual*. Library of Congress, 1987: 78.

Knight, Ellen. "Mr. Loeffler, Mrs. Gardner, and the Viola d'amore," *The Viola d'amore Society of America Newsletter* 5/1 (April 1981): 4-7.

Neuls-Bates, Carol, ed. *Women in Music*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1982.

Polignac, Princesse Edmond de. "Memoirs," *Horizon* 12 (August 1945): 110-41.

Rosenfeld, Jay C. *Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, A tribute on the One Hundredth Anniversary of her Birth* (Privately Printed) 1964.

Tharp, Louise H. Mrs. Jack: *A Biography of Isabella Stewart Gardner*. New York: Congdon & Weed, 1965.

I will never forget my first meeting with Joy Finzi. I had fallen utterly in love with the Wilfred Brown recording of Gerald Finzi's *Dies Natalis* and had been trying for years to find out more about the composer. During a concert, a piece of paper had fluttered to my feet announcing that a group of Finzi Trust Friends was to be founded, "to foster interest in Gerald Finzi's music, to promote live performances and a greater appreciation of his contribution to English music."

The meeting was to take place during the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, England that year. Of course I wrote immediately, wanting to be a part of it and offering to do ANYTHING to help. And so, at the end of that meeting I found myself washing dishes with the composer's widow!

I was in the greatest awe but Joy put me at ease by being so interested in me and apparently amazed by my own passion for the music. I did not know then that she was to be a friend and that she would prove to be the most remarkable woman it has been my privilege to know.

Joy was a kind of catalyst. She has been called an "enabler," a "networker," and a "provider of opportunities." She was tireless in encouraging friends to meet other artists, attend concerts and exhibitions. She was forever arranging enriching and inspiring experiences for others and supporting a new generation of talented musicians, and most of all, generally making things happen.

Joy finzi

"a PROVIDER of OPPORTUNITIES"

It was Joy who encouraged the formation of the Newbury String Players and acted as general manager arranging scores, bookings, programmes, transport, all the details. The Players gave literally hundreds of performances in Berkshire and the

Joyce Black

She was born Joyce Black in Hampstead on 3 March 1907. Youthful photographs show her as tall, radiant and fair, the kind of beauty admired by the Pre-Raphaelite painters. She had lovely hair, frequently hidden by hats. I never remember seeing her later in life without her inevitable headscarf. She was incredibly talented and seemed to excel at whatever she attempted. She was graceful, fit and lithe, a county standard tennis player. She had studied the violin, and later sculpture and pottery at the Central School of Art and Design. She was also a poet, full of *joie de vivre*, outgoing, with a fine intellect.

In the early 1930s, Gerald Finzi, a gentle, shy composer, rented a cottage belonging to Joy. They shared so many enthusiasms that it was not surprising they fell in love and were married. Thereafter Joy never stinted in her support and encouragement of Gerald and his music. His friend Howard Ferguson wrote, "It is hard to imagine how he would have accomplished all his undertakings if she had not been at hand and all too willing to subordinate her own interests to his."

Solace, inspiration, creativity

The completion of their distinctive home at Church Farm, Ashmansworth coincided with the outbreak of World War II, and, with Gerald working in London, the house became a haven for friends and refugees. Little ever seemed to surprise Joy and she took everything in her inimitable stride, interested in so much—light, colour, plants, bees, geese, the work of other artists, life.

Around 1940, Joy Finzi began to concentrate on drawing in pencil. Her first portrait was of her elder son, Christopher, asleep. One of her portraits of composer Ralph Vaughan Williams hangs in London's National Portrait Gallery.

adjoining counties, making up in some part for the musical deprivations caused by the war. The circle of musicians, composers, artists and friends who visited Ashmansworth continued to widen, many of them finding peace, solace and inspiration there. It became a place for creativity.

By 1948, Joy was assisting Gerald in the preservation and cataloguing of the works of Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918) and together they were instrumental in preserving the unpublished songs and poems of Ivor Gurney (1890-1937). Joy typed out hundreds of Gurney's poems and made lists of over 200 of his songs. Later it was she who persuaded the Gurney family to give the manuscripts to the Gloucester Public Library in the cathedral city where Gurney was born.

Joy began to concentrate on drawing in pencil and drew Gerald for the first time in 1940. Her studies were published in 1987 in a volume entitled *In That Place*. The beautiful and perceptive portraits give some idea of the range of her friendships and thus, of her sphere of influence. They include established and youthful composers, writers and poets—Ralph Vaughan Williams, Howard Ferguson, Alan Ridout, Malcolm Lipkin, Arthur Bliss, Robin Milford, Edmund Blunden, Helen Thomas (widow of the poet Edward Thomas), Sylvia Townsend Warner, Sir Adrian Boult, David Jones and many others.

Gerald was diagnosed with a serious illness in the early 1950s and sadly died in the autumn of 1956 at the age of 55. After his death, Joy arranged for his collection of autographs to go to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and his vast collection of English poetry to Reading University, where it is housed in the Finzi Reading Room. And she founded the Finzi Trust to ensure that Gerald's music be kept alive and to promote the work of other composers.

In 1978, Andrew Burn, now the administrator of the Trust, had sought Joy out because he was seeking knowledge of Finzi's music. Paul Spicer, who now leads the Finzi Singers, and Robert Gower, a

Courtesy The Finzi Trust



teacher and organist, soon followed in his footsteps, and Joy feeling that the union of these three young men would be "fruitful", arranged an introduction. From this meeting came the idea to organize a festival to mark the 25th anniversary of Finzi's death in 1981. It was followed by the formation of the Finzi Trust Friends and the triennial Summer Festivals of British Music. Many of Joy's inspired ideas became realities.

The Trust not only initiated recordings of Gerald's music but also that of Howard Ferguson, Malcolm Lipkin, Michael Berkeley, Kenneth Leighton and Ivor Gurney amongst others. It was typical and exciting that after I had introduced Joy to the talented young musicians Julius Drake (piano) and Nicholas Daniel (oboe), the Trust agreed to support their first recording together, featuring music by Paul Patterson, Herbert Howells and Finzi.

A magical place

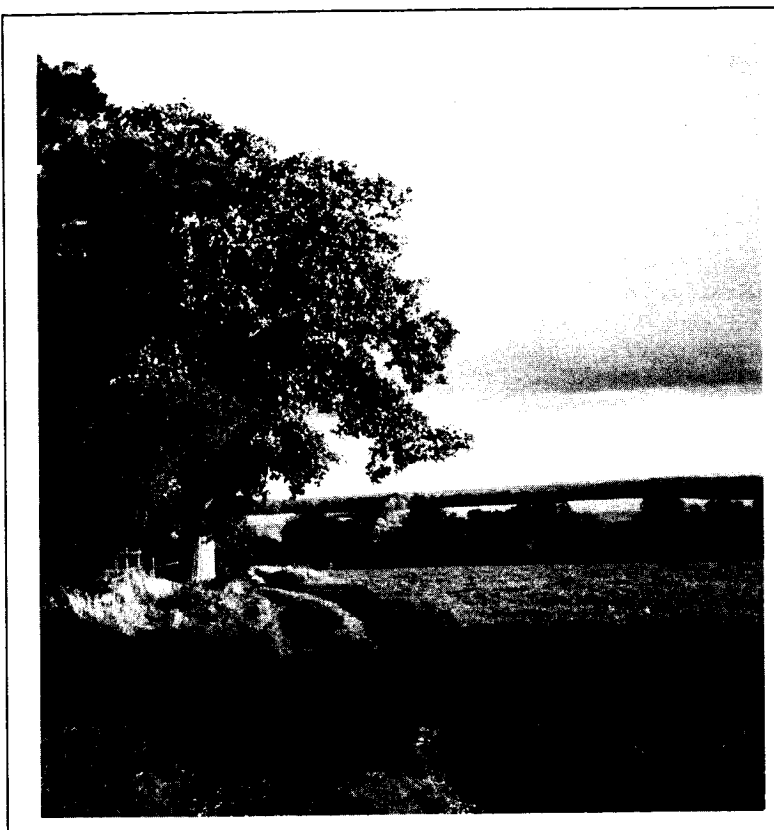
Going to Bushey Leaze, Joy's last home, was always eagerly anticipated and absolutely magical. The house was full of treasures—pottery, photographs, drawings, paintings and wonderful books. I wondered how long I might gaze and delve without seeming rude or intrusive, but Joy only encouraged.

Her garden with its mysterious medlar tree flowed out onto flinty fields and beyond and always seemed full of birds, herbs, ripening tomatoes and cyclamen. In mid-February, the Friends Committee members were able to sit outside in the warming sun to hold meetings. If one of us had an aching back, Joy would take off her shoes and walk it to a state of blessed relief. A difficult problem would bring forth her pendulum and she would consult it with great seriousness. In anyone else this would have generated scepticism and perhaps even ridicule, but I so admired Joy's wisdom and strength that I listened carefully to what she said and accepted it with ever-growing respect.

I remember a trip to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, a treat arranged for me to see some wonderful exhibition. The traffic was horrendous and it seemed that there was absolutely nowhere left in the city to put a single car. Joy was completely unperturbed.

"Don't worry, dear, I'll use my parking angel, but you must trust me absolutely," she said. "Drive to the front of the museum and then let me concentrate." As I watched in disbelief the car nearest the entrance backed out to yield a space—a fluke, sheer coincidence? It didn't feel like it because she was so bewitching, and I was under her spell. And who am I? I became, to my surprise, the producer of the Friends' Newsletter. I am a listener, great lover of music and teacher of art. My husband feels that Joy's influence is in me too. Certainly she touched my life

Pamela Blevins Collection



A field at Ashmansworth where Gerald and Joy Finzi built their distinctive home in the late 30s. During the war, the house became a haven for refugees and friends.

deeply. I would like to have had more of her but am so grateful that I met and knew her.

In a memorial celebration for Joy after her death in 1991, I was greatly moved by one especially beautiful song. The composer Jeremy Dale Roberts also remembers hearing it, at Ashmansworth in the autumn of 1956 in a never-to-be-forgotten moment, and he wrote of "...the tenor Wilfred Brown and Howard Ferguson unfolding the last sheaf of Finzi's songs to a group of friends. Poignant but somehow bountiful. No one could fail to hear Gerald's salute to his wife in Bridge's words":

To Joy

*Since we loved - (the earth that shook
As we kissed, fresh beauty took) -
Love hath been as poets paint,
Life as heaven is to a saint;*

*All my joys my hope excel,
All my work hath prosper'd well,
All my songs have happy been,
O my love, my life, my queen.*

Ann Warner-Casson is the editor of the Finzi Trust Friends Newsletter and a recently retired art teacher.

Resources

For information about The Finzi Society of America, contact Pamela Blevins, 5333 N. 26th Street, Arlington, VA

22207 or The Finzi Trust Friends in the UK, contact Andrew Burn, c/o The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, 2 Seldown Lane, Poole, Dorset BH15 1UF.

Select Bibliography

Banfield, Stephen. *Sensibility and English Song*, "Time and destiny: the Hardy songs of Gerald Finzi." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Finzi, Joyce. *A Point of Departure*, Poems, with wood engravings by R.S. Smith. Cambridge: The Golden Head Press, 1967.

_____. *In That Place, The Portrait Drawings of Joy Finzi*. Marlborough: Libanus Press, 1987.

Finzi, Christopher and Nigel and others. *Joy Finzi 1907-1991*, Tributes from her friends, a collection of essays. The Finzi Trust, 1992.

Hurd, Michael. *The Ordeal of Ivor Gurney*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, 1990.

Warner, Sylvia Townsend. *Letters*. William Maxwell, ed., New York: The Viking Press, 1982.

_____. *The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner*. Claire Harman, ed., London: Virago Press, 1994.

Williams, Ursula Vaughan. *R.V.W.: A biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Select Discography

The music of Gerald Finzi is available on Hyperion, Chandos, EMI Classics and Nimbus Records. The recordings of The Finzi Singers are available on Chandos.

♦
by
STEPHEN
CONNOCK
♦

If, as it is said, travel broadens the mind, Ursula Vaughan Williams must have a very broad mind indeed. Born in Malta in 1911 to a family with a strong military tradition, Ursula began her travels at an early age. Her father was Major General Sir Robert Lock. Her mother Beryl Penton had also had a military background through her father who was a general. Later she would marry an Army Captain herself.

Such a family was inevitably on the move—Plymouth, Woolwich (twice), Leeds, Blackheath, Malta, Salisbury Plain, and Canada where her father was an advisor to the Canadian government during World War I, although Ursula did not make the journey to Canada.

Such gregariousness ignited a remarkable curiosity in the young Ursula Lock. She questioned everything and read widely. Early on, one particular governess had given her the *Collected Works of William Shakespeare*, which stimulated her appetite for literature. At the age of ten, she saw a production of *Henry V* that thrilled her and soon after she began to write poetry.

Her maternal grandmother Mitty Penton, of whom she was very fond, had taught her the value of reading aloud. Poetry enhanced and filled a life which could, at times, be transient and empty for a naturally high-spirited and curious young woman. Often her mother disapproved of her daughter's unconventional interests while her father tried to persuade her to read Napier's *History of War*—not of much interest to a girl of ten!

Ursula left school at seventeen. That winter, she spent two terms at a Brussels finishing school with eight other young women from various countries to learn French and to study art, opera and plays. This experience led her to establish an interest in music, art and literature which remains with her to this day.

Learning from theatre

After her culturally enriching stay in Brussels, she rejoined her family at Porton Down near Salisbury, where her father was serving as Commandant. She loathed the place but found enjoyment in spending time in various dramatic societies. In 1932 she had the opportunity to become a student at the Old Vic in London.

Photo by Elizabeth Holden



Ursula Vaughan Williams



Ursula Vaughan Williams in her garden

At the time, the impresario and theatre manager Lilian Baylis (1874-1937) was the "queen" of the Old Vic, and she guided the actors and actresses, singers and dancers with courage and determination. The theatre was admirable and its artists were beginning to be known and respected for their work.

In the same week that Ursula had auditioned for the Old Vic, she became engaged to Captain Michael Forrester Wood (1900-1942), a fine artist, whom she had met at an army dance. Later during a visit with Ursula's father, Michael recalled the girl in the yellow dress he had danced with. They married in May 1933.

For Ursula, living in London was exciting and she developed a love of the city which has never left her. However, as Michael was a gunnery instructor, she was soon back on the move. When staying in London, she worked voluntarily in the Citizens Advice Bureau. Later, after Michael's death in World War II, she worked in London with a doctor specialising in children's illnesses, earning £2 a week. She was also writing reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement*. By her own admission, she was not a good actress, but she understood how to write libretti.

Poetry at the core

Her early love of poetry had remained a major source of satisfaction throughout these years. She had written her earliest published poem, "The Mountaineer" in 1927 and after her marriage her work appeared in various British publications. Her first poems were collected by Basil Blackwell in 1941 under the title *No Other Choice*. Further collections appeared in 1943, 1948, 1959 and in 1984.

Although Ursula insists that no specific poet or style affected her and that she does not belong to any school of poetry, the influence of other writers can be detected in her work. She discovered William Butler Yeats in 1925-26 and the impact of this poet can be felt in the stylish imagery which distinguishes her poems. Robert Graves, one of the great poets of World War I, was another formative influence. She was later to meet him in Majorca.

But it was her own experience that perhaps exercised the most compelling influence on her work at this time. "I lived in a world dominated by war and death," she recalls. "My husband Michael and my brother died in the Second World War. This was also the time of Holocaust."

The death of Michael in 1942 at the age of 42, was indeed a great blow. When the telegram arrived, Ursula was with someone who was to be a great comfort to her then, and thereafter, the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Friendship with Ralph Vaughan Williams

She had first heard Vaughan Williams' music whilst at the Old Vic in the 1932-33 season. Students got complimentary tickets to ballet performances on Mondays and one of the works in production was the composer's *Job*. Ursula was completely overcome by the power, beauty and originality of the music. She resolved to write to the composer with an idea for another story. This she did in 1938.

The letter was very formal. It began "Dear Sir," and his reply was equally formal, beginning "Dear Madam." After many similar letters, they decided to meet for lunch.

Ursula subsequently wrote, "I do not know which of us was the more surprised." She had not expected "someone so large and beautiful." At their first meeting, she remembers discussing William Barnes, a Dorset poet, and Spenser. From these discussions came Vaughan Williams' setting of Spenser's *Epithalamion* in *The Bridal Day*.

The friendship between Ursula Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams was close from the start. They began to learn about each other's home life. By 1940, she was researching Shelley for a series of war-time songs the composer was writing. Vaughan Williams' first setting of Ursula's poetry came with *Silence & Music*, an unaccompanied part-song, in 1953, his present to the new Queen. He set Ursula's *Menelaus on the beach at Pharos* in 1954. "Ralph read *Menelaus* when I left it on the table. He was interested by it and wrote the song immediately," she explains. "I never asked him to set any of my poems to music. This was his choice."

Poet and composer collaborated often on different projects. A joint commission in 1950 became *The Sons of Light* and Ursula contributed a poem for the Christmas cantata *Hodie* and a song for Lord Lechery in the opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

After the death of Vaughan Williams' wife, Adeline, in 1951, Ursula and Ralph married in 1953. They lived at 10 Hanover Terrace in London and enjoyed a fulfilling life, superbly described in Ursula's acclaimed biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams, first published in 1964.

Ralph Vaughan Williams died in 1958, after just five years of marriage. Ursula's poetry remembers him. For example, in *Tired* she writes:

*I shall remember firelight on your sleeping face,
I shall remember shadows growing deeper
as the fire fell to ashes and the minutes passed.*

More poignant are the recollections in poems such as *The Dictated Theme*. The sense of loss and grief marking her earlier war-time poems recurred as Ursula adjusted to life as a widow again.

Vaughan Williams Trust

Prior to Vaughan Williams' death, he and Ursula established the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. "Ralph always spent his money on his friends and composers and his accountant suggested that it would be better to have a Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust," Ursula explains. "He suggested to Ralph providing an allowance from his performing rights fees. Ralph was delighted. We created the Trust with friends to help him and he insisted that no money would be allocated to promoting his own work. Money from the Trust have enabled many important projects to be realised and given enormous pleasure to people. The Trust is now forty years old and is still helping other people."

Poetic vision

In the years after Vaughan Williams' death, Ursula continued to write. In addition to poetry, she has written four novels, three of which have been published. Her poetry has been set by over thirty composers, including Elisabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy, Herbert Howells, Roger Steptoe, Malcolm Williamson, Phyllis Tate, Betty Roe [see page 26] and Gerald Finzi [see page 10].

Why is her poetry so sought after by composers?

"There is beauty to it," observes Roger Steptoe. "It is very sensitive. She can capture moods and ideas in a few words or lines. Above all, the words are evocative and stimulate a musical response."

By the time a stroke in late 1994 put an end to her writing, Ursula had completed over 200 poems, most of which are published in *The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams* (Albion Music Ltd., 1996).

They deal with the big issues of life—love, old age, jealousy, sadness, death, illness, the environment—in ways which are both profound and moving. As well as Yeats and Graves, the poetry in its imagery and style is reminiscent of the Scottish poet Edwin Muir even though Ursula was writing long before she discovered his work in the early 1940s. There is in her work a melancholy vein, but also pleasure, fun and that curiosity which is such an important feature of her character. It contributes to poetry which is never dull, often inspired and always evocative, words that can be applied without hesitation to the poet herself.

Stephen Connock is the Chairman of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society. Further information and a membership form or a copy of *The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams*, price \$33 plus \$8 postage and packing, can be obtained from Stephen Connock, Willow House, 3 Bury Woods, Bakers Lane, Braiswick, Colchester CO4 5AW, England.

continued on page 30

The Vocal Point



*Study for a poster by
Toulouse-Lautrec*

◆
*"I am often quite bare on stage,
and I offer myself unclothed of all lies...*

I create the illusion...

*The great battle is the search
for Happiness in Truth,
and our follies are only our rages
over finding only Lies!!"*

Y.G.

Yvette Guilbert, the great turn-of-the-century (*fin de siècle*) French cabaret singer immortalized by the French painter Toulouse-Lautrec in her long black gloves, had strong feelings about most things and never hesitated to express them. She cared deeply about life, art, the poor, the down-trodden, her friends, but most of all, she cared deeply about Truth. It was this expression and communication of Truth which dominated her life as a performer.

Yvette knew from experience a great deal about poverty and the life of the downtrodden. Her maternal grandparents had been hard-working farmers in Normandy. Their intellectual bent and careful use of funds enabled them to live an interesting life of relative security. When their daughter, Albine, met a less well-off and not particularly industrious farmer named Hippolyte, her father tried to prevent their marriage. Albine was only eighteen at the time and Hippolyte was young, attractive and loved to sing!

Despite parental objections, they married right away and Hippolyte, tired of being a farmer, moved them to Saint-Lo where he attempted to become a

Yvette Guilbert, La Diseuse

merchant. When his business failed, they went to Paris, where again he failed as a merchant. Having exhausted Albine's large dowry, the young couple moved to a poor dwelling in the Marais district of Paris. Albine became a seamstress and Hippolyte, unsympathetic towards her hard work and the fatigue she suffered, did little or nothing to improve family finances.

Emma

Their daughter Emma—later, Yvette—was born on January 20, 1865. A tough, street child, she loved to sing like her father, and she also loved to dress up and impersonate the great *Café-Concert* singer Thérèse. Emma was a little show-off but her play world was soon to give way to harsh reality.

The Franco-Prussian War broke out when she was only five and she never forgot the sight of Germans marching through Paris, her family's hunger and her mother's hatred of the Germans. Albine continued to work hard and at the end of the war, she created a new kind of horsehair hat that became an enormous success. She employed 80 women in her shop, and sent Emma off to live with her grandparents in Normandy for two years while she got her business going. When Emma returned to Paris, she was sent to private school and spent time helping her mother, a task she loved.

Four years later, in 1877, the business began to fail and Emma was pulled out of school. Her mother sold all of their recently purchased clothes as well as their piano and moved into dirty, smaller quarters. During this difficult time, Hippolyte left his family and young Emma vowed never to forgive him. And she never did.

In August 1882 when Hippolyte was gravely ill in Normandy, Albine wanted to see him and persuaded Emma to go with her. Hippolyte called Emma into the room and said, "I repent, I repent, Daughter, I repent. Some day, Emma, soon perhaps, you will be marrying, and when you do, there is a favor I would like to ask. Will you remember me on your wedding day?"

Emma replied, "I shall never marry! Never! Why should I? I should be too miserable!" Shortly thereafter, Hippolyte died.

Mother and daughter

Albine and Emma worked side-by-side, sewing, beading, embroidering and making hats. They peddled them on the streets and rang the doorbells at luxurious homes where they were often berated and humiliated. The poor girl, always thin, became anemic from malnutrition. To be sure, her comings and goings at all hours showed her the seamy side of Paris.

At sixteen, she landed a job as a model at a fashionable dress shop. She was successful but her employers were slave drivers. She stood all day from eight in the morning until nine at night and after ten months she fell ill with typhoid fever.

Mother and daughter had only bread and cheese to eat but one day Emma could stand this meager diet no longer. She went into a store and ordered that a chicken be delivered to their home, knowing full well that they could not pay for it. When an errand boy came to collect the money and found they had none, he yelled "Crooks!" at the top of his lungs. He came back repeatedly for several days shouting his accusation and humiliating Emma and her mother in front of their neighbors.

Emma's next job found her serving as a salesgirl at the Paris department store *Au Printemps*. Although she did receive better pay and have more fun, the long hours wore her down and she became ill again. This time, she was slow to recuperate.

It is small wonder that Emma was determined to escape her life of poverty and misery, a life of never knowing if she and her mother would eat, how they would stay warm, and of never being able to stop work for a minute as long as she was well to provide for herself and her mother. She loved her mother deeply and providing for her became the driving force in her life.

A chance meeting

One day Emma was walking down a Paris boulevard when a stranger offered her a job as a circus rider at the Hippodrome. Circuses were very popular in Paris at the time. The man was Charles Zidler, manager of the Hippodrome and greatly respected in the Parisian entertainment world. He thought that the twenty-year-old Emma had

"presence" and wanted her to be in his theatre.

The young woman rejected the offer on her mother's advice but she went to Zidler and poured out her life story to him. He found her to be intelligent and courageous and would become her life-long friend and supporter. That a man like Zidler, powerful and respected, was interested in her was an inspiring experience for Emma.

What made her think of the stage? Aside from her childhood antics and impersonations, one single event undoubtedly changed the course of her life. Zidler had given her tickets to a performance by Sarah Bernhardt, but unbeknownst to Emma, the actress was ill and did not appear that night. As Emma and her companion, unable to believe that this performer was the great Bernhardt, criticized the actress, they were overheard by a man sitting next to him—a drama critic named Edmond Stoullig. Stoullig found Emma's comments so astute that he suggested she go on stage herself, not only recommending a drama teacher named Landrol but writing to him about Emma as well.

Landrol was a severe teacher but he found Emma to be "the most intelligent pupil [he] ever had." She worked hard and began reading everything she could get her hands on. Throughout her life, she continued to educate herself and found research exciting and stimulating. She spent many happy hours in libraries and museums.

At about this time, Emma became "Yvette." While at the country estate of the *Folies Bergère's* Léon Sare, Emma found her name to be a topic for discussion. Everyone agreed that Emma Guilbert had no ring to it. One young man asked the writer Guy de Maupassant for a suggestion. As he had just written a story about a woman named Yvette, the pretty daughter of a high class courtesan, he replied, "Tell her to call herself Yvette." And so it was—Yvette Guilbert was named by the famous de Maupassant, an auspicious beginning!

Cafés-Concerts

Yvette's first stage opportunity came in January 1887 when she opened in Dumas's *La Reine Margot*. Zidler gave her money for her wardrobe. She received little critical notice but when the star at the

Théâtre Cluny fell ill, Léon Marx, the manager, remembered Yvette from her role and asked her to step in. He was so pleased with her performance that he offered to help get her a job in a theatre on the boulevards. Although this was easier said than done, Yvette was once again inspired that someone believed in her.

Yvette had become acquainted with the *Théâtre Libre* in Montmartre whose *raison d'être* was Naturalism, or Truth. In the meantime, Marx secured an audition with Albert Brasseur, director of another theatre, *Théâtre des Nouveautés*. Although Brasseur wasn't impressed with Yvette, he hired her for bit parts in the comic theatre. Months later when he berated her for having too sad a face, she quit and moved on to the *Theatre Variétés*. Here she was billed in principal pieces, not earning much money but happy to be with a superior company. While on tour with *Variétés*, she sang duets on the train to amuse the troupe with the actor Baral, formerly of the *Comédie Française* and the *Bouffes-Parisiens*. Baral suggested that with a voice like hers she should head for the *cafés-concerts* and earn more money. And money it was that she wanted so she could support her mother in comfort.

The *cafés-concerts* were all the rage in Paris! Theatre was expensive and workers could go to the *caf'conc's* for free or very little money, have drinks, relax with friends and watch a high-energy entertaining show at the same time. The popular appetite was for laughter and the obscene. Yvette auditioned at the *Eldorado* on the Boulevard de Strasbourg, one of the best in Paris! After Yvette had sung, the other listeners persuaded the proprietress, Madame Allemand, to hire her. Yvette was bold, asked for a three-year contract at 600 francs per month and got it! Yvette always pushed for large sums of money and usually succeeded.

Of course, Yvette had no repertoire to sing at the *Eldorado* and only two months to devise one. Visiting all the other *caf'conc's*, she studied the performers and the programs and was horrified at the caliber of singers and songs. She managed to get hired for the summer months at a casino in Lyons, hoping to try out her new repertoire. The audience consisted mainly of students who, when they saw her—so tall, skinny and flat-chested—laughed her off the stage. At the end of the first week, she was fired and understandably mortified. She told Verdellet, the director, that his *café-concert* was out of date and vowed he would pay her 1200 francs per night before the year was out. (He ended up paying her almost that, 1100!). Yvette habitually blurted out her mind with disconcerting candor.

Back in Paris, she did not fare much better with the audience at the *Eldorado*. They kept a stony silence when she was on stage. Madame Allemand

moved her to the 8:00 show, to which few people came. When she was moved to the one-act sketches at the end of the programs and asked to accept 200 francs per month, she left.

Determination and transformation

Yvette Guilbert was nothing if not determined. Years later she was to say, "Other women are just as clever as I am, but if I make up my mind that I will do a thing, I always do it. I try, and try, and try, until I succeed." Although crushed, she decided to try one more time. The *Eden Concert* on the Boulevard Sebastopol was a family café allowing no bawdiness and no double entendres. On Friday evenings they even presented programs of chansons of old France, a subject which was to fascinate Yvette in years to come. The proprietress here, Madame Castellano Saint-Ange, was a kindly soul who had lost a daughter about Yvette's age and hired Yvette at 600 francs per month for two years. A lovely old gentleman named Eugène Baillet was the music director and chose the music.

Yvette decided to use her spare time to develop a repertoire of her own. Her main concern was *la vérité*, the Truth. She felt that the popular song was not keeping pace with the current novels and plays in this respect. The songs she heard at the cabarets *Le Chat Noir* and *Le Mirliton* were more to her liking. It occurred to her that even though the *café-concert* audience wanted to laugh, what was wrong with laughter on the edge of pity, laughter which tore the heart, laughter for those afraid to laugh?

But for songs like these she needed special lyrics. One day at a book stall in Paris she came across a small volume of *Les Chansons sans gêne* by Xanrof. It was Paris in poetry as seen through the eyes of a student. Both poetry and tunes were excellent. The author turned out to be a law student whose father had made him go to law school but whose real interest lay in poetry, literature and song. She also asked the composer Byrec to set some of her own verses.

Then she looked at herself and decided to concentrate on her unique looks. She wore a tight corset, making her waist nineteen inches and giving her some much-needed curves, used rice powder on her face to emphasize its natural pallor, hennaed her hair to a Titian red, kept her mouth wide and thin to emphasize her white teeth and shadowed her eyes with brown smoke. Since she could do nothing about her long neck and ugly nose, she learned to arch her neck gracefully while performing, thus adding to the poignancy of the songs. Most of the other performers had fancy gowns and wore a great deal of make-up, so Yvette decided on unadorned simplicity—no jewels. She also donned the long, black gloves which were to become her trademark. Ironically, she chose black instead of the customary

white because she could not afford to have them cleaned.

Yvette was a moderate success at the *Eden*. While there, she was invited to sing on a benefit at which the novelist Pierre Loti was guest of honor and the evening went exceptionally well. She tried out a new song by Xanrof (Léon Fourneau) which was delicate in nuances, risqué, irreverent and satirical. Yvette had the ability to sing such songs while maintaining a pure image herself. For the first time, she performed as a *diseuse*—half singing, half speaking—and the audience loved her. She was different! She communicated! She vividly portrayed a variety of characters, spewing forth the texts with perfect diction. This was the beginning of the Yvette Guilbert whom Paris and the world came to know and love.

This time her tour out of Paris was a triumph, first to Liège and then to Brussels. Her reviews were magnificent. But when she returned to the *Eden Concert*, Madame Saint-Ange was unimpressed and did not want her new songs. Yvette demanded a raise and the right to sing her own repertoire. When Madame refused, Yvette stormed out. Yvette tended to lose her temper when a situation was not to her liking.

Moulin Rouge

She went to Zidler in *Montmartre* for comfort. At this time he was involved in a new venture which was to prove fortuitous for Yvette. In *fin de siècle* Paris, *Montmartre* was the artistic, intellectual, entertainment center of the city. Cafés, cabarets, dance halls and brothels were everywhere. *Le Chat Noir*, managed by Rodolphe Salis, was the most original, most authentically French cabaret ever known in Paris. It was popular, but the dance halls had the widest notoriety in *Montmartre*.

Zidler opened the *Moulin Rouge* in 1890 and offered a varied program which was a combination of the more intellectual fare at *Le Chat Noir* and the bawdy entertainment in the dance halls. For the *Moulin Rouge* he assembled the biggest names of the day and by mid-evening there would be 2,000 spectators in the audience. Zidler offered to put Yvette on in the 8:30-9:00 p.m. slot, as long as her songs were not too subtle. The first night she presented a song called "Miss Valerie" and burlesqued an English nurse. The audience went wild and screamed with laughter. Gradually she built up an audience and when she finally received a newspaper rave, Zidler was ecstatic. Yvette Guilbert's career was launched.

The "Truth"

All of the suffering and poverty would finally be behind her, allowing her and her mother to live well—even elegantly—but leaving Yvette with memories which could never be erased. It was these mem-



For Yvette Guilbert,
"the great battle is the search
for Happiness in Truth."

ories which made her such a great communicator; her expressions of the "Truth" of the less fortunate came from her center and thus made an enormous impact on the audience.

Yvette's uniqueness as a performer was described by an English writer, Arthur Symonds: "Tall, thin, a little angular, she walks to the front of the stage with a distracted air and the exquisite gaucherie of a young girl, her shoulders sagging, her arms hanging at her sides. She bends in two in an automatic curtsey in response to the thunderous applause, and her strange smile flutters across her lips and rises like a dancing flame to her eyes, brilliant blue and wide open with the expression of an astonished child. Her dark blonde hair rises in a supple mass above her wide, pure brow. She wears a yellow and pink-striped dress with a train but no other decoration. Her arms are covered with long black gloves. Suddenly the applause stops; silence reigns; she begins to sing...."

"There is nothing conventional about her; even from afar she resembles no other French singer. Her voice, her face, her gestures, her mime, everything is different, everything is her very own. She's a being of contrasts, who suggests purity and perversity at the same time. She has the eyes of a child, of a pure, cloudless blue, shining with malicious cleverness, closed in extreme lassitude, open in surprise which empties them of all expression.

"Her ingenuousness is perfect, as perfect as that subtle, strange smile of understanding which ends her act."

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec said of Yvette, "Her inborn purity and distinction, freeing her from any coquettish tendencies, allowed her to transfigure herself, to become a caricature, a 'living macabre poster.'" Yvette was always horrified at how ugly Toulouse-Lautrec portrayed her but from his statement one can surmise that he was painting what he saw as well as what he felt when she performed.

In March 1891, Jehan Sarrazin, the director of the *Divan Japonais*, invited her to sing in his cabaret after her performance at the *Moulin Rouge*. This smaller cabaret, the liveliest example of avant-garde wit in Paris, was the perfect setting for Yvette's talent. She tried out a new repertoire with a character whom she thought of as satirical but whom the critics described as "morbid," "macabre" or even "divinely perverse." Edmond de Goncourt said that she was "a very great tragic actress who could cause an anguishing constriction of the heart."

Yvette Guilbert quickly became the symbol for decadent women, the very embodiment of the *fin de siècle*. She numbered among her devoted supporters such literary greats as Emile Zola, Jules Renard and Maurice Donnay.

This was the start of a career which would enable her to perform in the most popular cabarets in Paris and all of France and also take her to America and literally around the world. The fact that Yvette Guilbert was performing would turn unfashionable theatres into the most sought-after places to go. She was lauded and paid extraordinarily handsomely wherever she went. When in 1892 Yvette asked Toulouse-Lautrec to do a poster for her, he wrote, "It's the greatest success I could have dreamed of for she has already been done by the most famous [artists] and this is going to be a really nice work." As time went on Yvette was simply referred to by Parisians as *notre grande Yvette*.

Revival of old French chansons

Yvette still researched material for her performances, but poets and musicians kept her supplied with an enormous amount of material. When she became fascinated with the old French *chansons*, she continued to haunt libraries, old private collections and museums for songs. She performed them but these performances were not box office successes. So she would don her black gloves and plain dress and sing her old cabaret numbers so she could afford to give the more intellectual chanson performances to the select audiences who came to hear them. Her collection of these historical French songs numbered more than 80,000 original texts from the sixth century onward! Over the years Yvette had endured prejudice against her because of the earthy cabaret literature which she performed. Her performance of French chansons helped satisfy her urge "to get out

of my environment, to create a new repertoire, that was my dream." She wanted respectability. She also tried her hand at straight theatre, in which she was moderately successful.

Tenderness

In the winter of 1896, a young Jewish chemist from Berlin named Max Schiller met Yvette in New York City. Max was gentle, intelligent, cultured and attractive. He had wanted to become a violinist, but his father had ordered him to study chemistry. Max had come to New York at his brother-in-law's request to help manage the actress Eleanora Duse (1859-1924), who was unhappy in a strange country and needed someone charming and understanding to lift her spirits. Duse improved and Max stayed.

For years, Yvette vowed she would never go to Germany, recalling the Franco-Prussian War and her mother's hatred of Germans, and told her father that she would never marry. But Max possessed a mature tenderness which "wrapped around her and warmed and cushioned her." They became lovers almost immediately.

During Yvette's extended American tour that year, Max joined her in Chicago. He became her manager and in the spring of 1897 they became engaged. Max Schiller devoted his life and his energies to Yvette, enabling her to focus her strength on performing and research. On the afternoon of June 22, Yvette and Max were secretly married. True to form, Yvette performed at the cabaret *Les Ambassadeurs* that evening. Neither her mother Albine nor her dear friend Louis de Robert was at the wedding but both eventually succumbed to Max's charm.

Yvette was a huge success when she performed at the Apollo Theatre in Berlin, in December 1897, the same year *Le Chat Noir* closed in Paris. She came to love performing there, noting, "In Paris, they lauded my songs; in Germany, my art of singing them."

Yvette and Max's life together was blissful but not without difficulties. Yvette's health was delicate. It is believed that one of her kidneys was destroyed by the tight corsets in which she cinched herself for years. After several years of severe pain, she had the kidney removed but suffered from recurring pain for the rest of her life.

In the build-up to World War I, Yvette came under suspicion as a German spy, with her German husband and frequent trips to Germany. As ugly rumors spread, she and Max slipped out of Paris for New York. The Americans were war-conscious and Francophiles, enabling her to successfully assume the role of Ambassador from France. She opened her first performance with two songs from a cycle

continued on page 25

Jeannette Thurber

~ A NATIONAL VISION ~

Music education in America was advanced markedly in the late nineteenth century—by a singularly enterprising woman—Jeannette Myers Thurber. “Nettie,” as she was known to all her friends, was born in New York on January 29, 1850, the daughter of a Danish violinist who had immigrated to the United States. Young Jeannette was educated in New York and Paris and had tried her hand at music composition.

Impressed by the French system of government-supported education in the arts, she returned to the United States determined to do what she could for American music education. Her marriage to Francis B. Thurber, who had made his fortune in the wholesale grocery business, placed her among the wealthiest and most influential people in New York society, positioning her perfectly to support the arts. She launched her career as an arts patron by funding music study abroad for worthy American students.

Young People's Symphony Concerts

In the early 1880s, the vivacious Nettie conceptualized and organized with some like-minded women, a series of free concerts for young people. She persuaded New York's pre-eminent conductor Theodore Thomas (1835-1905) to present these concerts with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.

Although Thomas was convinced by long experience that children were not sufficiently advanced intellectually to appreciate symphonic music, he agreed to the experiment. His programs were suitably adapted to present music with clearly-defined melody and well-marked rhythms—music that could be grasped easily by the most uninitiated. One of the earliest programs, held in Steinway Hall in February 1884, offered overtures by Weber and Nicolai, Mozart and Rossini opera arias sung by the young Austrian-American soprano Emma Juch (1863-1939), the *Andante* movement from Haydn's “Surprise” Symphony, a symphonic poem by Saint-Saëns, a Boccherini minuet, and two short piano pieces by Grieg and Moskowski. The concert was the first of its kind anywhere in America.

Pleased with its success and encouraged by Jeannette Thurber's enthusiasm and organizing energy, Thomas continued to give young people's

concerts on and off for the rest of his life. The idea won full recognition when Frank Damrosch, director of the New York Symphony Society, established the Young People's Symphony Concerts of New York in 1898, that continue to this day.

Alliance with Theodore Thomas

Thurber's strong sense of purpose can be measured by her firm alliance with Theodore Thomas, who had made it his mission to bring symphonic music to the American people by forming his own orchestra in 1864 and touring with it each year. By 1877, when Thomas became conductor of the New York Philharmonic in addition to the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, he was recognized as the foremost American conductor of his time. His work laid the foundations for the modern American symphony orchestra.

Thurber was quick to perceive that the pioneering Thomas needed major financial support for his musical mission. She did what she could to give and raise money for his concerts, funding his Wagner Festival tour of April-June 1884, that included Boston, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago and Montreal. Thomas was the principal advocate for Wagner's music in America.

Conception of National Conservatory of Music

Desirous of providing opportunities for American musicians, Mrs. Thurber founded the National Conservatory of Music in 1885. It was an ambitious project and among the earliest efforts to establish the institutional bases for classical music in America, which were laid between 1860 and 1920. The first music conservatories in the United States were founded after the Civil War. The Peabody Institute in Baltimore was one of the earliest, followed in the 1860s by conservatories at Oberlin, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Many schools so familiar to us now were not formed until after 1900. The Institute of Musical Art in New York (the Juilliard School) was not founded until 1904, while others followed still later—New York's Mannes Music School (1916), Eastman School (1913), Cleveland Institute (1920), Curtis Institute (1924).

In New York, only the New York College of Music, founded in 1878, preceded Jeannette Thurber's grand design. And what a grand design it was! Conceived along lines of the Paris Conservatoire de Musique, the National Conservatory of Music offered a three-year, full-time, paid course of study for students under twenty-four. A liberal admissions policy accepted black, handicapped, and musically untrained students—providing an opportunity for music study in America for those who would otherwise have to go abroad to study.

Thurber convinced an impressive array of New York arts patrons to incorporate the project in New York State. Andrew Carnegie was appointed president, with Thurber as secretary/treasurer and her women friends—Mrs. August Belmont, Mrs. William T. Blodgett, and Mrs. Levi P. Morton—as vice-presidents.

At a time when most of America's orchestra members and conductors, opera directors and singers were imported from Germany or Italy, and the most promising American students went to Europe to study music, the conception of the National Conservatory was exceptionally far-sighted. Its purpose was to encourage the growth of a viable, indigenous, national musical culture.

The American Opera Company

Beginning as a school for opera, other branches of music study were to be added as the institution grew. The backbone of the “American School of Opera” was to be the American Opera Company, the members of which were to be native or naturalized Americans.

The operas were to be sung in English. American composers and librettists would be encouraged to write for the company. And promising singers from all parts of the United States could study without paying a fee. According to its prospectus, the American Opera Company represented an endeavor to prove that there is “no lack of American singers who require only encouragement and opportunity to do honor to the musical reputation of their native land.” Its object was to present “ensemble opera” as opposed to using the “star system.”



The daughter of an immigrant Danish violinist, Jeannette Myers Thurber became one of the most influential people in New York City. She devoted much time and money to bringing music into the lives of young people and providing them with educational opportunities.

MRS. JEANNETTE THURBER

Founded National Conservatory of Music Here in 1885—Dies at 94

Mrs. Jeannette Meyer Thurber, founder of the National Conservatory of Music of America here in 1885 and of the American Opera Company a year later, died on Wednesday in Bronxville, N. Y., after a brief illness. She was born in this State 94 years ago.

Her survivors are a son, F. B. Thurber of New York; a daughter, Mrs. J. Yayng Mills of Bronxville, and a sister, Mrs. Vaughan Williams of New York.

Jeannette Thurber's death received little notice in major newspapers despite her considerable achievements in music and education.

Theodore Thomas had given much thought to the ideal music education for Americans prior to accepting the position of music director of the Cincinnati College of Music in 1878. His conception, as Mrs. Thurber probably knew, similarly followed along lines of the great European institutions, supporting university instruction, a chorus, and a professional symphony orchestra, whose members would instruct as well as perform regular concerts. His vision of talented students receiving first-rate instruction at little or no cost was frustrated by the reality of the Cincinnati College's acceptance of students who could pay the fees, regardless of their talent. The discouraged Thomas resigned in 1880, leaving behind him a well-organized college of music. Jeannette Thurber must have known all this when she offered Thomas the music directorship of the National Conservatory of Music, which he accepted.

At the formal opening ceremonies on December 17, 1885, Thomas spoke about the need to import good teachers rather than export young talent.

In addition to Thomas's musical guidance, the American Opera Company was to be composed of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, the largest chorus and ballet corps ever assembled for opera in America, new costumes, properties, and scenery designed by the most eminent American artists in these fields.

The conservatory opened at 128 East 17th Street. The faculty of vocal instructors was headed by the Belgian baritone Jacques Bouhy. Arthur Mees, a vocal coach, joined the faculty the following season.

Thurber envisioned that the institution, although headquartered in New York, should not be a New York concern, but owned and managed by a combination of affiliated societies in all the large cities of America, providing the financial capital for the school. She energetically set about organizing affiliates in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago.

In return for their support, the opera company was to go to each of the affiliated cities, with orchestra, chorus, soloists, ballet and scenery, and replicate in each one its New York season of performances. Working with the affiliates, Thurber also planned to establish local opera school branches. In August, Thurber happily announced that she had guarantees of \$100,000 each to start company chapters in Chicago and Boston, \$50,000 each in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., St. Louis, and Cleveland, and \$25,000 in Louisville.

The sixty students who had been chosen competitively from across the nation had agreed that, in return for free instruction, they would, after graduation, "contribute one-quarter of their earnings over one thousand dollars per annum, for a period of five years to carry out the educational work of the conservatory." However, the need for more good solo

singers caused her to shift policy and open the doors of the conservatory to non-Americans as well as Americans.

The weakness of this "national" scheme of support for the American Opera Company ultimately led to its downfall. Thurber herself gave one million dollars to the conservatory, but she did not foresee that the wealthy patrons in other cities would have no interest in financing an institution based in New York, despite its national character. (The soloists, including Emma Juch, came from twenty American cities, while the chorus represented twenty-six different states).¹

The American Opera Company mounted its first full production on January 4, 1886, at the old Academy of Music, beautifully restored for this purpose. In its first season, the company gave nine operas in New York (56 performances in 15 weeks) and on a two-and-a-half month tour and then added six more operas to its repertory in 1887. The wide-ranging repertoire included works by Gluck, Wagner, Mozart, Gounod, Delibes, Meyerbeer, Verdi, Rubinstein. Audiences thronged to its performances in every city while critics recognized the company's artistic and educational merit. Many shared Amy Fay's [*Signature*, Vol. 1, No. 2] express hope: "[A]t last a company has been formed where we can hear our own charming artists in a language we can all understand, and...the day is near at hand when it will no longer be necessary for American musicians to hide their nationality under foreign names before they can get recognition from their own countrymen."

However, box office receipts, though large, could never fully support the company, and it became clear that the capital actually subscribed was not sufficient to support a scheme of that magnitude, especially with inexperienced management. Although Thurber went on tour with the company and worked hard to organize more support, she could never make up for the lack of capital in New York.

The tour had been ambitious, based on Thurber and Thomas's shared belief that American audiences could be developed for opera sung in English. They mounted full productions wherever theaters could accommodate them. The traveling company numbered 300 in all, including 25 principal singers and 35 technicians.

The first season proved to be an artistic triumph but a financial catastrophe. Money had been wasted on lavish productions and too little attention had been paid to hiring better solo singers. The company's manager, Charles Locke, was too inexperienced to manage the enterprise wisely.

Mrs. Thurber reorganized the company in New Jersey in September 1887, as the National Opera Company, for which capital stock was sold to provide support. Theodore Thomas was appointed president.

Although the company's productions were transferred to the Metropolitan Opera House (opened in 1883) and its last New York season production, Anton Rubinstein's *Nero*, was a triumph, this new organization did not last, dissolving in June 1887.

In early April 1887, the company embarked on a tour of the continent but its fortunes collapsed in San Francisco. Rose Fay Thomas [*Signature*, Vol. 1, No. 2], Theodore Thomas's wife, likened the return trip to the retreat of Napoleon's army from Moscow! The American Opera Company would have been left stranded on the Pacific coast had not Thurber and Thomas remained faithful to their duty.

Reaching St. Louis, Thomas wired the New York directors, "Troupe completely wrecked. Workingmen have gone without meals to the shame of the Directory. I have nothing to do with the business management, but I did not dare to leave the troupe in San Francisco, and only stay now until everyone can reach New York. We have been deserted and sold by everybody...." The harried cast and crew mounted performances in St. Louis, Louisville, and Buffalo on the way back to New York. On the reverse of the Buffalo program, Thomas wrote, "The most dreadful experience of my life."

Thurber was very harshly criticized for the financial collapse of the company but she remained loyal to the end, while many other officers and directors abandoned the corporation. Reflecting on the ill fate of the opera company, Amy Fay noted: "The inception of this enterprise was particularly difficult for the reason that the motive of its being lay, not in any necessity to supply a demand made by the public, but in the endeavor to supply a need long and bitterly felt by American artists for some field higher than comic opera, in which they might make name and fame for themselves in their own country."

Dvořák heads conservatory

After the collapse of the opera company and resignation of Thomas, Jeannette Thurber turned her energies to developing the National Conservatory of Music, creating a school similar to the Paris Conservatoire. Her efforts were rewarded with national recognition when the conservatory was granted a national charter by Act of Congress in March 1891.

Instrumental instructors and theorists were added from 1888, including Rafael Joseffy and Adele Margulies (piano), Leopold Lichtenberg (violin and chamber music), Victor Herbert (cello), and Henry T. Finck (music history). Composer Rubin Goldmark later joined the faculty as did Gustav Hinrichs and Emil Fischer (opera class), James G. Huneker (piano), and Frank Van der Stucken (orchestra and chorus director). Madam Fursch-Madi, B.O. Klein, Max Spicker, and American composer Horatio Parker became faculty members later still.

With education her primary concern, Mrs. Thurber, an astute businesswoman, harnessed the power of good publicity in drawing attention and financial support to her unique enterprise. In 1891, she resolved to select a world-renowned musician as the school's new general director, whose international reputation would add the necessary note of importance and luster to the conservatory.

She summoned twenty-eight-year-old Vienna-born Adele Margulies, a brilliant pianist who had been teaching at the conservatory since 1887, to sound out the Bohemian composer Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904). On June 5, 1891, Thurber sent Dvořák a telegram officially offering him the post as director of the National Conservatory. Receiving no reply, she sent a letter detailing his would-be duties and offering him a salary of \$15,000 per year, a small fortune at the time. After much deliberation, Dvořák accepted the appointment in December and made plans to relinquish his position as composition teacher at the Prague Conservatory.

Dvořák, his wife, and two of their six children arrived in New York City on September 26, 1892. From September 27, 1892 until April 16, 1895, Dvořák acted as "director" while Jeannette Thurber continued as the administrator of the conservatory. His duties consisted of teaching composition and orchestration to the most talented students and rehearsing the orchestra. In addition, he was expected to conduct six concerts of his own works during the school year.

Dvořák's appointment created a stir in the press, as Thurber had envisioned. It was hailed as a symbol of America's readiness to excel in the development of its own musical culture. New York critic Henry E. Krehbiel pointed to the composer's background and accomplishments as particularly fitting to the American character. Rising from humble origins to world renown by virtue of native talent, tireless effort and persistence in the face of adversity (and without formal education in composition), here was a European appropriately fitted to guide American composers toward original creative effort.

Dvořák had a very clear idea of his mission in America. He said, "I came to discover what young Americans had in them, and to help them to express it." It was Dvořák's own individuality and originality of invention which drew American attention to his observations and counsel concerning their own dilemma. They needed to be freed to expand Old World forms to accommodate the expression of the New World.

In an influential article in *Harper's* (February 1895), Dvořák adjured American composers to turn to the folk songs of America for inspiration, including black American melodies and native American Indian chants. During his years at the National Conservatory, Dvořák showed a distinct interest in

black Americans whom Mrs. Thurber encouraged to attend the conservatory through her nondiscriminatory admissions policy. Among those Dvořák taught, befriended and inspired was Will Marion Cook, an early contributor to the jazz idiom. Eager to explore black American music, Dvořák invited the gifted baritone and composer Harry Thacker Burleigh (1866-1949) to his home where the two intensely discussed the spirituals and other songs that Burleigh sang for him.

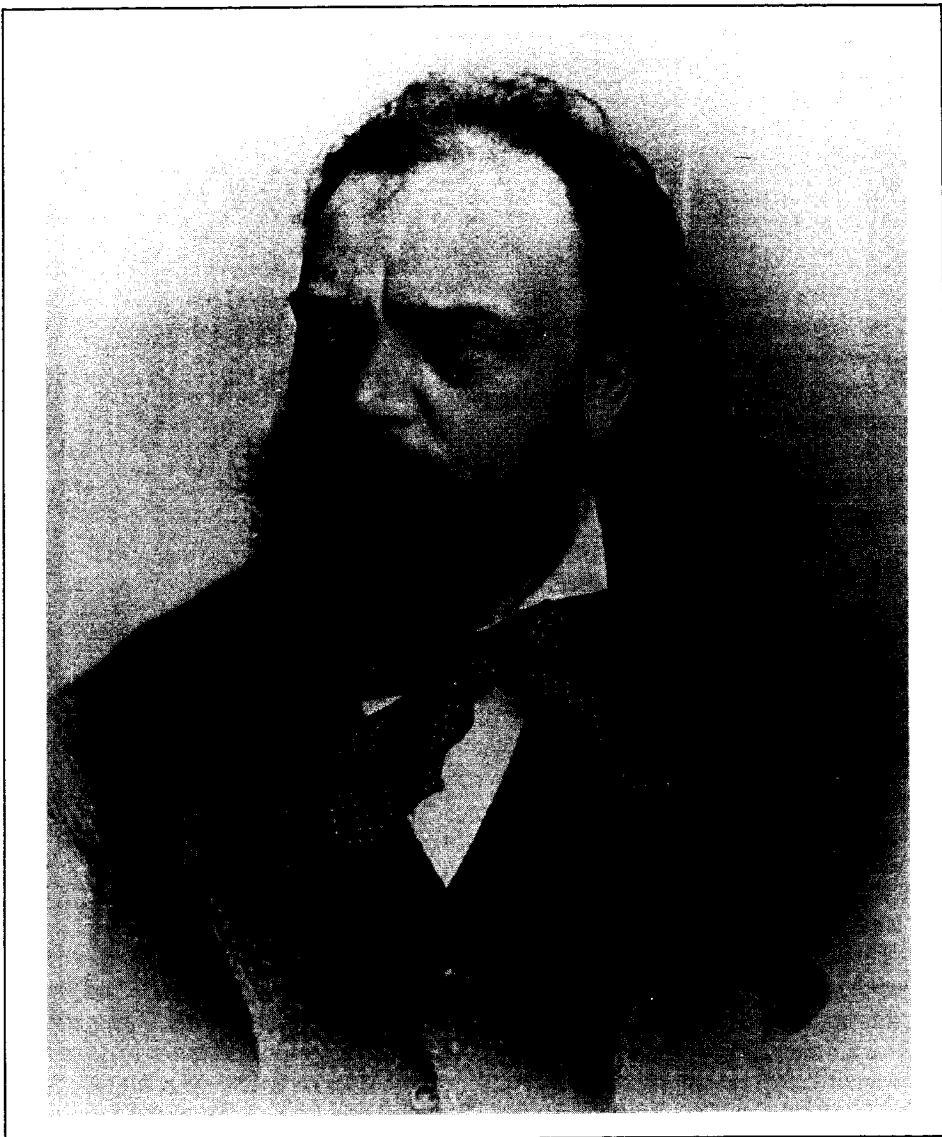
Many of Dvořák's students at the conservatory, including Rubin Goldmark (who later taught George Gershwin briefly), Harvey Worthington Loomis, Harry Rowe Shelley and Edwin Franko Goldman, made significant contributions to music literature. Laura Sedgwick Collins, a native of Poughkeepsie, New York, and graduate of the Lyceum School of Acting in New York, was one of his notable students. Her works include chamber pieces for piano and violin, **Incidental Music to Pierrot**, and songs, including **"The Boatman," "Shadowtown"** and **"With Pipe and Flute"**, which were performed at the students' concert of chamber music on May 8, 1893, "with the kind assistance of Mr. Victor Herbert." Ultimately, a new generation of American composers accepted Dvořák's challenge to investigate and explore their own folk and native music traditions as sources of inspiration.

The fifty-one-year-old Dvořák quickly settled into the rhythms of life in America, walking daily in Central Park and visiting Grand Central Station, where he delighted in inspecting the trains, a passion he had long indulged. He also found a new interest in steamships.

Thurber considered Dvořák's **Symphony in E Minor ("From the New World")**, composed between January and May 1893, his greatest achievement in America. "He used to be particularly homesick on steamer days when he read the shipping news in the *Herald*. Thoughts of home often moved him to tears. On one of these days I suggested that he write a symphony embodying his experiences and feelings in America—a suggestion which he promptly adopted," she recounted. "When he wrote this work," Thurber continued, "he attempted to reproduce in it, here and there, the spirit (though not the exact notes) of negro songs. I helped him to the best of my ability in securing the material, and so did Harry T. Burleigh...."

Jeannette Thurber noted that some thought that the slow movement of Dvořák's American symphony was inspired by Longfellow's "The Song of Hiawatha," but she asserted that was one of his operatic projects. Thurber herself secured the permission of the publishers and of Alice M. Longfellow for him to use the poem, but Dvořák did not live to carry out his plan. "He was deeply interested in his project for a *New World* opera. One day he wrote me: 'But I am

The Maud Powell Archive



Mrs. Thurber brought Antonín Dvořák to America in 1892 to head the National Conservatory of Music, knowing that his appointment would create a stir in the press. While in this country, he composed some of his most enduring music including the "New World" Symphony and his "American" Quartet.

The Maud Powell Archive



Dvořák suffered from terrible homesickness and was always hungering for the countryside and the outdoors. He often walked in Central Park which provided him with a quiet place to reflect and be with nature.

continued on page 31

Legacy of Hope

WILLIAM GRANT STILL MUSIC



*Out of the
Wilderness
or
"The Last Best
Hope of
Earth"*

In the early seventies, Dr. Robert Bartlett Haas planned the book, *William Grant Still and His Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, with the intention of introducing a totally unknown composer to the artistic community. The response to his plans at the university where he taught was negative, and he was forced to solicit private funds to publish the volume. Members of the Fine Arts Committee in his institution even turned down his request for monies to present a William Grant Still Festival for the composer's seventy-fifth birthday. Haas was so disappointed over the lack of interest in his project, that he committed himself to selling every copy of the book himself, if that became necessary.

It did not become necessary. Two printings of the book were sold in due course, and requests flowed in for a second edition. Twenty years later [1995] there are several books about William Grant Still [1895-1978] either printed or planned, and there have been over a dozen festivals for the composer across the country. Whereas the material in the original *Fusion* was completely new to the public, today there are other books in print, or soon-to-be in print, which contain some of the same material. So much has happened for Still since the first edition saw the light of day that the book has almost outlived the need for a new edition. However, my feeling is that a second edition is important, not because it rescues a great man from obscurity, but because it continues to make clear the nature of his achievement where artistic change and social reform are concerned. The title itself is sufficient to carry the message that he wished to convey to the world.

This is not to say that I have always been aware of the importance of the book and its title. I haven't....

A prophetic dream

When I was a young girl, I recall that it was always accepted in our metaphysically-oriented family that my father [William Grant Still] and my mother [Verna Arvey] had been chosen before birth to do an important spiritual and historical work in life. Psychics had told them that the music that would come out of their years together was destined to be heralded as some of the finest that the world would have to offer, not for its own sake, but because

ing the dream, I observed that there was no chance of my taking care of the music, because I expected my mother, who was fifteen years his junior and an astute businesswoman, to continue to run William Grant Still Music until the company came into its own. My father replied, "You never know what God has in store."

Shouldering the task

When my father had been dead two years, and my mother was bedridden, I wanted to resist the nagging sense that something had to be done with the music. But the thousands of pages of handwritten manuscript, some brown with age, some eaten by silverfish and stained by water from the leaky roof, all packed in neat butcher paper and manila packages, stood in stacks all over my mother's house, like thread-bare wayfarers begging for sustenance. When I thought of how my father had carefully penned the last works of his career, in spite of his eye trouble and stomach upsets—when I remembered how he had meticulously wrapped the onion skin master sheets and tied them neatly with strings, as if they were to be sent to a prestigious orchestra for performance—when I realized that so many of them had never been touched since, and that, regardless of all his attempts to interest conductors in them, they remained just as he had left them, my sorrow flowed in streams and torrents. Something had to be done, even though I was hardly the person qualified for the task.

At first I believed the job could be done in short order. It was good music, and my father's worst enemies might be expected to lose credibility after their victim had been dead for some time. I was told that once I had contacted a great conductor or two who would champion Still, and one or two interested New York publishers, the rest would be no problem. It did not occur to me that my father had, in the 20s, 30s and 40s, the greatest of conductors as his champions, and the finest publishers, and that even they had not been able to bring Still to the public. But, I was inexperienced, and from 1980 to 1983 I spent time and money seeking performances and publications, until it became clear that an increase in visibility of the name on concert programs did nothing to enhance its status.

its unique qualities would call attention to the need for change in social attitudes in the coming Aquarian Age. Other persons of color had been gifted in the arts, other couples had been intermarried, others had fought for civil rights, but none before Still and Arvey had been so persistent and so exemplary in affirming the cause of cultural interaction.

I was quite proud that my parents had been brought to this exalted calling, but I did not expect to share in their achievements, even as I was aware I had not been blessed with their enormous talents and gentle natures. My father's own dreams and visions had made it manifest that his would be a life of hardship which would go on "to the bitter end." I admired him for bearing up in the wilderness for forty years, for bringing the tablets down to the unbelievers, but surely I could do very little to assist, being so ill-prepared in the arts and in public relations. Moreover, I was not schooled in the techniques of self-sacrifice.

My father did not encourage me to join him on the "Cross," but he did tell me of a dream which I have recounted in detail in my book, *A Voice High-Sounding*. The upshot of the dream was that someday I would have to take care of the music, and that his catalog of compositions was to become a very valuable asset indeed. When he had finished describ-

continued on page 24

BY LANCE BOWLING

♦ William Grant Still ♦

William Grant Still composed some of the most *American* music ever heard upon the concert stage. His music draws deeply from the wealth of his part-Spanish, Scottish, Irish, Choctaw Indian, and African-American heritage. With few role models to follow, and struggling under the prevailing racial prejudices of the day, William Grant Still persevered as a trailblazer in nearly every musical genre he undertook.

Still's father, a college-educated bandmaster, was murdered three months after the composer's birth on May 11, 1895, in Woodville, Mississippi, after petitioning for equal pay for black teachers. His mother, Carrie Fambro Still, a graduate of Atlanta University, moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where she taught high school English.

Young Still's grandmother Ann Fambro, a former slave, half-Choctaw and half-Black, who couldn't read or write, taught him Negro spirituals as he was growing up while his mother conducted a choral group.

Still studied the violin as a youngster, then entered Wilberforce College and later Oberlin College Conservatory. In 1916, he toured with W.C. Handy, who became his musical mentor. After World War I, Still played in Handy's dance orchestra and became musical director of the Black Swan Phonograph Company in New York. In 1921, he was hired as an oboist and arranger for Sissle and Blake's landmark Black-American musical *Shuffle Along*. The most influential black show of its generation, *Shuffle Along* recast the American musical into a fast-paced syncopated affair during the early 1920's and was the most far-ranging example of black influence on American show business up to that time.

Self-taught in orchestration, Still entered the burgeoning field of network radio in 1929 as music arranger for Paul Whiteman's "Old Gold Hour." During the 1930s, Still became chief arranger and later, permanent conductor, for Willard Robison's "Deep River Hour," becoming the first Black American to conduct an all-white network orchestra. Using small ensembles to enhance the limited fidelity of radio during those early years, Still's techniques later became standard practice.

Still had studied composition privately with the American composer George Chadwick and beginning in 1923, he studied two years with the French ultra-modernist composer Edgar Varèse, who freed him from the European musical idiom. Ultimately, Still discovered his musical identity through his racial heritage and he became a pioneer in elevating the black musical idiom to symphonic status.

Courtesy William Grant Still Music



William Grant Still

With the premiere of his **Afro-American Symphony** in 1931 with Howard Hanson conducting the Eastman Rochester Orchestra, Still became the first Black American to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. Receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1934, he left the Harlem Renaissance for Los Angeles where he concentrated on serious composition.

In 1936, Still conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in several of his compositions, becoming the first African American to conduct a major American orchestra.

Still's music became known nationwide through network radio performances in the 1930s. Conductors such as Hanson and Leopold Stokowski enjoyed playing his

works because of their immediate audience appeal. Stokowski programmed the last movement of the **Afro-American Symphony** on the Philadelphia Orchestra's 1937 cross-country tour. Howard Hanson premiered many of Still's works, including the ballet **Sahdji** in the early 1930s, for which the composer spent over a year researching African music and lore.

In 1936, Still worked for Columbia studios as an orchestrator on the movie *Lost Horizons*. That made him the second major film orchestrator of color. Hired to be music director of *Stormy Weather*, Still protested the movie's stereotypical portrayal of the American Negro and resigned. His resignation received public attention and Blacks were called on to boycott the movie.

In 1937, the Columbia Broadcasting System commissioned Still and five other American composers (including Piston, Harris, Hanson, Copland/replacing Gershwin) to write new works for its radio workshop. Still's composition **Lenox Avenue** incorporated blues elements, a great novelty for a classical work during that era. After the premier broadcast, CBS received hundreds of letters requesting that it be repeated.

Still was unanimously chosen in a blind audition to write the theme music for the 1939 New York World's Fair. In 1940, Still wrote a powerful choral ballad for orchestra, contralto solo and two choirs, **"And they Lynched him on a Tree,"** to a poem by Katherine Garrison Chapin (Mrs. Francis Biddle) at a time when Congress was debating an anti-lynching bill. As a young man, the composer had witnessed a lynching in the Deep South, a horrifying experience he never forgot.

continued on page 32

Breaking barriers

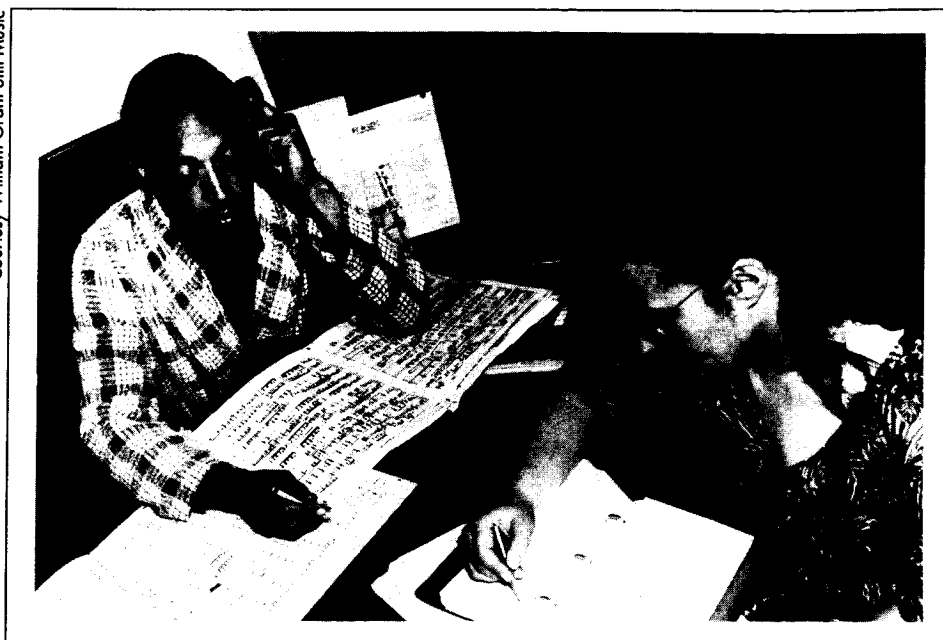
I realized, after hearing again and again, "Where can I get recordings of your father's music?" that the vast audiences were no longer in the concert halls. They were in their cars and in their kitchens and in their bedrooms, playing cassettes and discs, making private decisions about what to play from a sense of taste and pleasure that had no connection with stereotypes or pseudo-sophistication. I went to the record companies.

Most big recording companies in 1983 were not ready to lay out a welcome-mat for me. They greeted me with legions of stereotypical notions and mindless rejections, in varying degrees of politeness. "American music is out of favor these days." "Black music doesn't sell." "We do not feel that your father's work has commercial value." "We don't plan to do a collection of Black works unless you can bring us a substantial grant." "We are not familiar with your father's work." "We have just done an album of Gershwin [or Joplin or Ellington], and we feel that we have made a significant contribution to the recognition of your father's heritage." And all this without ever having seen a score, or heard a note, of the music that I was proposing for the recording.

I was not perturbed, I was enraged. Who said that civil rights were being given their due? Who said that the American people were blessed by artistic freedom and the freedom to know? I saw that I would have to make the first recordings myself, using all the resources that two widows and four children could bring to bear. We cinched up and began the rocky ascent. We borrowed money, moved to cheaper quarters, and, in the next five years, we made and/or distributed nine LPS and cassette tapes of the music of William Grant Still. We were assisted greatly by the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, which produced the recording of the **Third Symphony**, and by the Arkansas Arts council, which gave copies of that LP to universities all across the country.

When the LPs and tapes were successful, achieving critical acclaim, and when the Library of Congress decided to put the **Afro-American Symphony** on compact disc, it became easier to convince other companies to make all-Still CDs. We began to get money back. We used that money to expand our efforts, to send letters to music professors across the country, and to offer promotional CDs to radio stations. We also planned the publication of several books, among them the second edition of *Fusion*, but we decided to wait on those until there were at least two-dozen Still recordings on sale to the public. *Fusion* made no sense to anyone unless the music could be heard. Always we spent more than we had, always we robbed Peter to pay Paul, but always we made progress.

Courtesy William Grant Still Music



William Grant Still and Verna Avery, 1944

"A purpose larger than mere music"

The music on the recordings was scattered like seeds in the hearts of the people, where it now germinates and brings forth a growing awareness of what the composer and his wife tried to accomplish. We return now to the job of reprinting *Fusion of Cultures* for the Centennial, with full confidence that, in the next century, William Grant Still will be recognized as a prophet of a new age—the Age of Cosmic Consciousness. In this new age, which the composer heralded and advocated, there will be freedom to be part of the multiplicity of life as unique individuals, as well as the enlightened desire to understand and to participate in the differences of others. In culture and in society, when human intercourse becomes as harmonious and strikingly various as the natural world, then will civilization advance to the level of its technological competence.

It is unfortunate, of course, that our spirituality has lagged so far behind our technology for these one-hundred years, and that the road to an advanced level of civilized life has not been a straight one. In the Civil War, in the race riots, in the pogroms in Europe, in the World Wars, in the years of discrimination of every sort, and in the years of degradation in the arts, mankind has veered from the uphill route, and, self-serving ever, has taken the path of least resistance and most injustice. Thereupon, a higher source sent down a few kindly spirits, such as a Lincoln, a Gandhi and a Still, to step to the helm, to redefine good and evil, to affirm that there is a best way toward beauty and virtue, and to prove that the roughest, longest road is a small price to pay for progress.

In his journey on that long road, Lincoln created the conditions necessary to bring about interaction among the races: a unified nation and the freedom of all persons in that nation. Still demonstrated the value of that interaction, and the means to achieve it. Lincoln said, "I believe I have made some mark which will tell for civil liberty after I have gone." "In giving freedom to the slave, we assure...the last best hope of earth." "If my name goes down in history, it will be for this act." William Grant Still said, "If I have a wish to express, it would be that my music may serve a purpose larger than mere music. If it will help in some way to bring about better interracial understanding in America and in other countries, then I will feel that the work is justified." These two men pushed humankind along in the same direction. Lincoln's ultimate vindication, and the enormous fascination of people with his life and work, gives us assurance of the coming vindication for William Grant Still.

This book marks a part of the path toward that vindication. The book began the process of recognition in 1972 when it was first printed, and the fact that it retains its importance and interest value twenty-two years later, reveals how far we have come here at William Grant Still Music, and why we have made the journey. Like an oaken gate outside a capacious, century-old inn, its historical varnish shines and beckons, welcoming us to the new century, and to the hospitality of the kindly Host and noble ghosts who ushered in that century. The arch over the entry bears the inscription: Memorial to *William Grant Still and His Fusion of Cultures in American Music*. All travelers welcome.



Judith Anne Still is the daughter of William Grant Still

and Verna Arvey and the manager of William Grant Still Music. This article is an excerpt from Judith Anne Still's "Closing" to the second edition of William Grant Still and His Fusion of Cultures in American Music.

Resources

William Grant Still Music, 4 S. San Francisco St., Suite 422, Flagstaff, AZ 86001-5737, phone 520-526-9355, fax 520-526-0321

Forthcoming Conference: *William Grant Still and His World*, June 1998, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ. Contact: Catherine P. Smith, Program Chair, Dept. of Music, 226, Univ. of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557-0049 Fax: 702-784-6896, email: smithcp@scs.unr.edu

Select Bibliography

Arvey, Verna. *In One Lifetime*, (William Grant Still biography) Fayetteville, AR, 1984

William Grant Still and His Fusion of Cultures in American Music. R. Haas, ed., Los Angeles, 1972 [incl. discography and list of works]; 2nd/Centennial Collector's ed. J. A. Still, managing ed., Flagstaff: The Master-Player Library, 1995

Still, Judith A. *A Voice High-Sounding*. Flagstaff: The Master Player Library, 1995.

Still, Judith A., M.J. Dabrishus and C.L. Quinn. *William Grant Still, A Bio-Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Smith, C. Parsons. "The Politics of Race and Class in William Grant Still's Late Career," *American Music* (forthcoming).

Smith, C. Parsons and G. Murchison, co-editors. *William Grant Still, A Study in Contradictions: Essays and Sources toward a Biography* (in progress)

Select Discography

A Festive Sunday with William Grant Still, Symphony No. 3, Festive Overture, Cambria CD-1060

Get On Board, Music of William Grant Still, for woodwinds, Cambria CD-1083

Black Diamonds, incl. piano music by William Grant Still, Althea Waites, piano, Cambria CD-1097

Afro-American Symphony by WGS, Neemi Jarvi, Detroit Symphony, Chandos CD9154

Symphony in G-Minor by WGS, Neemi Jarvi, Detroit Symphony, Chandos CD-CHN9226

Recordings of operas and many other works by WGS are on a variety of record labels and many are available through William Grant Still Music.

YVETTE GUILBERT

continued from page 17

called "*La vie du Christ*." Her involvement with mysticism and spirituality added a quality to her performing which the public and the critics loved. The New York press wrote: "Mystic, a great soul, which is manifesting itself to us with irresistible force....Yvette Guilbert is not only a great artist, she is also a great woman....She is a great woman because—in Whitman's phrase—she 'contains multitudes.'" Audiences would have never believed the embarrassments earlier audiences had caused Yvette to endure. An aura began to surround her name. Yvette remained in the United States for seven years.

"...but one Yvette..."

Deeply imbedded in the persona of Yvette Guilbert was the need to teach. She founded several schools for young artists and attempted to get funding for many more. Her lecture-recitals were very successful. But how could she possibly teach people to be like she was? After one series of lectures, Carl Van Vechten wrote, "She told how she studied the words of her songs, how she planned them, what a large part the plasticity of her body played in their interpretation, and when she was done all she had said only went to prove that there is but one Yvette Guilbert."

She wrote a book, *How to Sing a Song*, published in 1918 by Macmillan, founded theatres, taught students, gave lectures, listed the technical devices most necessary for a diseuse/chanteuse, but always and always the critics said: "*Il n'y a qu'une Yvette*" (There is only one Yvette). She made yearly tours of the United States and Canada, along with tours of Western Europe and Russia.

The timing of Yvette and Max's return to Paris was unfortunate. It was in the midst of the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age focusing on futurism while Yvette focused on medievalism. Yvette hated jazz! She tried performing her *chansons* but without much success. Finally in March 1924, she stepped onto the stage of the *Empire Theatre* in Paris with her red hair, long black gloves and green dress of old and sang her old songs. No longer a thin young woman, the matronly-looking Yvette was very nervous, as she often was in a performance situation which she found threatening. She was a huge success with the critics and the fans of both generations.

In February 1926, the French chanteuse made her first appearance in Berlin after the war. An impassioned pacifist, she decided to single-handedly build a bridge between France and Germany. Under the aegis of Max Reinhardt, she gave a small private concert at his theatre, *Die Komoedia*, to which he invited all of the important people. Yvette received a tremendous ovation. Speaking from the stage, she pleaded for peace between the two countries. The audience rose in a body and the tears and applause continued for a half hour.

Guilbert continued to perform and tour well into her seventies. Plagued by arthritis, once on stage she became young and vital. Her fame and fortune were beyond present-day belief. In 1941 she once again suffered humiliation because of a war and her husband's race and nationality. Her apartment was broken into and then seized by the Germans. By 1943, they were satisfied that she was not Jewish, but the anxiety had taken its toll. She was weak and ill and died in bed on the morning of February 3, 1944, while writing about reading and re-reading the Bible.

"Know your fellow-creatures as you know yourself and you will be an artist. Love your fellow-creatures as yourself and you will be a genius; worship God and His creation, sing its praise and you will be immortal." Y.G.



Soprano Leslie M. Holmes has sung many programs of Cabaret, both classical and popular, throughout New England and Europe, and lectures on the origins of Cabaret. She is a former radio host on WCRB Boston.

Select Bibliography

Shapiro, Barbara S. *Pleasures of Paris: Daumier to Picasso*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1991.

Knapp, Bettina and M. Chipman. *That Was Yvette*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Pessis, Jacques and J. Crépineau. *The Moulin Rouge*. Andrew Lamb, ed. St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Frey, Julia. *Toulouse-Lautrec*. Viking Press, 1994.

Geffroy, Gustave and H. de Toulouse-Lautrec. *Yvette Guilbert*. Eng. trans. Barbara Sessions. New York: Walker and Company, 1968.

Few English musicians can have had a more versatile career than Betty Roe, who at 66 is as busy as ever and revelling in the variety.

Born in London of a fishmonger father and housewife mother, she was, she says, rather gauche and unsociable as a child. But what made her acceptable to her peers was that she could play the piano by ear at parties. She was at the organ console for church services well before her teens and scrambled through her schooling largely on the basis of her musical and acting abilities: "I just couldn't grasp anything academic."

Training at the Royal Academy of Music ("RAM") in London set her up to be a piano teacher. On leaving the Academy, having done well at harmony and keyboard but not being considered a prospect for anything other than teaching, she got out into the big world and did just that—50-plus piano lessons a week in the early years. She also did musical jobbing work—directing a church choir, being accompanist to singers at Masonic dinners—and sang in an amateur revue company as a sideline.

Encouraged by her husband, she managed to break into the then busy professional chorus session-singing world in London. This meant anything from major operatic recordings to appearances on TV pop-music shows. Mornings might be spent recording a Bach cantata, afternoons doing a close-harmony TV jingle, and evenings backing Joan Sutherland in a Bellini opera.

All through this time, apart from having three children, she kept up her work as choirmaster and organist, became musical director of one of London's leading drama schools, worked as solo cabaret artist, developed a career as examiner for Britain's premiere music-examining body, and became a sought-after adjudicator at competitive music festivals.

She stopped giving piano lessons many years ago, but still works regularly as coach for singers, and particularly for actors. Flexibility at the piano, in all musical styles from Purcell to Sondheim, and the ability to spot quickly how people can best be helped in circumstances where they haven't the time to embark on a long series of lessons, means a steady flow of customers to her front door.

Still living in the street where she was born, though not in the same house, she is also musical director of a local music-theatre group which encompasses the choral repertoire, chamber operas, musical plays and that distinctive English theatrical form, the pantomime. And she still keeps her hand in playing the occasional church service.

Betty Roe

"a community composer"

Courtesy Thames Publishing



Betty Roe, right, and her collaborator Marian Lines who is "every composer's dream: fluent, prolific, equally at home in serious and comedy requirements...Our meetings are laughter-filled."

All this would be energetic enough for most people, but Betty will tell you that perhaps the most important aspect of her life as a musician, particularly in the last 20 years, is her work as a composer.

Enjoying composing

Motivation for composers varies enormously. Some just *have* to write, whether or not there is the remotest chance of performance. For others—and Betty is very much of this number—the incentive is a likely performance and, where possible, a reasonable fee. Almost all her works in recent years have been to commission, exploring the talents of particular performers or meeting the challenge of particular circumstances and occasions. "I am a community composer and proud of it," she says. "Inspiration comes when it will, but for me there is

always the excitement of exercising one's craft and sizing up what a particular performer might manage. I am lucky in that musical ideas come easily to me. I haven't so far ever had a creative block. I used always to compose at the keyboard but more and more now I work away from it."

She began composing not long after completing her studies at the RAM. "I fell in with an amateur revue company which specialised in writing its own material. One of the lyric-writers in the company sought my help in supplying music, and I found the discipline and challenge of this very good training. Numbers had to be written quickly, sometimes on the same day, and they had to have strong melodies and sharply defined musical character—pastiche often—but with my own flavour.



"I am a community composer and proud of it," says Betty Roe.

"I often performed my own material, which gave me a good sense of what worked as a vocal line and what comedy timing was all about. All this proved invaluable in the later, and generally more serious, music that I have written, much of it vocal."

Laughter-filled collaboration

All composers will tell you that good librettists and word-smiths are hard to find. "I've been lucky here," says Betty. "In my early days I worked with Maurice Holstock, a witty and imaginative writer whose best work was the equal of much that was appearing in the West End revues of that period. But my real good fortune was when I met Marian Lines quite by chance at a party just down the street from my home. Author of novels, plays and poems, she has turned out to be every composer's dream: fluent, prolific, equally at home in serious and comedy requirements, ever ready to add another verse, an extra syllable, or reshape a scene to meet a musical requirement. Our meetings are laughter-filled—sometimes convulsively so—as ideas are banged backwards and forwards."

The briefings that Roe-Lines get for their commissions are often unfocused, and Marian is particularly imaginative in expanding on an often simple opening idea or requirement. A good example is **Crowds**, a full-length musical play written for one of England's leading schools. They wanted a show which didn't have star parts but opportunities for perhaps a dozen children to shine as individuals, as well as having a colourful chorus part. The show

had to be "educational" but not obtrusively so. What emerged was a sharply-etched social history of Britain between the World Wars. Set-pieces like the Derby horse-race and the University Boat Race were sandwiched between key political and national events. The show has been widely performed and has recently been published in definitive form.

The Roe-Lines works now number some two dozen and include two chamber operas, instrumental works, choral works and a host of children's musicals and what might be called mini-dramas. The most recent of these, premiered in June 1996, was **The Storm Hound**, based on an old folk-legend about a sinister devil-figure. The commissioning school choir had performed one of Benjamin Britten's miniature music dramas, **The Golden Vanity**, and was keen to tackle something offering a similar test of their abilities—which is what they got.

A particularly interesting challenge was to write a chamber opera as a companion piece to an earlier opera Betty had written to a libretto by Ursula Vaughan Williams (widow of Ralph Vaughan Williams). This latter was set in Chaucer's time and developed relationships between some of the Pilgrims on arrival at Canterbury after they had participated in the famous ride. The aim was for Marian

to write a mirror-image to this piece, set in modern times and featuring similar characters. Her solution was **A Flight of Pilgrims**, which takes place in an airport lounge, where some pilgrims are ensconced for an hour or so while their plane is being repaired. In forty-five minutes there is considerable diversity as personalities are revealed and relationships explored. The two operas can be played as a double bill, with the same seven singers appearing in both works.

Music for the occasion

But important though the Lines works are in Betty's canon, she has set many other poets and librettists. A work to which she is particularly attached is **The Heritage of Children**, for medium-size choral group, soprano solo, oboe and organ. It arose from a commission she had from a friend who had adopted a baby from middle-Europe and wished to celebrate the successful conclusion of the lengthy and painful adoption procedure. Betty drew on many English poets, past and present, in compiling her text, which explores childhood and the parent-child relationship in music of deep commitment. Two of the work's most joyous sections use words by one of England's most penetrating contemporary poets, Charles Causley, whose poetry she has set with notable success on several previous occasions.

continued on page 34

♦ by ANYA LAURENCE ♦

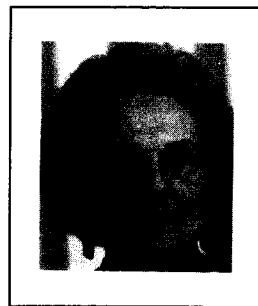
Have you ever heard of...

Charlotte Helen Sainton-Dolby was born at London, England, on May 17, 1821. She was a contralto who received her musical education at the Royal Academy of Music and made her debut as soloist at a London Philharmonic concert in 1842. Felix Mendelssohn, who admired her musicality, wrote the contralto part in *Elijah* for her, and also dedicated his *Six Songs*, op. 57 to her. After marrying the celebrated violinist Prosper Sainton (1813-1890) in 1869, she went on to found a vocal school in London in 1872.

Sainton-Dolby's compositions include three cantatas: *The Legend of St. Dorothea*, *The Story of the Faithful Soul* (both of which were performed in public several times) and *Florimel*, for female voices, which was completed a few months before her death. She also composed a number of songs and was the author of *Tutor for English Singers*.

Charlotte Sainton-Dolby died at London on February 18, 1885.

Reference: Laurence, Anya. *Women of Notes: 1,000 Women Composers born before 1900*. New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1978.



Anya Laurence is an educator, pianist and arts administrator.

Marnie Hall

RECORDING PIONEER

You won't find a listing for Marnie Hall in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Go through *The MusicIndex*, the standard reference for periodicals about music, and you can count the number of articles about her on the fingers of one hand. This is hardly what one would expect with regard to the founder of a record company. But maybe it is not so surprising really, since Hall is a woman and her company Leonarda specializes in recording music written by women.

At first, Hall, who was born in Clay Center, Kansas (pop. about 4,000), was not even interested in music, let alone a musical career. "My mother forced me to take piano lessons," she remembers, speaking by phone from her home in New York (on her 54th birthday, it turned out), "and I never practiced." But at age eight she was "dragged off to a violin recital" and, to her surprise, found herself falling in love with the instrument. She eventually ended up at the University of Kansas, where she received a bachelor's degree, supporting herself her junior and senior years by playing violin in the Kansas City Philharmonic. She considered taking up conducting initially, but realizing the field was closed to women, she decided to become a teacher at a university. When Hall went to New York to earn her master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, she found herself making a living as a freelance violinist.

Hall's freelancing led to her involvement with many ensembles, including the American Ballet Theater Orchestra and the American Symphony Orchestra, where she worked under Leopold Stokowski. But she did not feel "fulfilled." As she put it: "As a section player, you feel left out. It's never your show." So in 1972 she founded the Vieuxtemps String Quartet, made up of fellow female freelance musicians.

During their years together, the quartet appeared on a number of concert series, toured the Midwest, and played in everything from formal concerts to senior centers to weddings. They appeared at two women's colleges (Lesley College in Massachusetts and Russell Sage College in upstate New York) and were invited to perform at Drew University by the women's student association.

Courtesy Marnie Hall



Marnie Hall in her office today.

Courtesy Marnie Hall



Marnie Hall in 1974 shortly before she produced the groundbreaking recorded anthology *Women's Work: Works by Famous Women Composers* on her own Gemini Hall label.

Woman's Work

Not surprisingly, the quartet members were soon asked if they played music by women. In fact, they did not. Up to that point, the only woman composer Hall had even heard of was Cécile Chaminade. Intrigued, she began searching out music in the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts and the Library of Congress, armed with a list of names culled from *Baker's Biographical Dictionary*. Additional composers were identified with the help of Jane Bowers, a musicologist specializing in the Renaissance, who also shared the music she had collected during her nine months of research in European libraries.

Hall became so interested in this research that she eventually decided to record an entire album of works exclusively by women composers. The result was the groundbreaking anthology *Woman's Work: Works by Famous Woman Composers*, released in 1975 on her own Gemini Hall label. The project was an amazingly ambitious one, including works spanning a 300-year period (1625-1925) and featuring, in addition to the Vieuxtemps Quartet, soprano Berenice Bramson, mezzo Mertine Johns, and pianists Michael May and Roger Rundle. Some of the composers, like Clara Schumann, Cécile Chaminade and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, were recognizable to a general audience, but the vast majority were unfamiliar—Francesca Caccini, Maria Malibran, Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia and Louise Hérítte-Viardot.

At first, the album did fairly well. It was reviewed widely, not only in small publications like the now-defunct *Paid My Dues: A Journal of Women and Music*, but by prestigious publications like the *New York Times*. In all, it sold about 3,000 copies. Its reception made Hall realize, "I felt I had discovered something that was important to do, and I was happy it was something I could do, something which would utilize my particular talents."

But, as Hall discovered, making albums is an expensive business. The production and manufacturing costs were \$16,000, an investment of her own savings, and she spent an additional \$10,000 to promote and sell 2,000 copies of *Woman's Work*. Although sales of the album were steady, expenses

were such that she lost the money invested in it and consequently stopped promoting it only two years after it was issued. Another 1,300 copies were eventually sold before it went out of print.

Leonarda, heart and soul

After this experience, Hall turned her energies to starting a new recording company, which she decided to call "Leonarda." The company would be non-profit and tax-exempt because, as she admitted, "I realized that any venture of this kind would never earn a real profit." Support money was expected to come from grants, foundations, and even the artists themselves. She decided that Leonarda albums would primarily focus on women composers, concentrating on presenting longer and larger works by little-known composers. But she also determined to feature twentieth-century music by both men and women, aware of the difficulty many of them have getting their music performed and recorded. Finally, she resolved to use both male and female performers because, as she put it, "My goal has never been to isolate women's music, but to bring it to the attention of both men and women—to make it available to as many people as I can."

"Many record companies accept tapes and don't get involved in production or repertoire," she explains. "I have always recorded only music that interests me because a big catalog and money have not been the driving force behind the label. Since I generally like to work with performers who can put together repertoire by different composers, I usually work directly with them, although sometimes a composer has a piece so terrific I will try to place it. Sometimes people bring finished masters that are not up to my recording standards. I like to be involved at the beginning of a project, starting with the selection (or approval) of repertoire, right on through production."

As a result of Leonarda recordings, a number of composers whose work would not have reached the public otherwise have received commissions, residencies and performances of their music.

During the days when Hall was producing LPs, she loaned Leonarda a substantial amount of money and worked for many years without a salary, supporting herself as a violinist. Money that should have gone to her went instead to engineers and typesetters. When digital recording came along, production costs escalated by about 400 percent. Determined to continue despite rising costs, Hall says: "The only way I could survive was by asking artists to find funding for the recordings and by becoming a recording engineer and graphic designer myself." In 1992, the cost of digital editing equipment came down enough for her to invest in it and set up her own editing studio.

By 1990, Leonarda had released about thirty-five albums, two-thirds of which were LPs, as well as several cassettes. Two of the latter are samplers and two are a companion piece to the book *Women Composers: A Lost Tradition Found*. Hall says the overall reaction to the label was "mostly favorable....There were a few critics but they were small."

ly and feels that the time has come to correct some of the imbalances that are hurting the classical recording business and the people in it. "There is no reason why production and publicity need to cost so much," she says firmly, mentioning as an example a publicist who makes \$300,000 a year. "Few musicians make that kind of money. It doesn't make

Photo by Susanne Faulkner Stevens



The Vieuxtemps String Quartet photographed prior to a 1975 performance at the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival. Quartet members were Masako Yanagita, Marnie Hall, Margaret Middleton and Evalyn Stetnbock.

Recording industry challenges

But from the first, like many other small labels, Leonarda had distribution problems because of the restrictions many stores put on the merchandise they sell. For example, some do not want to carry new music, while others want no more than two composers per disc to facilitate shelf placement. Then, too, a backlash developed against the label, as if a company that favored women composers were anti-male. Ironically, Hall says, "My men's things don't sell!"

While it appears that the classical recording industry is going through a rough patch universally, Hall focuses on a key reality of the business that has been in place for years. "The fact is that few recordings on any label, whether for-profit or nonprofit, major label or small label, ever recoup their expenses," she observes. "Most recordings of classical music are supported by outside funding which comes from individual artists or ensembles, faculty grants, and/or one of several foundations that funds recordings."

Over the years Hall has monitored the changing financial picture of the recording industry very close-

sense to me that these people make so much while others involved in performing the music and bringing it to the public make comparatively little."

"Consider what recording companies do," she continues. "They provide free CDs for radio broadcasts and the press, but all the copyright royalties from sales and broadcasts go to composers and music publishers; none go to performers or record companies. Yet a recording can also accomplish what a manager can, i.e., get commissions and residencies for composers and performance opportunities for musicians."

Energetic innovation

Hall has recently set into motion a plan designed to benefit everyone involved in a recording. The idea is to offer a combination of engineering, production, distribution, artist management and publicity services so that the artist will not be faced with the need to hire several independent firms whose professional fees the lone artist cannot afford. If paid for these services, which recording companies often now perform anyway for no compensation, the

continued on page 34

FROM THE DESK OF . . .

continued from page 5

presented Price's expressive songs and melodic instrumental pieces which were "big hits" with our audiences. Since then, this music has become part of our repertoire.

The spirit of Cécile Chaminade had hovered over my childhood thanks to my mother who, in her youth, had actually seen and heard Chaminade give a wildly successful concert of her own compositions in New York City (around 1910). Forever after, my mother idolized Chaminade and held her up as a role model for me to emulate as soon as I began studying music at the age of six. However, I never heard Chaminade's music, as her days of glory were long past and her music no longer performed. It was dismissed as parlour music even though Chaminade lived on until 1944. While her music did not influence me, the fact that she was a woman composer did.

In 1975, the United Nations proclaimed the forthcoming decade as "The Decade of Women." That year Nancy Van de Vate formed the League of Women Composers and Tommie Carl started American Women Composers, Inc. I was a charter member of both organizations.

I was always hoping to find kindred spirits among other women composers, but I was mostly disappointed. I had always thought that women, by nature and nurture, were supposedly more sensitive, emotional, expressive, tender, gentler, and so forth than men. Thus I naively expected their music to be more beautiful, expressive and moving than the vogueish "modern music" dominated by men. I was wrong.

Most living women composers seemed determined to outdo the men in sounding "masculine," that is, by writing the kind of music praised by critics as "uncompromising" and "powerful"—two euphemisms favored by critics to describe ugly, strident works! In my youthful days as a concert pianist, it was considered the highest compliment to say of a female pianist, "She plays like a man." I guess "she composes like a man" reflects a similar mind set. Actually, since the 1970s, the unconscious bias against women as serious composers has been crumbling. The barriers are falling and we are now invited aboard but I'm afraid it's an invitation to board a ship that has been sinking for a long time.

A sort of insanity has gripped all the arts in this century. The relentless pursuit of "originality," the "new" and the "different" nearly destroyed serious music. Twelve-tone serial music vied with aleatory (chance) music to be dubbed the "music of the future." A politically correct and aspiring composer would dabble with both idioms and throw in whatever

other sounds and gimmicks he thought "original." By mid-century, total atonality reigned supreme in approved academic circles. The past was soundly rejected—especially Romanticism.

A major triad became a major sin and a memorable melody an outcast. How music sounded became less important than how it was constructed. Complex serial music could indeed look impressive on paper. It reminds me of Mark Twain's famous quip about Wagner's music, "I've been told it's better than it sounds."

I have found that the real prejudice today is not against *women* composers but against the stereotype of "modern music" firmly entrenched in the minds of audiences and performers alike. They have been stung so often that they don't want to try anything new. When I submit program proposals to potential presenters, I must constantly reiterate that not all contemporary music is harsh, discordant, dry and unlistenable. Performers, understandably, want to present music that will move audiences to warm responses. They also want music they can enjoy performing. Presenters, justifiably, want to present programs that will attract large audiences.

A predictable reaction has begun to set in. The heyday of severely cerebral, endlessly dissonant, cold, unlovely music has passed. A new warmth and lyricism is beginning to emerge among the younger composers.

Fads and fashions come and go, but the human spirit continues to crave beauty. Music is uniquely equipped to satisfy this yearning. A few miraculously inspired notes, such as an immortal Schubert melody, can pierce our hearts and stir our souls. This is the magic of music that, hopefully, the younger generation is rediscovering. An earnest student once asked the imperious conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, "Sir Thomas, what makes great music?" Beecham replied, "A good tune!"

An opportunity exists today for emerging women composers to come into their own and lead music back to sanity and beauty. I hope young women will create a whole new repertoire of "good tunes." One such composer is Stefania de Kenessey who describes her own music as "unabashedly tonal." It has instant audience appeal besides being skillfully crafted.

Florence Price's music is being resurrected because it, too, has real appeal and the power to move all of us.

Published Music

Jeanne Singer's music has been published by Cor Publishing Co., Massapequa, NY; Plymouth Music Co., Ft. Lauderdale, FL; and Frank E. Warren Music Service, W. Newton, MA. For information on other works by Singer, call 516-627-3705.

Discography

To Stir A Dream: American poets in song, 23 settings of American poetry, A. Miskell, tenor, F. Hechtel, soprano, J. Singer, piano, Cambria (CD 1051) or (CT 1051, cassette)

Horn and Harp Odyssey: J. Singer, Suite for Horn and Harp (in four mvmts), S. Hermansson, horn, E. Goodman, harp, BIS (CD-793)

Tribute to Wallenberg (for voice and orchestra, 2 parts), R. Stankovsky, cond., Slovak Radio Symphony Orch., A. Miskell, tenor, MMC Recordings, Ltd. (to be released in 1998)

Six chamber works, Slovak Chamber Players, MMC Recordings, Ltd. (to be released in 1998)

URSULA VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

continued from page 13

Select Bibliography

Biography

Vaughan Williams, Ursula. *R.V.W. A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 1988, 1995.

Vaughan Williams, Ursula and Lunn, John E. *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, a pictorial biography, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Fiction

Vaughan Williams, Ursula. *Metamorphoses*, Duckworth, 1966.

_____. *Set to Partners*, Duckworth, 1968.

_____. *The Yellow Dress*, The Kensal Press, 1984.

Poetry

Wood (Vaughan Williams), Ursula. *No Other Choice*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1941.

_____. *Fall of Leaf*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1943.

_____. *Need for Speech*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948.

Vaughan Williams, Ursula. *Silence and Music*, Hutchinson, 1959.

_____. *Aspects*, Autolycus Publications, 1984.

Select Discography

Vaughan Williams, Ralph. *Epithalamion*, Sir David Willcocks, LPO, Bach Choir, EMI Classics (CDM 7 64730 2).

_____. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Sir Adrian Boult, LPO and Choir, EMI Classics (CMS7 642122-2)

_____. *The Sons of Light*, Sir David Willcocks, LPO, Bach Choir, RCM Chorus, Lyrita SRCS 125 (LP only).

_____. *Four Last Songs*, R. Savidge (baritone), R. Steptoe (piano), BMG TRX CD 116.

_____. *Silence & Music*, Clare College Chapel Choir, Cambridge, Brown, Gamut GAM CD 529.

_____. *Hodie (A Christmas Cantata)*, LSO, Sir David Willcocks, Bach Choir, Choristers of Westminster Abbey, EMI CDM 7 69872 2.

JEANNETTE THURBER

continued from page 21

longing for the libretto of *Hiawatha*. Where is it? If I cannot have it very soon—much is lost.” Thurber related that they discussed the possible librettists, and “I took him to see Buffalo Bill’s Indians dance as a suggestion for the ballet. It is really to be regretted that this operatic project came to naught. *Hiawatha* would have been sung in English. When I first met Dr. Dvořák, in London, he told me that he had wanted to meet me, as he considered I ‘had made music a possibility in America by having opera sung in the vernacular.’”

With the completion of the symphony and the arrival in New York of the rest of the Dvořák children, the composer and his family set out for Spillville, Iowa, to spend the summer in this Bohemian community which reminded Dvořák of home. During that summer, he wrote the **String Quartet in F** and **String Quintet in E flat** (both called the “*American*”), performing the former first in private with a group of amateur musicians, assuming the first violin part himself.

Back at work in New York, Dvořák resumed his teaching, orchestral rehearsals, and train watching. The sensational premiere of his **Symphony “From the New World”** was given by the New York Philharmonic, directed by Anton Seidl at Carnegie Hall in December 1893. *The New York Herald* waxed enthusiastic: “The Director of the National Conservatory Adds a Masterpiece to Musical Literature”...“A work of heroic proportions.” Jeannette Thurber sat in her usual seat in the hall, brimming with pride as the composer she had brought to America received one of the most enthusiastic ovations of his life. “It was the most important event in the long history of the Philharmonic,” she noted with satisfaction.

This triumph was followed in January 1894 by the Kneisel Quartet’s premier of the “*American*” Quartet in Boston and the “*American*” Quintet in New York. “Well do I remember how the Kneisel Quartet came to the Conservatory to try over this music in the composer’s presence,” Thurber recalled. That year, Dvořák composed his **Suite in A**, op. 98 and eight **Humoresques**, op. 101, for piano, which reflect distinctly American influence.

While Dvořák was experiencing remarkable personal success, the National Conservatory was facing financial collapse by April 1894. Caught in the Panic of 1893, the Thurburs were personally facing bankruptcy. Mrs. Thurber fell behind in paying Dvořák’s salary. The Dvořáks gravely deliberated the advisability of his returning to New York after their forthcoming summer in Europe.

Despite his misgivings, the composer signed a contract to return in November for six months, contingent on Mrs. Thurber’s ability to honor the debt. By the time early autumn had arrived he was certain she would be unable to pay him. On October 12, he cabled her: “May be (sic) cannot come without receiving all.” But Thurber had already cabled him half of the sum on October 9, so seven days later Anna, Antonin and their nine-year-old son Otakar set off again for America.

By now, Dvořák was suffering not only the homesickness that plagued him whenever he left his beloved Bohemia, but he was also working under a fairly restrictive schedule which left him little time to compose. Even under these circumstances, he produced one of the most glorious compositions of all time, the **Cello Concerto in B Minor**, op. 104.

As much as Dvořák loved his students, however, the call of home was too strong for him to ignore. On April 16, 1895, he and his family left New York for the last time. The great composer’s letter to Thurber requesting release from his contract closed: “Mrs. Thurber, you know well how much I value your friendship, how much I admire your love for music, for its development you have done so much, and, therefore, I may hope that you will agree with me and that you will kindly recognize and acknowledge all the above-mentioned [family] reasons.” A great chapter in American music history had come to an end.

The years that the great composer Antonin Dvořák spent in the United States gave the world some of his most sublime music, including the **Concerto for Cello and Orchestra**, **String Quartet No. 12**, op. 96 and **String Quintet in E flat**, op. 97 (both subtitled “*The American*”) and the towering **Symphony in E Minor (“From the New World”)**. For these compositions we are largely indebted to the vision and persistence of Jeannette Thurber. She once wrote: “There is nothing I am so proud of as having been able to bring Dr. Dvořák to America, thus being privileged to open the way for one of the world’s symphonic masterpieces, as well as some chamber works which are admittedly even better than the chamber music he wrote in Europe.”

Moving forward

Disappointed but not defeated, Jeannette Thurber continued her enterprising efforts to bring music education and music to Americans. She continued to attract important musicians like the conductor Anton Seidl (1850-1898) to the conservatory. Emil Paur (1855-1932), who succeeded Seidl in 1899 as conductor of the New York Philharmonic, served as the conservatory’s director from 1899 to 1902. The German composer Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921) had accepted Mrs. Thurber’s offer to become the director in

1913 but ultimately had to decline when he could not negotiate release from his duties in Berlin.

To encourage new music, Mrs. Thurber established a prize for American composition in 1894 whose winners included Horatio Parker, George Whitefield Chadwick and Marguerite Merington for her opera-libretto **Daphne**. In 1898-99, the National Conservatory launched its first series of concerts at Madison Square Garden with its own orchestra.

By 1910 Jeannette Thurber’s school rivaled in excellence Baltimore’s Peabody Conservatory, the Cincinnati Conservatory and the New England Conservatory. Jeannette Thurber and a few friends continued to pay tuition for students until 1915. Despite Thurber’s valiant efforts to secure permanent backing for her enterprise, funding fell behind these other institutions, and in 1928 the National Conservatory of Music closed its doors.

When Jeannette Thurber died on January 2, 1946, the *New York Times* published a scant two-inch article about her: “Founder of National Conservatory of Music Here in 1885—Dies at 94.” (She was in her 96th year). There was no special tribute to this visionary woman who had achieved so much during her long life and who had set a new standard for music education in the United States. Her life’s work was summarized in one brief paragraph while a man who ran a department store in Manila, a former Brooklyn public school teacher and a British zoologist were acknowledged with longer and more detailed summaries of their lives and achievements.

Notes

¹ After the collapse of the American/National Opera Company, Emma Juch, who had grown up and studied in Detroit, established the Emma Juch Opera Company, which toured widely in the U.S., Canada and Mexico for two years.

Karen A. Shaffer is the biographer of American violinist Maud Powell and founder of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education. Anya Laurence is a distinguished pianist, author, teacher and arts administrator.

Select Bibliography

Howard, John Tasker and G.K. Bellows. *A Short History of Music in America*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967.

Schabas, Ezra. *Theodore Thomas*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Shaffer, Karen A. and N.G. Greenwood. *Maud Powell, Pioneer American Violinist*. Ames: University of Iowa Press, 1988.

The New Grove Dictionary of American Music, “Dvořák”, “Juch”, “Thomas”, “New York, Education”, “New York, Opera”, “Women in music.” H.W. Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, ed. London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1986.

Thomas, Rose Fay. *Memoirs of Theodore Thomas*. New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1911. All quotations of Amy Fay, Theodore Thomas and the American Opera Company prospectus are from this source.

Thurber, J.M. “Dvořák as I Knew Him,” *The Etude*, xxxvii (1919), 693.

WILLIAM GRANT STILL

continued from page 23

In Los Angeles, Still often worked with Verna Arvey, a talented Jewish pianist and music journalist, whom he married in early 1939, surmounting California's prohibition of inter-racial marriages by marrying in Tijuana, Mexico.

Still became the first Black American to have an opera staged by a major American opera company. **Troubled Island**, composed in 1939 with a libretto by Langston Hughes, was premiered by the New York City Opera in 1949. But New York was not ready for an opera composed by an African American, particularly about a black subject with a white cast. The work received twenty-two curtain calls, but the critics panned it. Overnight, Still became a changed man. Quiet and somber, he continued to compose but mostly in smaller genres—chamber works, textbook songs, and background music for television shows—in order to survive. For the next thirty years, it appeared that his name had been erased from music history, although, in 1955, he became the first Black American to conduct a major symphony orchestra in the Deep South.

Several conductors and performers continued to champion his music. The American violinist Louis Kaufman and his pianist wife Annette programmed his music on their world concert tours and recorded nearly all his works for violin.

At mid-century, amid the mania for alternative musical expression, Still's music, along with that of many other traditional composers, was passed over by young conductors. Still remained true to his own voice and continued to compose until his death in 1978, realizing that his music might not be heard in his lifetime.

The music of William Grant Still is currently enjoying a major revival worldwide. His **Afro-American Symphony** is in the standard repertoire of every major orchestra and is the most performed American symphony today. Audiences return again and again to hear Still's wonderful melodies and superb craftsmanship because, in essence, his music touches the heart.

Lance Bowling is president of Cambria Master Recordings and Publishing.

The Collected Poems of Ursula Vaughan Williams

A book to keep near at hand. You can pick it up at any time of the day or night and find a poem to suit your mood. The poetry of Ursula Vaughan Williams is moving, profound, evocative and lyrical. She has that rare and enviable talent of being able to write in a way that makes the reader think "that's it, that's exactly how it is!" From 'Mountaineer', one of the first poems in this collection and written when she was just 16 years old, to 'Time Being', the last piece in the book, we make the acquaintance of a poet with a love of nature, a concern for humanity and a keen sense of humour. Published by Albion Music Ltd, a division of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society.

\$4 I includes shipping

For further information, please contact
Stephen Connock
Willow House, 3 Burywoods, Bakers Lane,
Braiswick, Colchester CO4 5AW ENGLAND

Checks should be made payable to Albion Music Ltd.
and sent directly to Stephen Connock for immediate delivery.

a new release from
Nannerl Recordings

Music by Women of Baroque Mexico

MUSICA DE LA PUEBLA DE LOS ANGELES



ARS FEMINA

Music by Women Before 1800

compact disc: \$18.00

cassette: \$12.00

ARS FEMINA

Post Office Box 7692

Louisville KY 40257

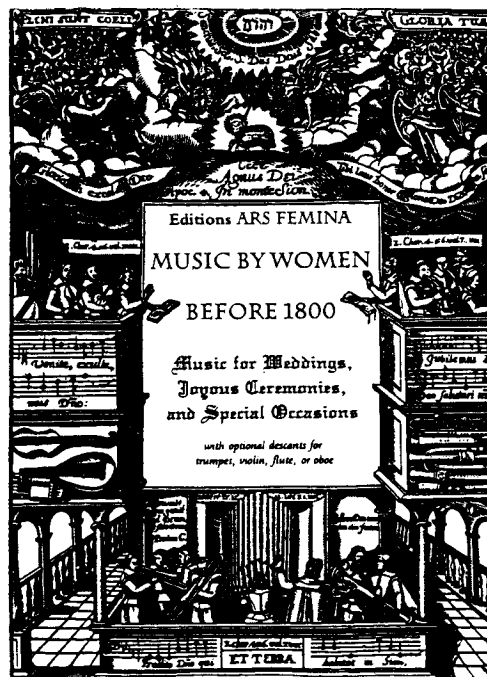
(shipping \$3.00 per item)

a new publication from

Editions

ARS FEMINA

sheet music: \$20.00



"LIVING WITH..."

An informative one-man play about AIDS

This powerful presentation demonstrates the many influences of the disease, not only its effect on the body but also on relationships, care givers and careers. AIDS victims come from many walks of life and play many roles in relation to the disease. It is not only those carrying the virus who are affected by it. This play takes AIDS out of the clinical and into the human and relational aspects of AIDS.

Informative, sensitive and revealing, this drama offers unique insights into the psychology of those LIVING WITH AIDS.

Written by LOUISE SCHROADER

Performed by CY WEBBER

A powerful event for your organization...A fund raising blockbuster...

Unforgettable... Educational

FOR AVAILABILITY AND COST CONTACT

Cy Webber at 502 451-1187

A Webber Production, 1806 Richmond Drive, Louisville, KY 40205



Novelist-poet Sylvia Townsend Warner

IN THAT PLACE

Portrait drawings by Joy Finzi

Joy Finzi (1907-1991) was an artist, sculptor, poet and musician who with her husband, Gerald Finzi, worked with Marion Scott to preserve the legacy of poet-composer Ivor Gurney. From the 1930s until her death, Joy Finzi produced a number of hauntingly exact pencil portraits of her friends, including Sylvia Townsend Warner, Ursula Le Guin, Sir Adrian Boult, Ralph Vaughan Williams, war poets Edmund Blunden and David Jones.

In 1987, Libanus Press in England published an extraordinary collection of these portrait drawings in a limited edition. Each portrait carries a personal commentary by the artist. For the first time, this beautiful book, signed by Joy Finzi and numbered, is being offered to readers of *The Mand Powell Signature* for

\$85 postpaid

To order your volume, please send your check in the amount of \$85 made payable to

The Finzi Society of America

5333 North 26th Street, Arlington, VA 22207 USA

A brochure is available upon request by calling 703-532-2055

BETTY ROE

continued from page 27

Betty's many solo songs have mostly been written for singers known to her, and some of her most satisfying music is to be found here. A compact disc of her songs, *The Music Tree*, has just been released by a new company, Somm, which specialises in vocal music and is the brainchild of a well-known figure in the UK record industry, Siva Ohe; the recording enjoys the advocacy of three of England's most accomplished solo singers. The range is wide, from the intensity of religious texts by Robert Herrick, through lyrical poems by such writers as Walter de la Mare and Rudyard Kipling, to lighter lyrics by James Reeves and folk-poems like "Cock Robin." The songs' singability is undeniable.

A compact disc of her choral music—straightforwardly joyous, as in a wedding anthem written for her son, less conventional, as in a setting of John Donne's "Go and catche a falling starre"—was issued two years ago, and a third compact disc, of her vocal music for children, is to be released in March by Somm.

A recent song commission has come from the American soprano Tobé Malawista, who has now added to her already considerable Roe repertoire an extensive setting for soprano, flute, cello and piano of one of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* poems. This was premiered in London late in 1996, as was a duet setting of an Emily Dickinson poem.

Writing for children

Writing for children is something on which Betty Roe and Marian Lines have strong views. Says Betty: "What I like about Marian's work is that she never writes down to children. The attitudes and truths she expresses are ageless, the humour genial and robust."

Marian sums up her philosophy thus: "I believe writing for children demands the same broad aims as writing for adults: to entertain, inform, divert, move emotionally and expand understanding according to the subject matter. Means and manner of delivery are the things which change, depending on the age-group. As with adults, children deserve the best material a writer can provide in terms of language and plot, and the more turbulent aspects of human relationships should be explored where appropriate to the story. However, as children nowadays have access to graphic examples of these relationships, I don't choose to provide more in my work."

"Tragedy, love and destructive behaviour can, where needed, be suggested without using brutal and excessively manipulative depictions—honest reality

doesn't have to be all bursting shells and writhing bodies!

"Children presenting plays, musicals and performance material must enjoy themselves, but also be aware that their project is of high quality, demanding excellence in performance. Only then can confidence be built in the individual and the group."

"Having said all this, children's musicals and plays are a lot of fun. I've had fun thinking up ideas and even more writing them and collaborating with Betty. But the greatest fun of all is sitting in the audience, watching the finished product and listening to the reactions around me."

Betty likewise is concerned with reaction, for writing cerebral "works of art" seems, if not exactly pointless to her, certainly a path down which she chooses not to walk. She is happy to be essentially a miniaturist, working unashamedly in a mainstream idiom, and like Benjamin Britten—whose music has been an inspiration throughout her career—serving the musical needs of the community to the best of her ability.

Published Music

Betty Roe's music is available in the U.S.A. through Elkins Music International, Inc., 16 N.E. Fourth Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301, phone: 954/522-3611, fax: 954-522-3609, and in the U.K. from Novellos. Kevin Mayhew publishes a number of Roe's organ pieces, piano pieces and choral works, as well. A detailed list of Betty Roe's extensive compositions (vocal solo, choral, operas, musical plays, incidental music, works for children, instrumental, Christmas music) can be obtained from Thames Publishing, 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR, phone: (01144)181-969-3579, fax: (01144) 181-969-1465, as well as all works not otherwise obtainable.

Select Discography

The Music Tree (Somm)

Thomas Hardy and Love, includes five songs by Betty Roe, B. Roe, piano, C. Keyte and M. Cable, voice (Pearl)

Shakespeare and Love, includes Betty Roe's setting of the **Willow Song** (Pearl)

Betty Roe Choral Music, Soloists and Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, Three's Company Plus, and the Allegri Singers, 60-minute cassette (available from Thames Publishing, see above)

MARNIE HALL

continued from page 29

company could afford to offer artists their recordings at cost. Through this enterprising innovation, the overall cost to the performer to pursue her/his profession could be "drastically" reduced and the business of producing recordings would become financially secure, enabling much-needed recording companies to survive.

"Why not combine some of these activities?" she asks. "If a record company could succeed in providing such services, perhaps artists could own their own recordings. Then they would be more willing to invest in recordings since they would be paid for sales and would get recordings at cost to sell on tours and to distribute at other promotional opportunities. But this can only happen if the record company is paid for its services, not just for a product," Hall says.

Never one to stand still, Hall is venturing into publishing sheet music and has begun selling the music for one of Leonarda's recordings, a collection of piano pieces called **Character Sketches**, which is presently selling even better than the recording!

Hall has added another dimension to her career. Although she has always been involved in post-production editing, in 1992 she added "recording engineer" to her roles and now usually acts as both engineer and musical producer at recording sessions. She feels good about what she has accomplished so far. "My first CD as an engineer turned out just fabulously," she says proudly. "Some of the others took a lot of post-production work to get the sound I wanted, but I think I've got a good handle on the recording end of it now."

At present, Hall is optimistic about her plans and the future of Leonarda. While she admits that she would make more money by concentrating on engineering alone, "I can't give up the label. It's my heart and soul."

D.C. Culbertson is a writer and composer based in Baltimore.

Select Bibliography

Hall, Marnie. "Chronicling Women Composers on Disc" in J.L. Zaimont, ed., *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984, 82-97.





The career of American composer Elinor Remick Warren spanned 75 years, beginning with the publication of *A Song of June* by G. Schirmer while she was a Los Angeles high school student. In her late teens, she went to New York where she studied accompaniment, piano and composition. She established herself as an accompanist for great singers of the day, including Richard Crooks, Florence Easton and Lawrence Tibbett. In the 1930s while still writing art songs and pieces for chorus and piano, she also turned her attention to composition in the larger forms. From 1932 until her death in 1991 she produced a substantial body of works for orchestra, chorus and orchestra, and orchestra and voice. Elinor Remick Warren never dwelled on the fact that she was a woman in a male-dominated field. She said, "I believe that music has no gender."



Announcing the formation of the Elinor Remick Warren Society

dedicated to

furthering the art song, the choral and
choral/orchestral repertoire in America
and the tonal romantic idiom in serious
music throughout the world



establishing the
Elinor Remick Warren Archive
for scholarly research --
recordings,
published and unpublished compositions
and memorabilia

For information:

Executive Director
Elinor Remick Warren Society
c/o The Maud Powell Signature
5333 N. 26th Street
Arlington, VA 22207
703-532-2055

Save this date...

April 26

to participate in an exciting Choral Workshop celebrating Women in History



Libby Larsen

Choral Music by Women
A Symposium and Master Class
featuring composer
Libby Larsen

and a panel of Music Professionals including Marina Alexander, Bruce MacIntyre, Martha Schleiffer, Nan Childress, Pamela Blevins, Karen Shaffer in a discussion of women in music history and the achievements of contemporary women

at Wagner College, Staten Island, New York

Options include

Accommodations at The Mayflower Hotel, Central Park West & 61st Street, Manhattan

Transportation from the airport to the hotel

Saturday evening - a special performance by The Staten Island Symphony Orchestra
at the Center for The Arts of the College of Staten Island/City University of New York

Pre-concert dinner in Staten Island's Historic Richmondtown Restoration

Sunday Brunch and city tour

Sponsored by

The Richmond Choral Society

Brooklyn College of The City University of New York,

Council on the Arts and Humanities for Staten Island

Chorus America

Wagner College

For a brochure and further information, please call



Brooklyn College/CUNY
Office of Continuing Education
(718) 951-5013 ask for Jean