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William Billings's VARIETY WITHOUT METHOD: An Experiment in Modulation

The English parish church anthem, imported into America in the 1760s, was the most extended sacred music form prevalent in colonial and federal era New England. Many American composers wrote anthems following the English model, which Ralph T. Daniel characterized as

a relatively short piece (about four or five minutes) for an unaccompanied, four-part mixed chorus, with short [solo] parts for any or all of the voices—treble, counter or alto, tenor, and bass. . . . As it is in most vocal music, the text is naturally the determinative element in the formal structure. Each line of text is treated independently so that the result is a series of sections bearing little musical relationship to one another. In one sense, such an arrangement might be considered through-composed, but the section endings are usually so clearly demarcated by such musical devices as dominant-tonic cadences, rests, or changes of texture that the continuity characteristic of a through-composed unit is minimized. The impression of successive blocks of musical material is strengthened by too frequent “padding” in the form of immediate repetition of each small section.¹

Daniel continues by noting that,

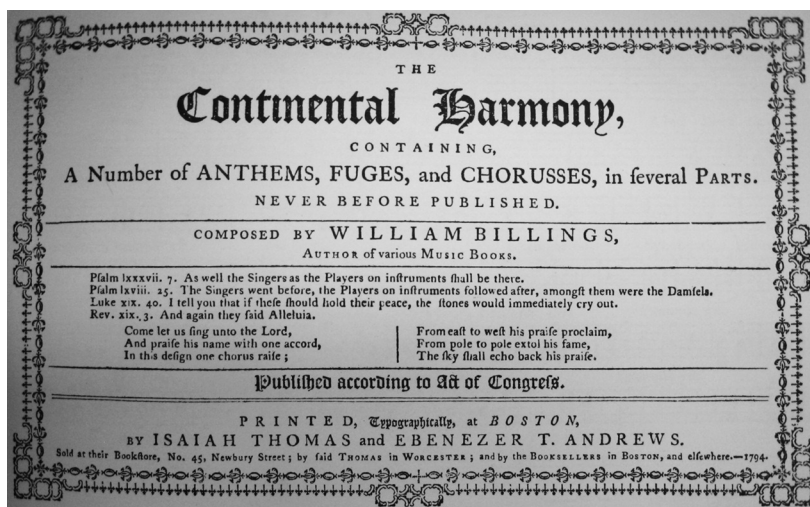
Meter and tempo may be consistent throughout the piece, or they may change several times as further indications of sectional divisions. . . . A lyric, cantabile melody is a prominent factor of the total musical effect at any given moment. . . . The melodic progression of all the parts is mostly conjunct (scalewise) except for the bass part, where frequent skips of a fourth or a fifth are demanded by its harmonic function. The phrases are of about medium length, having neither the long, flowing character of

Renaissance and Baroque vocal lines nor the short, motivic nature sometimes transferred to choral music from the contemporary instrumental idiom. The phrases are irregular in length, and thereby avoid the square-cut, antecedent-consequent effect so typical of Continental music of the same period. Harmonic and tonal schemes are predictably simple. One tonal center is maintained throughout the piece (most frequently G or C major), although there may be an occasional transitory excursion to the relative or tonic minor. Tonality is rarely used as a formal element in the sense that a new sectional division is denoted by a change of key or mode.²

William Billings (1746–1800) was the leading American composer of anthems during the late eighteenth century. While most other American psalm-odists published relatively few of these extended settings of biblical prose or sacred poetry (seldom more than half a dozen), Billings issued over fifty. They generally follow the formal, melodic, and harmonic characteristics noted by Daniel: they are highly sectional, vocally grateful, and harmonically passive. Some of them introduce a change of mode, usually from major to minor and back, but the tonic pitch rarely moves. One anthem, however, stands out as exceptional in the area of tonality: Billings's expressive setting of verses 1–2, 5–6, and 9–12 from *The Book of Common Prayer* version of Psalm 60, "O God, thou hast been displeased."³ He gave this work a novel title: VARIETY WITHOUT METHOD (Billings, *Complete Works* IV, 206–13).⁴ McKay and Crawford in their biography of the composer, call the work "experimental," and note a certain waggishness in its title.⁵ Experimental it certainly is, for nothing like it exists in the entire Anglo-American anthem repertory.

The anthem was published in 1794 in Billings's final tunebook, *The Continental Harmony*. Printed as a charitable act by Boston choristers to earn money for the Billings family in a time of financial distress, this tunebook has been described as "a retrospective compendium of [Billings's] creative achievements."⁶ Some pieces first published there have been traced in manuscript back to the 1770s, while stylistic factors suggest that others are more recent, perhaps almost coeval with the tunebook's printing. VARIETY WITHOUT METHOD, because of its unusual handling of modulation, may well be one of the later pieces in the collection.

The title is also unique among Anglo-American anthems. Most anthems carry one of three types of labels: either identifying the source of the text (as "An Anthem taken from Psalm 42"); or identifying the function for which the anthem was written (as "An Anthem for Fast Day" or "Ordination Anthem"); or a descriptive title related to the subject of the text (as *Sublimity*, an



Example 1. Title page of *The Continental Harmony*, William Billings's last published tunebook (1794). Courtesy of American Music Research Center

Anthem, Psalm 19, set to the words “The heavens declare the glory of God”). Obviously, Billings’s choice of title intended to convey something significant. It implies that the work will consist of diverse elements (“variety”), but these will be presented without an “orderly, logical, or effective arrangement” (“method”).⁷

The most striking of the diverse elements employed by Billings is key change. Modulation was never much of a factor in Billings’s music. A reason for this, as Daniel implies, may be that each section of text is set as an independent musical unit, much as a stanza of a psalm-tune. With each strain, or section, bearing little musical relation to that which precedes or follows it, Billings probably saw no reason to change key, which would only offer difficulties to his modestly trained singers. Moreover, the English anthems he knew and earlier had used as models—those of William Tans’ur, William Knapp, Joseph Stephenson, and Aaron Williams—do not modulate and therefore offered no examples. In many of his compositions, Billings does not change key or mode at all; in others he may temporarily tonicize a pitch—usually the dominant or submediant—but the music usually moves immediately away from this new tonal center to return to the original key (see Table I).

Table I. Keys and Modulations in Billings's Anthems

Text (Title if distinctive)(Tunebook)	Keys and Key Changes
A By the Rivers (LAMENTATION OVER BOSTON)(SMA)	Am
David, the King (DAVID'S LAMENTATION)(SMA)	Am
Except the Lord Build (IP)	A
Hear my Prayer (NEPS)	Am
I am come into my Garden (CH)	Am
I am the Rose of Sharon (SMA)	A
Let ev'ry mortal Ear (PSA)	Am – A
Samuel the Priest (FUNERAL)(PSA)	Am
The Lord is ris'n (EASTER)(IP)	A
Was not the Day (RETROSPECT)(SMA)	Am – A – Am – A
B And I Saw (PSA)	B – Bm – B
The Dying Christian to his Soul (PSA)	Bm – D – Bm – B
C Behold how good (UNION)(SH)	C
Blessed is he (NEPS)	C – Cm – C – Cm – C
Down steers the Bass (CONSONANCE)(PSA)	C
Hark! Hark! (CHRISTMAS)(CH)	C
I charge you (CH)	C
I love the Lord (SMA)	C – Cm – C
I will love thee (DELIVERANCE)(CH)	C
Mourn, Mourn (CH)	Cm – C
O praise God (UNIVERSAL PRAISE)(CH)	C
O thou to whom (CH)	C – F – C
Sing Praises (CH)	C
Sing we Merrily (SMA)	C
The Heavens declare (SUBLIMITY)(CH)	C
The Lord descended (NEPS)	C
The Lord is King (NEPS)	C
Thou, O God, art praised (PSA)	C
D God is the King (PEACE)(IP)	D
The States, O Lord (INDEPENDENCE)(SMA)	D
E Blessed is he (PSA)	E – Em – E
We are met (MODERN MUSIC)(PSA)	E – Em – G – Em – E
We have heard (CH)	E – Em – E
Who is this (PSA)	E – Em – G – Em – E
F Hear, O Heav'ns (CH)	Fm
I heard a great Voice (FUNERAL)(SMA)	Fm
Lift up your Eyes (SH)	F – C – F
O praise the Lord (CH)	F
The Beauty of Israel (PSA)	Fm – F – Fm

When the Lord turn'd (CH)	F
F# They that go down (EUROCLYDON)(PSA)	F#m – F#
G As the Hart panteth (NEPS)	Gm – G – Gm – G
Is any afflicted (SMA)	Gm – G
O clap your Hands (IP)	G
O God, my Heart (CH)	G – Gm – G
O God, thou hast been (VARIETY WITHOUT METHOD) (CH)	Gm – F – B ^b – Cm – E ^b – C – Cm – E ^b – Cm – B ^b – F – Fm – C – F
Sanctify a Fast (CH)	Gm – G
The Dying Christian's Last Farewell (CH)	Gm

Keys are listed by letter name. Those without an “m” following are major; those followed by an “m” are minor.

Legend:

CH—*The Continental Harmony* (Boston, 1794)

IP—Independent publication (ca.1783–90)

NEPS—*The New-England Psalm-Singer* (Boston, 1770)

PSA—*The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* (Boston, 1781)

SH—*The Suffolk Harmony* (Boston, 1786)

SMA—*The Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, 1778)

As can be seen in the table above, in only a few works does Billings attempt to change the tonic pitch: the set-pieces RUTLAND, MODERN MUSIC, and THE DYING CHRISTIAN, published in *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* (1781), and the anthems “Lift Up Your Eyes” from *The Suffolk Harmony* (1786) and “O Thou To Whom All Creatures Bow” in *The Continental Harmony* (1794). But in these works the modulations seem awkward and ineffective. In VARIETY, while there is still some awkwardness, they are more convincing and imaginative. It seems probable that Billings had some guidance in his handling of tonal manipulation, but he employed modulation in a characteristically free and innovative fashion.

In *The Singing Master's Assistant* (1778), Billings characterized himself as a “musical enthusiast,” and like any enthusiast, he pushes the boundaries of taste, acceptability, and normal practice. No work reinforces this description more strongly than VARIETY, for not only does Billings employ numerous changes of key, but he also ends the piece in a different key from its beginning. The anthem starts in G minor and concludes in F major. Along the way, the music modulates or changes mode no less than thirteen times: from G minor, to F major, to B-flat major, to C minor, to E-flat major, to C major, to C minor, to E-flat major, to C minor, to B-flat major, to F major, to F minor, to C major, and finally to F major (see Example 2).

1 9 14 18 32 38 58 62 69 77 79 89 98 136

CA CC P3 CC P3 CM CC CC CA P3 CM CC CC

CA = Chromatic alteration
 CC = Common Chord
 CM = Change of mode
 P3 = Picardy third

Example 2. Tonic pitches of successive modulations

The methods Billings uses to effect these modulations are, for the most part, standard harmonic procedures. Several of them, such as the movement to B-flat major at measure 14, to E-flat major at measure 62, and to F major at measure 136, are realized through common chord modulation, where the dominant of the new key is either the tonic or subtonic of the old. Others employ a raised pitch to serve as the leading tone in the dominant chord of the new key, resolving to the new tonic. Billings employs the raised sixth scale degree three times (measures 9, 69, and 77), the raised fourth twice (measures 79 and 98), and the raised tonic and raised fifth once each (measures 17 and 38). The last two are accompanied by a harmonic procedure unique to Billings in Anglo-American psalmody: in both cases, the tonic chord employs a Picardy third. At measure 17, the Picardy third suggests a modulation to C major, but in the subsequent section, Billings chooses to use C minor. The key change at measure 98 is more elaborate; it also uses a Picardy third, leading from F minor to C major, but this time Billings keeps the major mode for the lengthy coda praising God (see Examples 3 and 4). There are two changes of mode: at measure 58 from C major to C minor, and measure 89 from F major to F minor. It is interesting to note that, in spite of Billings's claim of lack of method, the changes in tonic pitch in the second through sixth modulations are repeated in retrograde in the seventh through eleventh pitches (F – B-flat – C – E-flat – C followed by C – E-flat – C – B-flat – F). This was probably accidental, but it does suggest that Billings's inner ear by this time had developed a high degree of sophistication.

The anthem falls into 12 sections, each often but not always set off by a change of key signature. Textually, these sections alternate assertions about

15 16 17 18 19 20

O turn thee un - to us a - gain. Thou hast mov'd the Land

I ii I V V of ii II# C (minor)

Example 3. Modulation from B-flat major to C major/minor

for vain, for vain is the Help of Man. Through God

F minor: vii[°]6 iii i v i — V₅ I[#] V_{of} V becomes C: I V

Example 4. Modulation from F minor to C major

God's displeasure and past aid or the supplicant's confidence in God's goodness, with requests for God's help and nurture. The text, of course, strongly governs the musical setting. In general, the assertions are set in major keys, the supplications in minor. The sections generally progress by alternating homophonic textures with antiphonal ones, with several short polyphonic segments included only at the outset. The coda is an extended paean of praise culminating in four long block chords over which Billings has marked the word "Swell," meaning "get louder," ending the work triumphantly. Following the psalmist's growing faith in God's goodness, the anthem progresses from an alternation of brief major- and minor-key sections to a final long passage in major, in which this confidence is fully expressed and God praised.

In some respects, *VARIETY* is reminiscent of Billings's infamous musical joke, *JARGON*, published in *The Singing Master's Assistant* (1778). There, in response to a critic taking him to task for his music being too consonant, or for not employing expressive dissonances to give his music spice, Billings composed a tune consisting entirely of discords, directing that

an ass bray the bass, . . . the fileing [*sic*] of a saw carry the tenor,
 . . . a hog who is extremely hungry squeal the counter, and . . . a
 cart-wheel, which is heavy loaded, and that has been long with-
 out grease, squeak the treble.⁸

Billings's reaction to criticism in *JARGON* was both extravagant and droll, but not intended to be taken seriously. In the case of *VARIETY*, one can imagine something similar happening (although we have no actual record of it): a musician with an orthodox musical education criticized Billings's music for lack of tonal variety. It seems apparent that Billings accepted, perhaps even welcomed, this criticism, for his reaction was not satire but an expressive work that demonstrates his ability to manipulate tonality, albeit in his own unorthodox way. The difference is significant and adds credence to the idea that late in his career Billings attempted to align his musical style with more conventional harmonic procedures.⁹

If, indeed, this happened, who was the musician who might have censured Billings's work? We do not know for sure, but it certainly was not an American psalmist; they were no more adept at modulation than was Billings. The critic then was probably a foreigner. Two European immigrant musicians in Boston come immediately to mind: William Selby, since 1771 organist at the Anglican Stone Chapel, and Hans Gram, who arrived in 1785 and assumed the post of organist at the Brattle Street Congregational Church. Both were trained in traditional harmonic procedures, and both are known to have been associated with Billings.

Of the two, Gram seems the more likely to have been our man. Selby had known Billings from early on and collaborated with him in the 1780s on several occasions in presenting sacred music concerts.¹⁰ If he had reservations about a lack of tonal variety in Billings's music, it seems likely that he would have expressed them earlier. Gram, on the other hand, was a much more recent arrival. As an Anglican parish church musician, Selby was familiar with and apparently tolerant of the unconventional musical idiom of the Anglo-American psalmists. To Gram, a Dane who seems to have had both a university education and tutelage in standard European musical practice, hearing and seeing Billings's music was a new and perhaps somewhat unsettling experience. Judging from the fact that in 1795 he and two young American psalmists, Oliver Holden and Samuel Holyoke, published a manual advocating traditional European harmonic practice, Gram seems likely, sometime after 1785, to have found fault with Billings's musical style and perhaps offered advice on harmonic procedures.¹¹

We know that Gram and Billings were friends, for in the 1790s Gram acted on Billings's behalf in trying to interest the printing firm of Thomas and Andrews in purchasing Billings's music.¹² That Gram admired Billings's music is confirmed by a 1791 letter from Ebenezer T. Andrews to Isaiah Thomas:

Billings, thro' Gram, wishes us to purchase his music of him. He has got 200 pages by him, that never was published, 9 or 10 tunes of which Gram has played on his Harpsichord, and thinks very good.¹³

Billings probably did not actually study with Gram. But one can imagine Gram offering some friendly suggestions that led to the new harmonic resources seen in *VARIETY*. It seems likely that Gram showed Billings some methods by which a key could be changed, and, in characteristic fashion, Billings carried these modulatory techniques to the extremes found in *VARIETY*.

After *The Continental Harmony* was published in 1794, Billings lived for another six years in financial hardship. The only work he published during this time was a revised version of his popular ANTHEM FOR EASTER issued in 1795. There Billings inserted a short section touching briefly on F-sharp minor and introducing mildly canonic imitation—both new elements in the anthem. Undoubtedly Billings continued to compose, but we do not know if any new pieces, none of which seem to have survived his death in 1800, employed any of the modulatory procedures displayed so prominently in VARIETY. This work and several others suggest that late in his life, Billings was attempting to develop a more orthodox, but at the same time, a more imaginative musical style, one in which the elements of melody, harmony, texture, and form were firmly under his artistic control.

NOTES

¹ Ralph T. Daniel, *The Anthem in New England before 1800* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 47–50.

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Book of Common Prayer . . . According to the use of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America*. New York: Evert Duycinck, 1809.

⁴ *The Complete Works of William Billings*, 4 v., ed. by Karl Kroeger and Hans Nathan. Boston: The American Musicological Society and the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1977–90.

⁵ David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth-Century American Composer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 177.

⁶ *Complete Works* III, xlv.

⁷ *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 9th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1984.

⁸ *Complete Works*, II, 31.

⁹ *Complete Works*, III, xlili.

¹⁰ Hans Nathan, *William Billings: Data and Documents* (Detroit: Data Coordinators, 1976), 38.

¹¹ Hans Gram, Oliver Holden, and Samuel Holyoke, *The Massachusetts Compiler of Theoretical and Practical Elements of Sacred Vocal Music* (Boston: Thomas and Andrews, 1795).

¹² *Complete Works*, IV, xiv.

¹³ *Ibid.*, xvii.

Scott A. Carter

Forging a Sound Citizenry: Voice Culture and the Embodiment of the Nation, 1880–1920

In nothing do the Americans more generally offend the cultivated ear than in the use of the voice. The high, shrill, nasal tones of American girls or American women; the careless, slovenly enunciation which one hears from a group of American men, would indicate to a foreigner, accustomed to vocal culture, entire absence of any sort of refinement; *for, as a rule, the voice is, more than anything else, the revealer of the presence or absence of culture.*¹

Writing in 1908, the self-proclaimed “voice master” Richard Cone bemoaned what he heard as the dismal state of the American voice. A voice instructor at the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word in Boston (one of the nation’s leading elocutionary institutions), Cone had labored for several years, slowly perfecting a pedagogical method for elocution based on, as he put it, “the fundamental principles of vocal science.”² This method, Cone believed, would reform the nation’s oratorical deficiency: only a modern pedagogy based on scientific principles of vocal mechanics could address the “shrill, nasal tones . . . of American girls [and] American women” and the “slovenly enunciation of American men.” Yet Cone detested these harsh tones not simply for their inelegance but for what he thought they revealed about the nation’s well-being. For Cone, as for many commentators on the voice at the turn of the century, vocal quality disclosed an individual’s, or a nation’s, character and provided a metric by which social progress might be judged. In this way, the “shrill” and “slovenly” tones of the nation’s citizens rendered aural what Cone and others understood as a symptom emerging from within the national body politic; namely, the lack of a refined mode of speaking that betrayed the nation’s emergence as an economic and political

world power. Culture, for writers such as Cone, was more than the Arnoldian notion of artistic supremacy; culture was performative and relied just as importantly on how a society's achievements were expressed vocally.

Cone's monograph was part of a turn-of-the-twentieth-century social and artistic movement known as "voice culture"—an attempt to refine elocutionary and singing practices in order to produce standard vocal expressions representative of the nation's cultural, economic, and political achievements.³ While the phrase "voice culture" appeared in the United States as early as 1850, when it referred exclusively to elocutionary training in public schools, by the 1880s voice culture implied vocal training and the state of the nation's vocal expressions more generally. In this essay, I focus on singing instruction and the attempts by voice culture practitioners to establish an ideal singing aesthetic capable of representing the nation-state. Singing instructors, while ostensibly concerned with the vocal sound of the body politic as a whole, catered primarily to a burgeoning labor-class of amateur and professional singers seeking success in concert and opera performance. This ambition on the part of would-be professional singers supported an entire industry of private instruction: advertisements for singing instruction, whether by individuals or by musical institutions such as the National Conservatory of Music, were commonplace in newspapers and periodicals throughout the nation, with teachers promoting their expertise in voice culture, musical expression, and artistic singing.⁴ The archival material I employ here comprises the singing manuals authored by voice culture practitioners, of which over 150 were published between 1880 and 1920. While the majority of the voice culture practitioners I cover in this essay worked in New York City and were associated with the city's major cultural institutions, it is important to note that voice training manuals and essays on voice culture were published throughout the nation, suggesting that the movement was not simply a local phenomenon but rather a nationwide endeavor to cultivate the nation's singing.

While the specific pedagogical practices and aesthetic philosophies of singing varied widely among the movement's adherents, the majority were straightforward instructional texts that included advice on a range of topics, many of which could be found in any manual published today: chapters on vocal hygiene, breathing exercises, diction, resonance, the vocal registers, stage deportment, and singing exercises ranging from spoken dialogue to sung passages. What connected the disparate training regimens found in these texts was a common belief shared by instructors that the entire body, not just the vocal apparatus, required training in order to produce a cultivated sound. Vocal physiology fascinated voice culture practitioners, and man-

uals often included anatomical descriptions of the vocal tract, complete with detailed explanations of vocal mechanics, as a supplement to singing exercises. Drawing on the work of physicians and physical anthropologists, voice culture advocates applied the latest research on vocal physiology in their practices, from experiments purporting to show empirically how to produce the best tone to advice on maintaining a healthy vocal tract. Physicians and doctors were regularly consulted for their expertise, sometimes authoring texts themselves, and provided the movement with a sense of scientific legitimacy. Though the use of such knowledge for students was highly debated, what was not contested was the idea that only certain singers were capable of producing a beautiful vocal sound, namely those singers who embodied the ideals of national subjectivity. While promoting a healthy lifestyle and the importance of diligent adherence to their training regimen, instructors emphasized restraint above all else: tightly controlled vibrato, proper decorum, stately bodily comportment, and other genteel bodily practices. Such training provided a kinesthetic knowledge of how beautiful singing and the embodiment of national subjectivity ought to feel.

This interest in vocal training arose from a circulation of bodies, and of knowledge about those bodies, that made possible the transition of the United States to a global economic and imperial power. Though unrefined voices could be heard throughout the national populace, authors regularly singled out the voices of African Americans and of the recently arrived European and Asian immigrant populations as particularly vexing. These Other voices posed for the cultured elite an aural and physical threat to what was perceived as a fragile national culture by transforming urban soundscapes into polyvocal communities beset with racial and cultural tensions. Vocal performance thus became one manifestation of what Jennifer Stoecker-Ackerman has called the sonic color-line, which she defines as the way in which “race is mediated through aural signifiers as well as visual ones.”⁵ The birth of the popular music industry (driven increasingly by black musical expressions) added to this polyphony and tension through the mechanization and democratization of musical commodities.⁶ The voice culture movement responded to such change by delimiting which vocal expressions, and in turn, which bodies, could (and should) sing for the nation. Drawing on the work of historian Matthew Frye Jacobson, we can think of the ideal voice imagined by this movement as a racial object born out of the struggles for power to define racial and national belonging.⁷ Voice culture, in this sense, served as a means to exercise the power of race in order to forge a sound citizenry.

Beyond a few cursory references in musicological scholarship, the voice culture movement remains an unexplored phenomenon, particularly for the role it played in defining a standard vocal sound in the United States. Several scholars have examined the history of elite vocal training, including Brent Jeffrey Monahan, James Stark, John Potter, and David Mason, and their work has added to our understanding of historical singing practices and how those methods reflected social and aesthetic changes.⁸ With regard to music's public utility, Jann Pasler and Derek Vaillant have explored the ways in which governments and civic organizations have mobilized music in the production and maintenance of the common good, respectively.⁹ Pasler's work, in particular, has been crucial for understanding the role of vocal timbre in defining who may become authorized to speak, or sing, for the nation. Most notably, Grant Olwage's essay on British vocal pedagogy in South Africa has helped scholars of the voice understand more thoroughly the connections between vocal timbre, singing pedagogy, and racialized bodies.¹⁰

The focus on sound's importance to issues of subject formation has become a central issue in musical scholarship over the last decade as scholars of voice and singing in ethnomusicology and anthropology have urged us to listen critically to how the social categories of race, class, sexuality, and gender are performative expressions of human meaning-making rather than essential characteristics of bodies and cultures. To date, most of these studies have focused on how social categories are musically represented, and they have provided us with a richer understanding of how notions of race, gender, sexuality, class, region, and nation become articulated through musical expression. This is important work, and this essay is heavily indebted to this scholarship. My argument here, however, seeks to move beyond issues of musical representation and begins, instead, to ask how singing molds and shapes our bodies into subjects that inhabit these ideological categories. How, for instance, does the act of vocal production govern subjectivity, both for the vocalizers and their listeners? By situating the material production of singing in the critical categories of race and nation, we can better understand how seemingly innocuous language such as "clear," "open," and "sonorous" describes not merely an aesthetic ideal, but also charts a particular physiological coordination that embodies notions of racial and national supremacy. Recent scholarship by Nina Sun Eidsheim, Amanda Weidman, and Aaron Fox has begun to consider the ways in which ideology is brought into physical form through vocal performance.¹¹ Drawing on their work, I focus on how a national, idealized singing voice was formulated within the voice culture movement and the intimate ways in which vocal training shaped singers' bodies into model citizens.

A Vocal Crisis

By 1900, the nation's urban soundscape was simply noisy: the sounds of capitalism—from rail travel to factories to new technologies of communication—auralized the nation's emergence as a modern, industrial society, while an influx of poor and working-class immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and African American migrants from the southern United States amplified the cacophony of the nation's rapidly changing political and racial geography.¹² These social transformations fueled a debate over how the nation ought to sound, from discussions regarding a representative musical style to the technologies of managing and disseminating sound, music, and noise within the public sphere.¹³ The voice figured prominently in these debates, serving most often as a ubiquitous marker of difference that delineated the boundaries between native and Other, elite and mass culture. As historian Davarian Baldwin has argued, while immigrant and migrant laborers claimed popular culture and public spaces such as movie theaters and vaudeville houses as an opportunity for remodeling themselves as modern citizens, elites heard these “newcomers to the city” as a “boisterous” threat to notions of proper social decorum and to established racial and class hierarchies.¹⁴ Critics deplored the “horrible facial contortions” displayed by amateur vocalists and vaudeville performers, preferring those singers who performed in a more modest fashion.¹⁵ Indeed, commentators on non-Western music heard in Others’ singing a racial menace that threatened the very health of the body politic. One need only consider the allusions to the so-called “infectious” rhythms of African American and non-Western singing to understand the anxieties elicited by this vocal mass.¹⁶

No figure captured the aural nuisance of modern urban life quite like the organ grinder. From the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth century, commentators in New York City frequently targeted organ grinders with derision, legislation, and even incitements of violence.¹⁷ A *New York Times* article from 1893, titled “This Music without Charm,” quoted a Brooklyn policeman’s advice dealing with these musicians: “I tells ’m to take two or three able-bodied bricks up stairs with them. When the organ-grinders come along they can drop ’em by accident.”¹⁸ Nearly thirty years later, in 1920, cartoonist and author Denys Wortman portrayed the aural and visual signifiers of urban life in a fictional narrative titled “Last of the Organ Grinders.”¹⁹ Wortman conveys a street scene dominated by familiar, yet foreign sounds. In the accompanying cartoon, an organ grinder and a fortune teller stand soberly amidst a crowd of caricatured African American adults and children (two of whom are dressed in overalls signifying, perhaps, their status as rural migrants) and a “wildly animated” Italian. Overlooking the scene stands a

policeman whose rigid stance and stern gaze, just barely visible in the cartoon, mark his authoritative distance from this common rabble. The crowd and the policeman are further separated by their voices as both the Italian's and the African American's speech are depicted in stereotyped dialect. The Italian man, pointing to the organ grinder's pet mouse, asks, "How mooch is DESE?," while an African American "with wide-opened and suspicious eyes" exposes the musician/fortune teller's cartomantic deception, exclaiming, "He done put it thar hissself" as the grinder slips a hidden fortune-telling card into place. Such depictions of foreign speech and song exposed what U.S. literature historian Gavin Jones has called with regard to the black dialect literature "a popular means of encoding racist beliefs," ultimately distancing these sounds from Western practices (here literally embodied by the patrolman whose speech is portrayed in standard English) even as urban living brought unfamiliar cultures into growing proximity.²⁰

Critics of elite music, meanwhile, bemoaned the nation's lack of an indigenous vocal school that could consistently produce talented singers and inaugurate a national vocal legacy worthy of its burgeoning global stature. Echoing the epigraph which began this essay, an anonymous writer in the *Milwaukee Journal* noted in 1898 that "It is often said that the American voice is the least musical known to civilization."²¹ European commentators were especially contemptuous in their assessment of the nation's singing. The German soprano Mathilde Marchesi, for instance, offered in 1901 what was at the time a standard critique of U.S. vocal timbre in her monograph, *Ten Singing Lessons*: "And now I must address to my young readers, and especially those of American birth, a question . . . Why, oh why, do almost all of them speak through their noses?"²² At issue was a seeming lack of talented, U.S.-born instructors who could provide guidance to the rising number of singers attempting to break into the professional ranks. While the nation could boast of numerous world-renowned vocalists, the majority of native singers sought European instruction, from Lillian Nordica's tutelage under François Delsarte in 1878 to Anna Olivia and Geraldine Farrar, both of whom studied with the German soprano Lilli Lehmann in the 1890s.²³ Even as late as 1910, vocalist Millie Ryan continued to advise her students that while their study may begin in the United States, they should complete their training in Europe "in order to get the broadening and the finishing touches that are necessary in order to become an artist."²⁴

But singing instructors in America faced a critical issue when it came to defining a national vocal aesthetic: if the nation lacked a distinct singing style, as so many argued, then singers and instructors needed to look elsewhere for aesthetic guidance. African American and Native American song

offered indigenous options, and these musics were celebrated by a few (most notably Henry Krehbiel, Charles Ives, and Arthur Farwell) for both their energy and pathos.²⁵ But these styles were dismissed by elite practitioners due to their racial Otherness and supposed lack of formal complexity. Writing in his *History of American Music*, William Hubbard's dismissal of Native American music was typical: "Strictly speaking, the music of the American Indian has played little or no part in the development of our art music. . . . Crude and primitive it was and crude and primitive it remains."²⁶ Voice culture practitioners, instead, relied on the Western European concert tradition, from nostalgic appeals for a re-emergence of the bel canto tradition to the promotion of the more dramatic styles of Enrico Caruso. Yet these practices were themselves foreign, and their adoption exposed the absence that lay at the heart of discussions regarding the nation's vocal legacy. Thus the challenge for the voice culture movement became to inaugurate a vocal aesthetic that embodied the nation's achievements without sounding racially Other.

The response to the nation's increasing polyphony and lack of a vocal standard was a decades-long movement focused on the development and reform of vocal instruction, from grade school education to the professional ranks. The history of public music education in the nineteenth century has been well documented and, as education historian Ruth Gustafson has shown, singing instruction has long been used to "fortify] the qualities of citizenship, duty, patriotism, and manliness as aspects of whiteness" through the performance of patriotic songs and its emphasis on physical health and bearing.²⁷ What separated the voice culture movement at the turn of the century from these earlier endeavors and defined it as a modern discipline were authors' reliance on scientific observation to explain proper vocal technique. Manuals utilizing scientific voice studies or texts focused entirely on vocal physiology were published regularly throughout the voice culture movement. Medical journals, such as *The Laryngoscope*, featured articles on singing by prominent voice physicians including Frank Miller, the head physician for the Manhattan Opera House, and H. Holbrook Curtis, who served as a personal physician to Enrico Caruso, Jean de Reszke, Lillian Russell, and then-Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.²⁸ These texts proscribed restrictive methods for avoiding the health problems associated with modern, industrial life. Irving Wilson Voorhees, a prominent laryngologist in New York City and author of *Hygiene of the Voice*, argued, for example, against the imbibing of alcohol, prescribed vacations in clean air environments in order to cleanse the vocal tract from urban exposure, and forbade his students to travel by train so as to avoid the pollutants produced by locomotives.²⁹ To partake in any sort of excess (either through overexertion or exposure to dangerous

environmental elements) was to risk phonasthenia, a physiological weakening of the voice, at which point surgery might be required.³⁰

Scientific inquiry into vocal anatomy flourished over the course of the nineteenth century as scientists and musicians took a greater interest in the physiological mechanics of singing, both to explain how the voice was formed as well as to utilize that knowledge for training the voice along scientific principles. The original impetus for their curiosity, as Gregory Bloch has noted, was the changing aesthetics of vocal performance from the light voices associated with the *bel canto* tradition to the darker, more dramatic sounds of grand opera.³¹ Bloch refers to this “new species of voice,” as it was dubbed at the time, as “pathological,” highlighting its divergence from contemporary understandings of proper physiological mechanics as well as the supposed threat such singing posed to the musical corpus by way of its challenge to traditional vocal aesthetics. Bloch’s notion of a pathological voice is crucial for understanding how racial science was brought to bear on voice pedagogy at the turn of the century, as those singers who sounded outside the rigid definition of “beautiful” represented for voice culture practitioners not simply aesthetically displeasing sounds but racially distinct practices. Voice culture authors drew on prevailing anthropological theories of race and culture that assumed a direct relationship between artistic output and ethnic heritage. Writing in 1921, Thaddeus Wronski, a singer and opera conductor in Detroit, associated “oriental” singing with physical fragility in his monograph *The Singer and His Art*: “I advise all to hear some of the oriental records. Their voices are very much pinched. The women sing in a chesty, throaty manner and when hearing these singers one involuntarily feels that their voice may break at any moment.”³² European singers, too, were categorized by the physicality of their voices; Frank Miller, for example, attributed Germans’ “choppy” breathing and “barking” voice quality in his text *Voice, Its Production, Care, and Preservation* (published in 1910) to their “naturally strong physique.”³³ While a strong physique may represent masculine prowess, voice culture practitioners argued that in order to sing correctly, the fleshiness of the voice had to be restrained by controlling carefully the body’s vocal mechanics. In other words, learning to breathe and to sing properly would expunge from the voice any traces of the singer’s body—such as her throat or chest—leaving only a beautiful, pure tone.

The reliance on evolutionary theories of race to explain musical performance was common in the United States and frequently used to create typologies of vocal characteristics based on racial, ethnic, or national heritage. For example, music scholar Louis C. Elson included a chapter titled “Race Peculiarities in Singing” in his music history text, *The Realm of Music*, where

he called for a “musico-medical . . . study of the effects of character or race upon the human voice.”³⁴ Why, Elson wondered, did the United States tend to produce sopranos, Russia basses, and Spain high tenors? While acknowledging the possible effects of climate and diet on vocal expression, Elson suggested that the ultimate factor in determining timbre and range was “hereditary, rather than of climate.”³⁵ Fascinated by the prospects of what a scientific analysis of singing could reveal regarding the connections between voice and racial heritage, Elson explained the benefits of such investigation as follows:

A classification of the different species of voices, together with the countries and races where they are most generally found, would undoubtedly be a help to the operatic manager, who would then know exactly where to steer his bark to find a *Soprano sfogato*, or a *Basso Profundo*, but it would also be something more serious and valuable than that, and might throw some interesting light on the origin of vocal music.³⁶

By employing evolutionary nomenclature, Elson’s call for a physiological study of vocal performance that could reveal evidence of vocal music’s origins suggested that only a scientifically oriented vocal discipline was capable of refashioning vocal practice and performance as a modern endeavor.

The use of anthropological and racial science extended beyond the classification of voices to the actual mechanics of singing. Vocal mechanics had long been a source of curiosity in Western literature, dating back at least to the Greek philosopher Galen’s dissections of the larynx in the second century CE. What changed with the voice culture movement was the direct use of such knowledge in pedagogical methods. Compare, for example, two statements arguing against singing through the nose written nearly 150 years apart. The first excerpt was written by Pier Francesco Tosi in his *Observations on the Florid Song; or, Sentiments of the Ancient and Modern Singers*, first published in Bologna in 1723 and later made available in English translation in 1743. Here, Tosi states, “Let the Master attend with great Care to the Voice of the Scholar, which, whether it be *di Petto*, or *di Testa*, should always come forth neat and clear, without passing thro’ the Nose, or being choaked [*sic*] in the Throat; which are two the most horrible Defects in a Singer, and past all Remedy if once grown into a Habit.”³⁷ While the idea is clear (singing through the nose should be strictly avoided), Tosi provides no information for how a student should avoid this “most horrible Defect.” Writing in 1889, however, Edmund Shaftesbury offers a detailed account on how to avoid singing with a nasal timbre: “Close the lips, as the mouth cavity and throat cavity are kept fully open (the soft palate being raised and the larynx lowered)

and project a full resonant tone into the nasal cavity without any attempt to make it forcible.”³⁸ The instructions here are much more detailed and require the student to have at least a passing knowledge of vocal anatomy.

Of particular interest for instructors was breath production, a widely debated topic throughout the voice culture literature. Authors frequently attempted to prove their method for developing proper breath support by referencing scientific literature on the subject. Take, for example, Dr. Thomas Fillebrown’s assertion that the chest-abdominal breathing method was the best method for voice production, a claim he based on a study of “85 persons, most of them Indians, [which] found that 79 out of the 85 used abdominal breathing. The chest breathers were from classes ‘civilized’ and more or less ‘cultured.’”³⁹ Henry Harper Hulbert, a professor of voice at the Central School for Speech and Drama in London, meanwhile, advocated lateral costal breathing (expanding the lungs sideways as opposed to breathing downward toward the diaphragm), claiming this method as the one used by *bel canto* artists in the eighteenth century. According to Hulbert, lateral costal breathing was especially beneficial to female singers as breathing from the diaphragm involved pushing air downward against the sexual organs which, in Hulbert’s reasoning, might cause injury to a woman’s reproductive abilities: “nature has ordained that she should make use of her intercostal muscles in breathing, so that she may not be embarrassed by the changes that take place in the organs peculiar to her sex; and for her to violate this law by cultivating abdominal breathing is to defy nature.”⁴⁰

For late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century vocal pedagogues, singing in accordance with nature referred to two seemingly contradictory concepts. On the one hand, singing naturally implied that singers should perform organically; in other words, they should perform in a manner that simply felt comfortable. Singing naturally, in this sense, meant singing with less labor, where mind and body were synchronized in such a way that a beautiful tone seemed to issue forth effortlessly from the vocal tract so that audiences could neither see nor hear the body laboring. On the other hand, singing naturally implied a singer whose voice was attuned to an understanding of Nature as progressing according to universal laws, which governed both music’s formal development as well as its anthropological evolution. In this way, nature was something ordained, either by divine decree or by physical, discoverable principles.

Throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, the idea that music (or, at least, Western music) developed according to an internal, formal logic that progressed like an organic system evolving into ever more complex forms gained currency through the writings of Eduard Hanslick and

others.⁴¹ This latter sense of natural relied on the nineteenth-century teleological understanding of musical progress, of a musical Truth, based on the idea of Western musical supremacy. For voice culture authors, there was no contradiction between these two concepts of natural singing: vocal training provided access to one's innate Self and served as a technological project that brought forth one's true being in order to stave off the degenerative effects of modern life: the feminizing effects of popular culture, racial miscegenation, and so on. Racial degeneracy, in this view, was something to be cured through an intense focus on corporeal training that could bring the body into Western norms, and we can understand voice culture as partaking in such a project.⁴² Once voice cultivation was achieved, singers could then perform in the first sense of natural: by freeing the inner Self, singers would perform effortlessly, without hindrance from their unruly flesh. Through scientific observation, the proper coordination of the vocal tract (correct breathing method, proper laryngeal position, etc.) could be discovered, and students could be trained in the correct (as defined by Western vocal aesthetics) way of managing and positioning these anatomical features in order to produce a beautiful tone.

Embodying the Nation through Song

Rarely was the racial basis of voice culture expressed so explicitly. Most often, the belief in elite singing's aesthetic superiority was manifested in subtle language that reveals, under careful scrutiny, a thorough investment in contemporary racial ideologies. Of all the descriptions used to portray the ideal national voice, none resonated more with the anxieties over immigrant bodies than the idea of singing with a pure tone. A pure tone represented for voice culture advocates a sound unencumbered by vocal physiology, i.e., a natural sound produced through a rigid adherence to corporeal management (tightly controlled vibrato, clear enunciation, and unlabored breathing). For example, Frederic Root, describing an experiment in which a voice instructor was attempting to prove the supremacy of his breathing technique, wrote: "during the emission of pure tone the flame of a candle held before the mouth will not flicker . . . this pure tone is obtained by a certain control of the breath."⁴³ As Jann Pasler has argued in her analysis of timbral preferences in French singing during this period, the idea of a pure tone suggested more than a vocal ideal and signified, instead, a notion of racial purity embodied by Western European definitions of whiteness.⁴⁴ Exaggerated gestures and the vulgar sounds of non-Western and popular singing revealed not just poor training but hinted at racial degeneracy. In the words of one voice culture author, "all expression must emphasize the highest functions of the voice in the expression of the fullest experience of the race."⁴⁵

Voice culture provided its middle- and upper-class participants with new, albeit highly restricted, ways of inhabiting the body that freed them from the traditional mores of bodily comportment and public display even as the practices of this movement reinforced the ideal national body as white, heterosexual, and capable of being a productive member of society. The voice culture movement was closely aligned with the physical culture movement made popular by the French singer and actor François Delsarte and disseminated in the United States by his students, including Genevieve Stebbins, who authored one of the earliest texts on Delsartian techniques of vocal training.⁴⁶ As several scholars have noted, these corporeal projects were reactions to the nation's emerging status as a global economic and military power that provided a bulwark against the feminizing effects of modern culture's reliance on technology and consumerism while also separating civilized bodies from the primitive both at home and abroad.⁴⁷ For women in particular, voice and physical culture helped establish a "constitution of themselves as creators in addition to executants," highlighting women's creative agency in the formation of Western art music even as composers attempted to tighten their grip on performance practice.⁴⁸

Physical exercises, such as those employed by Delsarte's followers, were regularly incorporated into voice culture texts as a means to teach proper posture. Edgar Werner, a voice teacher and a major publisher of music and voice culture texts based in New York City, was one of the foremost proponents of Delsartian exercise.⁴⁹ Werner's press was responsible for publishing some of the earliest works devoted to Delsartian methods, including Genevieve Stebbins's monograph in 1902, and his monthly periodical, *Werner's Magazine*, included regular features on physical culture, emphasizing the physical and psychological benefits—especially for women—of practicing Classical poses, dance, pantomime, and other forms of movement that emphasized grace and gentility.⁵⁰ Like vocal aesthetics, standards of bodily comportment were being challenged by the new forms of leisure available in American society at the turn of the century, prompting a backlash by elite commentators who decried the more casual demeanors displayed by that nation's youth.⁵¹ Bodily comportment thus became a crucial site for middle- and upper-class self-definition, and the rigid poses promoted by voice culture authors revealed growing concerns over the public display of the body.

Henry Hulbert's *Breathing for Voice Production* is a prime example of how concerns over posture were incorporated into vocal pedagogy texts. Hulbert emphasized the benefits of proper breathing, depicting the human body in technological terms and thus establishing respiration while singing as a thor-

oughly scientific affair: “The air being the motor power of the voice, common sense teaches us that the more thoroughly the lungs are filled with air, and the more easily that air is controlled, the more effective and perfect will be the machine through which the artistic impulses of the singer are to find vent.”⁵² To facilitate his method, Hulbert provided detailed instructions for each of the thirty-seven breathing exercises he offered in his text, with photographs depicting nearly half of the exercises. For each exercise, the student was to begin in an upright position (either sitting or standing), with legs and back straight and arms placed against her side. Example 1 shows Hulbert demonstrating exercise seventeen, where he strikes a classic Vitruvian pose: dressed in a double-breasted frock coat and an ascot, Hulbert stands rigid, staring intently into the camera with back straight and arms outstretched perpendicular to his torso. The instructions provided for this exercise underneath the heading “The Control of the Breath” leave little room for interpretation, detailing the strictly regulated motions necessary for singing properly:

Assume the correct pose.

1. Raise the arms straight out sideways from the body until the hands and arms are on a level with the top of the shoulders, and inhale deeply through the nose.
2. Hold the breath for five seconds, then slowly count aloud up to six.
3. Return to the original position and exhale vigorously through the mouth.

Repeat from six to twelve times.⁵³

This preoccupation with air and lungs was not simply an interest in breath support. As postcolonial theorist Ali Behdad has noted, this era bore witness to a new form of xenophobia based, in part, on a fear of contagion perceived to accompany immigrants entering the United States; Behdad writes, “[m]edicine and hygiene constitute the essence of this newer form of patriotism, the differential markers that separate the citizen from the ‘alien,’ the native self from the immigrant other.”⁵⁴ As the health of the immigrant body became a crucial site for the surveillance of national subjectivity, the vocal tract became an opening through which the state could assert its control and its power. For writers on the voice, auscultation, or listening to the sounds of the body, revealed what an external observation of the body could not: voices that sounded unhealthy—too throaty or guttural—were a clear indication of a diseased body, one that was unfit for service to the nation.⁵⁵



SEVENTEENTH EXERCISE.—FIG. II.

Example 1. “[T]he more easily that air is controlled, the more effective and perfect will be the machine through which the artistic impulses of the singer are to find vent.” From Henry Harper Hulbert, *Breathing for Voice Production* (New York: Novello, Ewer, and Co., 1903), 59.

While abdominal strength provided the force with which to expel air from the lungs, laryngeal flexibility was critical to producing a well-rounded tone and for controlling vibrato. Often, these authors pointed to famous vocalists, including Jenny Lind and Enrico Caruso (both of whom were subjects of physiological study), as exemplary models of vocal mastery over laryngeal management. Such control was necessary, these authors argued, in order to avoid an overabundance of vibrato or an exaggerated *portamento* caused by a too rigid throat. Excessive vibrato, in particular, was singled out as a clear indication of uncontrolled emotion and equated with uncultivated singing. Likewise, palatal flexibility was crucial to producing a variety of timbres, but was most often singled out as the anatomical component that regulated the flow of air through the pharynx and into the mouth. The improper positioning of the soft palate, or velum, would either allow the voice to sound through the nose or catch in the bottom of the pharyngeal cavity. Genevieve Stebbins, for example, noted three points of reverberation in the vocal apparatus, each of which corresponded to a different aspect of the psyche: the mental with the back of the upper teeth; the moral with the palatal arch; and the physical with the pharynx. Pharyngeal reverberation, or singing from the

back of the throat, was best expressed by the singing of “the common street-vendor, as he calls his wares.”⁵⁶

It would be easy to dismiss such racialized and sexualized theories as mere pseudo-science—fanciful notions of vocal production based on flimsy evidence that traded in class, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. But for authors of voice culture texts, racialized voices represented an increasingly diverse population that posed a tangible threat to the project of creating a sound body politic. The voices of this mass populace, it was feared, would soon overwhelm civic discourse and undermine the attempt to forge an ideal vocal aesthetic. Vocal training offered an inoculation against such degeneracy. By focusing on the body as a transformative site for cultural and social progress, vocal pedagogues argued that proper training would lead to the improvement of national voice and the formation of an ideal national subject. The British physiologist and musician Golan Hoole stated this idea most succinctly: “Supreme greatness in the art of singing is only possible to the well-proportioned, finely built, perfectly organised man.”⁵⁷ By correlating self-discipline with vocal expression, voice-culture authors suggested that by scientifically training the body and, in turn, vocal expression, one could literally sing the progress of American civilization.

Oscar Saenger and the Dissemination of a U.S. Imperial Voice

In the remainder of this essay, I want to focus on the work of Oscar Saenger, one of the most prolific vocal instructors of the early twentieth century and the first instructor to make use of recording technology in his pedagogy. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Saenger began formal music instruction at age eighteen at the National Conservatory of Music at Irving Plaza, where he studied voice with the head of the vocal department, M. Jacques Bouhy, the French baritone who created the role of Escamillo in *Carmen*.⁵⁸ Saenger thrived at the conservatory, studying acting with the British actor Frederick Robinson and music theory with Bruno Oscar Klein. After leaving the conservatory, Saenger began his professional career as a baritone in 1891 with Gustav Hinrichs’s American Opera Company. By 1892, however, Saenger had retired from the stage, joining the vocal faculty at the National Conservatory. In 1895, Saenger launched a six-week course on opera, which he first taught in New York during the winter before adding a summer program in Chicago. Among his more famous students were the soprano Queena Mario, the tenor Paul Althouse, and the contralto Marion Anderson.⁵⁹

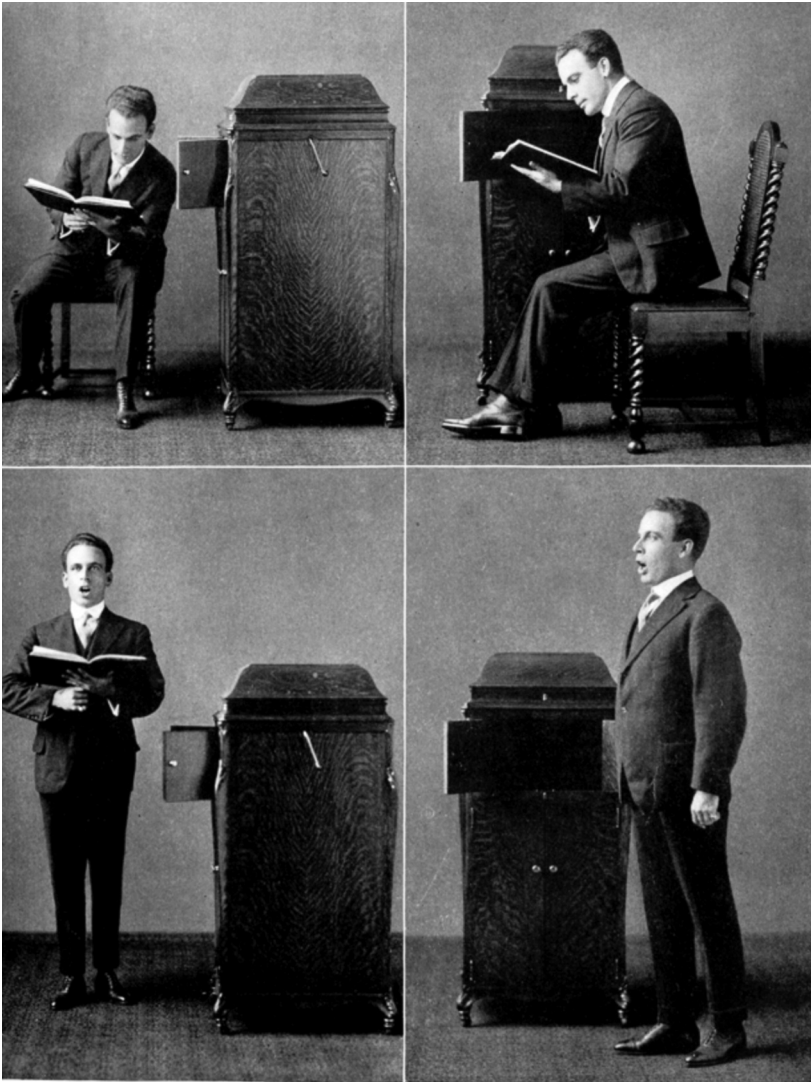
Saenger devoted the remainder of his life to teaching and to shaping the national discourse on vocal pedagogy. As a founding member of the American Academy of Teachers of Singing (established in 1924), Saenger helped shape the professional practices of vocal pedagogy by, according to the Academy's Code of Ethics and Practice, "promot[ing] the teaching of singing, not primarily as a commercial product, but as a means of culture."⁶⁰ Saenger, along with the other professional instructors, sought to regulate vocal training in order to provide standard expectations for both students and teachers. The Academy emphasized, above all else, the need for slow, steady development, and required its members to teach a student continuously for "a minimum of one year" before they could claim the student as a pupil. Such restrictions sought to address the propensity of instructors promising their students immediate results and guaranteed success; to do so was, according to the code, "a breach of ethics and integrity."⁶¹

In 1916, Saenger published his *Course in Vocal Training* through the Victor Talking Machine Company, and with his student Paul Althouse, recorded a series of ten double-sided recordings demonstrating Saenger's conception of how an ideal singing voice ought to sound.⁶² Saenger and Victrola touted the *Course's* contributions to "the musical art of the Nation" by promoting the use of recordings in vocal training as a technological innovation that would allow students living "far from . . . the great musical centers" to study with a world-renowned instructor.⁶³ Indeed, this text was meant to showcase U.S. talent on the global stage, disseminating the nation's imperial voice and declaring the importance of vocal training as part of "What the Victor Company Presents to the World."⁶⁴ Like most vocal pedagogy texts, Saenger's monograph included sections on the philosophy of art song ("song is intended to stir us into action and into a condition where we become conscious of the presence of higher, holier things than 'are dreamed of in our philosophies'"), bodily comportment, breath control, placement of the voice, formation of vowel sounds, attack, registers of the voice, and phrasing.⁶⁵ Throughout the text, Saenger relies on notions of unsound bodies to illustrate poor singing; thus, "[t]he scooping up [to a note] so frequently indulged in by poor singers may be the result of a rigid throat, defective sense of pitch, slovenliness, or lack of breath control."⁶⁶ The written instructions for each recorded lesson are almost militaristic in tone:

Attention! Stand erect; take a quiet, deep breath; open your mouth and throat naturally, relaxing the tongue and jaw. Listen carefully to the pitch, and, with the intention of singing your most beautiful tone on the vowel *ah*, attach the tone clearly, never pushing or forcing the voice, and focusing it forward in the face.⁶⁷

Saenger's manual is a fascinating text that explicitly correlates social development and civic virtue with refined singing, a progression made explicit in a series of images accompanying the section "How to Practice with the Records." In this section, Saenger emphasizes the student's need for "[s]elf-analysis and self-criticism" as well as adherence to a strict, daily regimen of vocal practice to be conducted "in a special room . . . devoted exclusively to the daily practice" in the event that the student finds him- or herself suffering from a lack of "mental concentration."⁶⁸ The accompany images clearly demonstrate the student's vocal and corporeal evolution (see Example 2). In the first two images, the student (Althouse) is seated immediately before the Victrola, listening intently to the recordings while studying the exercises in the text. In the third image, the student is standing next to the Victrola, feet together, holding the open manual, while performing the exercises along with the recordings. In the final image, the student has come fully into his own: the manual missing from view, the student now performs without assistance, standing with one foot slightly in front of the other in a manner suggesting poise and confidence.

The recordings, performed by Althouse with Saenger as the accompanist, provide material evidence of the sound that voice culture authors sought to define the nation. More significantly, the *Course* placed a model for vocal aesthetics into homes throughout the nation, pre-dating by just a few years the dissemination of a seemingly nonaccented English on radio broadcasts that radio historian Michele Hilmes has identified as "a ticket into the middle class for the sons and daughters . . . of immigrants," to which we could certainly add those wishing to rid themselves of a regional U.S. dialect.⁶⁹ Each recording begins with a spoken introduction by Saenger describing, carefully and with exaggerated enunciation, the objective for the exercise. Lesson twenty for tenors on the vocalize (*sic*) is typical, (the italicization added to mark those words spoken with added emphasis): "The purpose of vocalizes is to place and fix the voice *ac-cur-ate-ly* and to develop taste while singing *rhyth-mi-cal-ly* and *el-e-gant-ly*."⁷⁰ The exercise that follows, a simple melody sung by Althouse using the Italian vowel *ah*, leaves space between phrases, allowing the student to immediately repeat the phrase just performed. The tone is admittedly generic: Althouse employs a round, full timbre and uses the slightest hint of *portamento* between notes. What is striking about this text and the included exercises is the lack of attention paid to developing individual approaches to performance; instead, conformity to standard technique is stressed throughout the manual, with students urged to obey Saenger's "authoritative voice."⁷¹



In studying the lessons the student should sit and stand close to the Victrola, as shown above

Example 2. Paul Althouse demonstrates a student's vocal and corporeal evolution through singing.

Conclusion

Texts such as Saenger's offered an inoculation against the supposed degeneracy of modern life, popular culture, and racial interaction by providing a model not simply of successful performance practices but for embodying through song an ideal form of national subjectivity. The circulation of people

brought about by global capitalism and imperial expansion, in particular, shaped a sonic epistemology based on racial Otherness that heard music, and singing more specifically, as an index of the corporeal and social body. By 1900, U.S. audiences were increasingly familiar with the sounds of foreign and indigenous musics through everyday interactions as well as a variety of media: from travel journals, to essays in the popular press, to the highly racialized depictions of blacks and immigrants in blackface minstrelsy and vaudeville, and, later, on commercial music recordings. While such depictions often relied on a simple dichotomy of Western music and non-Western noise, commentators employed a rich lexicon for documenting foreign sounds, from the use of dialect in depicting foreign speakers' use of English to descriptions of non-Western and indigenous musics. Most striking was the reliance on corporeal language to describe foreign music making, either through nonverbal, psychological descriptions (screams, cries, and moans) or physiological terminology (nasal, throaty, guttural). Such cacophony propagated the need for a national voice, formulated and authorized by experts such as Saenger and others, that would mollify an increasingly vociferous public.

By focusing on the body as a transformative site for cultural and social progress, vocal pedagogues argued that proper training would lead to the improvement of national vocality and the formation of an ideal national subject. For these authors, beautiful singing resulted from a body organized along contemporary ideals of proper bodily comportment: good posture, restrained movement, and carefully composed emotions. Such adherence to a strict vocal regimen allowed singers to distance themselves from the din and noise of mass culture while helping to inaugurate an ideal national sound. Voice culture represented a physical manifestation of the attempt by the nation's cultural elites to secure their continuing monopoly over the conditions of national, racial, and class belonging. The national voice sought by the nation's pedagogues embodied the supposed virtues of national character: patriotism, discipline, and capitalist industriousness. The systems of vocal care and management devised by the nation's singing instructors instilled these virtues, combining the belief in "beautiful music" as a tool for social progress with a corporeal regimen that molded bodies into specimens of an idealized and racialized national subject.

NOTES

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¹ Quoted in Richard Wood Cone, *The Speaking Voice: Its Scientific Basis in Music* (Boston: Evans Music Company, 1908), 114 [emphasis mine]. The quote originated in an anonymously written article in *The Outlook* 56, no. 12 (17 July 1897): 677.

² Richard W. Cone, "Music of the Speaking Voice," in *Proceedings of the National Association of Elocutionists, Fourteenth Annual Meeting* (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1906), 43.

³ Most often referred to as "voice culture," a few texts used the phrase "vocal culture," instead. For consistency, I will use the former throughout this essay.

⁴ For a history of the National Conservatory of Music, see Emanuel Rubin, "Jeannette Meyers Thurber and the National Conservatory of Music," *American Music* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1990), 294–325.

⁵ Jennifer Stoeve-Ackerman, "The Word and the Sound: Listening to the Sonic Colour-Line in Frederick Douglass's 1845 *Narrative*," *SoundEffects: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Sound and Sound Experience* 1, no. 1 (2011): 21.

⁶ David Suisman, *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁷ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

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- ³⁷ Pier Francesco Tosi, *Observations on the Florid Song; or, Sentiments on the Ancient and Modern Singers*, translated by John Ernest Galliard (London: J. Wilcox, 1926 [1743]), 22.
- ³⁸ Edmund Shaftesbury, *Lessons in Voice Culture* (Washington, DC: The Martyn College Press, 1889), 42-43. At first glance, this passage seems to promote a nasal timbre. However, by raising the soft palate, the singer would effectively close off the nasal cavity. What Shaftesbury seems to be suggesting here is for the student to push the air upward from the laryngeal cavity against the soft palate in order to make full use of the resonance of the mouth cavity.
- ³⁹ Thomas Fillebrown, *Resonance in Singing and Speaking* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1911), 25-26. Fillebrown was a dentist and oral surgeon; this text is his only known book on vocal pedagogy. Sv. "Fillebrown, Thomas," in General Joshua L. Chamberlain, ed., *Universities and Their Sons* (Boston: R. Herndon Co., 1898), 161-162.

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- ⁶⁰ "Code of Ethics and Practice," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 11, no. 2 (December 1924): 16.
- ⁶¹ "Code of Ethics," 16.
- ⁶² Oscar Saenger, *The Oscar Saenger Course in Vocal Training: A Complete Course of Vocal Study for the Tenor Voice on Victor Records* (Camden, NJ: The Victor Talking Machine Company, 1916). Hereafter, I will refer to this manual as Saenger's *Course*.
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- ⁶⁴ Saenger, *Course*, 9.
- ⁶⁵ Saenger, *Course*, 16.
- ⁶⁶ Saenger, *Course*, 23.
- ⁶⁷ Saenger, 34.
- ⁶⁸ Saenger, 26.
- ⁶⁹ Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 19.
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Laurie J. Sampsel and Donald M. Puscher

“Out Where the West Begins”: The Denver Song that Became a Western Classic

Scholars of popular American sheet music extol the idea that the combination of poetry, music, and art combine in this “ephemeral” genre to capture an artistic concept in a unique manner that reflects not only their disparate arts, but also the history, culture, and viewpoint of a time. The sheet music for “Out Where the West Begins” offers a quintessential example in support of this view, in this case portraying the period’s romanticized ideal or myth of the West.

“Out Where the West Begins” started its life as a poem by Arthur Chapman (1873–1935) published in his “Center Shots” column on 3 December 1911 in the *Denver Republican* newspaper.¹ The poem quickly became popular and was widely republished. Denver composer and music teacher Estelle Philleo (1880–1936), set the poem to music in 1915.² She chose pen and ink drawings by the famous novelist Harold Bell Wright (1872–1944) to illustrate the sheet music. Philleo’s Denver friend and fellow musician Margaret St. Vrain Sanford Neill (1886–1958) supported its initial publication in 1917. The song was later picked up by Forster Music Publishing in Chicago and became a national hit according to sources such as *Music Trades* magazine and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.³ More than that, however, the song became a Western classic, is still in print, and continues to be discussed among aficionados of Western lore today.⁴

The shared artistic concept of Arthur Chapman, Estelle Philleo, and Harold Bell Wright came together to create an object greater than the sum of its parts. The sheet music to “Out Where the West Begins” captured a romanticized view of the American West common ca. 1915–1920; “Out where the handclasp’s a little stronger, / Out where the smile dwells a little longer /

That's where the West begins." The combination of the newspaperman's poem, piano teacher's song, and novelist's art captured the public's imagination at the time and remains known to this day.⁵ The song has been described as being to the West what "Dixie" was to the South.⁶ It was popular during World War I, perhaps owing to nostalgia for home and the values it symbolized and which characterize many other songs of the time. This article explores how the three creators—who were not originally from the West—captured and idealized this concept so convincingly. Who were Chapman, Philleo, and Wright? How did the music attract financial backing from Neill, the only native Coloradan in the story? What was the zeitgeist that created the conditions for the popularity of "Out Where the West Begins" to thrive?

Colorado had become a state in 1876 and by 1880 had a population of 194,327. People continued to settle in the state, increasing the population to 539,700 in 1900, 799,024 in 1910, and 939,629 in 1920.⁷ Known early on for mining and fur trading, the state soon became a magnet for health resorts and tourists. Harold Bell Wright is only one of many citizens who moved west because of respiratory problems. According to his *New York Times* obituary, "In 1916 his constant fight with ill health, which had dogged him since childhood, sent him to Arizona to live."⁸ The clean air and natural setting were a welcome change to people living in the crowded cities of the East, and the natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains drew people from around the world who wanted to see the sights. "Between 1890 and 1920 the state's tourist industry shifted from one that primarily appealed to sick people and affluent travelers to an enterprise more attuned to middle-class visitors."⁹

A movement began early in the twentieth century to preserve the natural beauty in the state. In 1909 Enos Mills (1870–1922), a nature writer, championed the idea of a national park some fifty miles northwest of Denver in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. In 1911 President Taft created Colorado National Monument, near Grand Junction, and in 1915 President Wilson created Dinosaur National Monument in the far northwest of the state, and Rocky Mountain National Park, Mills's original idea.

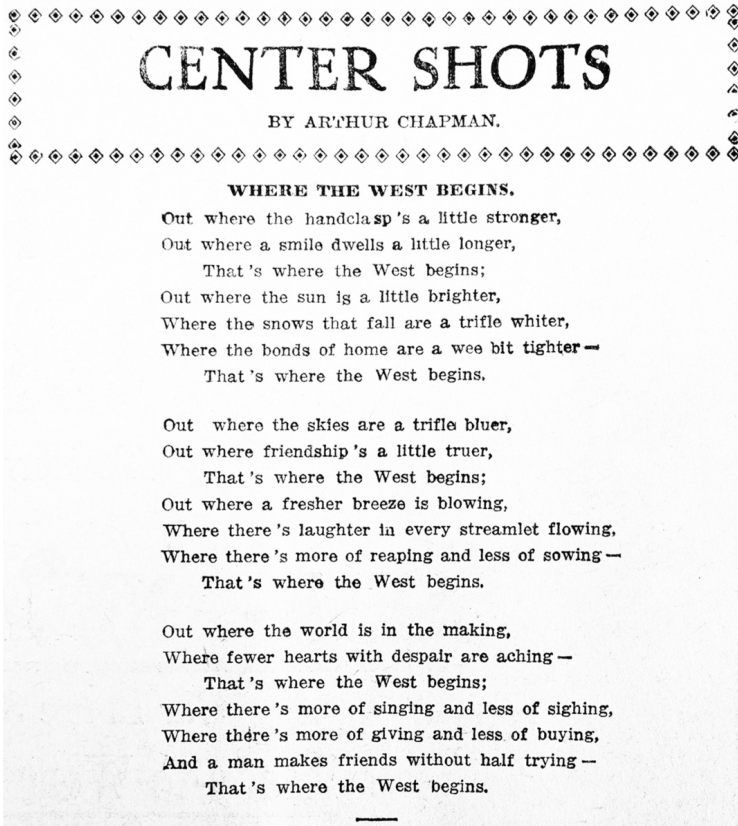
The way west, once an arduous journey by wagon or horseback, became easier by the 1870s when the transcontinental railroad made the trip accessible to a wider segment of the population.¹⁰ Roads were always crucial to Colorado's development. Settlers widened Native American and frontier footpaths to accommodate wagons and built bridges over rivers and ravines. Late nineteenth-century roads were maintained as toll roads, and the Colorado Highway Commission was established in 1910. "By 1912 Governor

John F. Shafroth was predicting that good roads could make the state ‘a playground for the world.’”¹¹ In 1916 the Federal Highway Act provided one-to-one matching funding to states, allowing the construction of the first paved road in Colorado between Denver and Littleton (now U.S. highway 85).¹² The Victory Highway Association was organized in 1921 to build a paved, multi-lane road from New York to San Francisco. The highway, dedicated to the soldiers who died in World War I, ran past Philleo’s cabin home in Dumont, west of Denver.¹³ As more roads were built, more people came to visit the state.

Denver, the state’s capital, was home to a number of larger than life people and events that captured the nation’s attention. The Democratic National Convention was held there in 1908, in Denver Municipal Auditorium. Margaret “Molly” Brown of Denver was hailed as a heroine by survivors of the RMS *Titanic* and became known as “The Unsinkable Molly Brown.” Dwight D. Eisenhower, as an Army lieutenant, married Mary “Mamie” Geneva Doud in Denver in 1916. William Frederick “Buffalo Bill” Cody died there in 1917 and is buried just to the south of the city.

Cody (1846–1917) personified the West to the nation and Europe. Having worked as a Pony Express rider and wagon train guide while still a teenager, he was hired as a U.S. Army scout between 1868 and 1872. He was best known for his travelling show, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West,” which he started in 1883. The name of the show changed to “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World” in 1893 and included Native Americans, cowboys of all types, horses, and feats of skill and daring. Both shows travelled the United States and Europe, where Cody met the crown heads of England and the Pope. When he died in 1917 over 18,000 people attended his Denver funeral.¹⁴ He was buried on Lookout Mountain in Golden, a site that immediately became—and remains today—another popular tourist attraction.

Where does the West begin geographically? This is the question that inspired Arthur Chapman to write the poem in the first place. The story goes that Chapman needed a poem for his column “Center Shots” in the *Denver Republican*. Late in the day, he found himself both uninspired and hungry for a home-cooked dinner when he read an Associated Press report about a conference of governors of the western states debating this very issue. Realizing that the governors were missing the point—the West was surely as much a state of mind as a place on the map—he reportedly dashed off the poem and headed home (see Example 1).



Example 1. Arthur Chapman's poem "Out Where the West Begins" from the 3 December 1911 *Denver Republican*. Image of the original publication of the poem in the *Denver Republican* courtesy of Archives, University Libraries, University of Colorado Boulder.

As noted above, Chapman earned his living as a journalist. Born in Rockford, Illinois, his first job was for the *Chicago Daily News*. He moved to Denver in 1898 to take up a position with the *Denver Republican*. In 1913 he left the *Republican* for the *Denver Times*. His career led him to New York City in 1919, where he served as a staff writer for the *New York Tribune* (later the *New York Herald Tribune*). Although Chapman would not return to the West for work, the region continued to inspire both his fiction and nonfiction writing throughout his career.

The poem "Out Where the West Begins" was next published in Denver in 1916 by Carson-Harper in a small collection of poems titled *Out Where the West Begins, and Other Small Songs of a Big Country*.¹⁵ The success of this

publication led to another, larger collection of Chapman’s poetry, *Out Where the West Begins, and Other Western Verses* in 1917.¹⁶ “Out Where the West Begins” was the first poem in this book published by Houghton Mifflin.

Chapman also wrote two novels, *Mystery Ranch* (1921) and *John Crews* (1926), both of which were criticized for their melodramatic and stereotypical portrayal of the West and frontier life. Both were commercial successes, however. Another volume of poetry, *Cactus Center*, was published in 1921. Between the novels, he wrote a history of Colorado, titled *The Story of Colorado: Out Where the West Begins* (1924), and in 1932 a history of the Pony Express.¹⁷

Chapman is best remembered today, however, for the poem under discussion, which has been adopted as a typical example of Cowboy poetry. Accounts of the poem’s popularity around 1920 are many. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* it was quoted by U.S. congressmen and used in campaign literature for at least two governors. “The poem was an



Example 2. Poet and journalist Arthur Chapman (1873–1935). Courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. Uncataloged photograph.

Example 3. Composer Estelle Philleo (1880–1936). Courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, F10311.



immediate sensation, widely quoted, often imitated, and more often parodied.”¹⁸ Its distribution went far beyond the publications mentioned above. In his book on western agriculture, author Mark Fiege explains how Chapman’s poem became part of western popular culture. “I have found it encased in a picture frame hanging in a lonely tavern; printed on a place mat in a restaurant; and embossed in copper plate and nailed to the wall of a shabby motel room. Somewhere, in Twin Falls or Rock Springs, I don’t recall where, I purchased a copy of it printed on a postcard.”¹⁹

It was from one of these postcards that Estelle Philleo was introduced to the poem. In his short biography of Philleo, Nolie Mumey relates, “Miss Philleo was a music critic on the same paper with Arthur Chapman, but her introduction to the poem was on a post card sent from a friend in Arizona. The poem was printed without any identification of the composer, and it was some time after receiving it before she learned the author was working in the same office.”²⁰ This story is entirely plausible, as Chapman’s *New York Times* obituary explains, “He received nothing more for it than his daily salary at the time and for some years thereafter, not having had it copyrighted.”²¹

Smitten with the poem, and given the author's consent, Philleo set it to music. While she is not remembered today beyond the locales where she lived and worked, “Out Where the West Begins” has become a classic Western song. Philleo was born in Parkman, Ohio, and grew up in Mason, Michigan. The exact date she moved to Colorado is unknown, but city directories place her in Denver as early as 1906.²² She taught piano and worked in the public schools.²³ In 1921 Philleo became a charter member of the Colorado State Music Teachers Association.²⁴ Her first song published was “A Fragrant Memory” in 1912 by M.L. Casey in Denver. The next, “Out Where the West Begins,” appeared in 1917. In all, she composed over a dozen pieces, although most are rarely seen today.²⁵ Almost all are songs and are related to either the West or the First World War.


Philleo's music for “Out Where the West Begins” pays careful attention to the text declamation. She composed a simple, but memorable and tuneful melody in G major that fits the mood of the text. The song is strophic, A A¹ A in form. The second stanza is softer than the first, marked “With sentiment,” and includes a new accompanimental figure in the piano, perhaps to represent the “laughter” in the fifth line. The setting for the final stanza returns to the *forte* dynamic of the beginning and is marked “With breadth” for an emphatic ending. The song is easy both to sing and play at the piano, which no doubt helped increase its popularity (see Example 4).

Other composers also set Chapman's poem to music, but none of them achieved widespread popularity. Appearing in 1918, Broadway composer Leo Edwards's song “That's Where the West Begins” was the earliest example of this group.²⁶ Art song composer Frank LaForge's setting “Where the West Begins” followed in 1920.²⁷ A choral setting with flute and tenor solos was composed by church musician Samuel Richards Gaines and published in 1926.²⁸ The most recent example appeared in 2000. New Zealand composer David Hamilton included a setting in his collection, *Songs for the Open Road*, for unaccompanied male voices.²⁹

Later in life, Philleo is quoted as saying the following about the song: “I felt it was nothing at all, so I put it away, where it waited until the time was ripe for the market. Then one day I got it out, and a friend urged me to send it to the publishers. I did. And that's the story.”³⁰ Two possible reasons that Philleo deemed the market “ripe” in 1917 were the death of “Buffalo Bill” Cody in January and the United States' entrance into World War I in April. But many other factors may have come into play.

Colorado certainly needed some good press after the Ludlow Massacre in 1914. The coal mine labor dispute resulted in twenty deaths, including

OUT WHERE THE WEST BEGINS




Skyline Sketch
by
Harold Bell Wright from "When a Man's a Man"


A Song

Words by Music by
Arthur Chapman Estelle Philleo

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OUT WHERE THE WEST BEGINS

—

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,
That's where the West begins;
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,
Where the honds of home are a wee bit tighter,
That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where friendship's a little truer,
That's where the West begins;
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,
That's where the West begins;
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying -
That's where the West begins.

—

Poem from "Out Where the West Begins," a book of Western Verse by Arthur Chapman, used through courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company.
The three sketches are reproductions of original pen sketches by Harold Bell Wright, made to illustrate his recent novel "When a Man's a Man" and are used by permission of his publishers, the Book Supply Company.

Example 4. 1920 edition of "Out Where the West Begins." Published by Forster Music Company. Courtesy of the Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.

2

Out Where the West Begins

Words by
ARTHUR CHAPMAN

Music by
ESTELLE PHILLEO.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes markings for *With spirit*, *f*, and *p*. The lyrics for the first system are: "Out where the hand-clasp's a lit-tle stronger, Out where the". The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with lyrics: "smile dwells a lit - tle long-er, Thats where the West be-gins!". The piano part includes a *ppp* marking and an "Echo. L.H." instruction. The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with lyrics: "Out where the sun shines a lit - tle bright-er, Where snows that". The piano part includes a *f* marking.

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3

fall are a tri - fle whiter, Where the bonds of home are a
wee bit tight-er- That's where the West be - gins.

With sentiment
Out where the skies are a tri - fle blu - er, Out where a
friend-ship's a lit - tle tru - er, That's where the West be-gins!

pp
J. H.
Echo

Out Where the West Begins 5

Detailed description: This is a page of sheet music for the song "Out Where the West Begins". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The music is in G major and 2/4 time. The lyrics are: "fall are a tri - fle whiter, Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tight-er- That's where the West be - gins. Out where the skies are a tri - fle blu - er, Out where a friend-ship's a lit - tle tru - er, That's where the West be-gins!". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *p*, and *pp*. The piece concludes with the signature "J. H. Echo". The page number "3" is in the top right corner, and the title "Out Where the West Begins 5" is at the bottom left.

4

Out where a fresh - er breeze is blow - ing, Out where there's

laugh - ter in stream - lets flowing, Where there's more of reap - ing and

less of sow - ing - That's where the West be - gins.

With breadth
Out where the world still is in the mak - ing, Where few - er

hearts in de-spair are ach-ing, That's where the West be-gins.

pp
Echo
L.H.

This system contains the first line of the song. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a dynamic marking of *pp* and the instruction 'Echo L.H.'.

There's more of sing-ing and less of sigh-ing, There's more of

This system contains the second line of the song. It continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

giv-ing and less of buy-ing, And a man makes friends with-

This system contains the third line of the song. It continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

out half try-ing - Out where the West be-gins!

This system contains the final line of the song. It concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment.

women and children, after the National Guard attacked strikers. “Newspapers across the United States flayed the coal barons” and the state was left with a negative image.³¹ Trends in the music market also favored the type of song “Out Where the West Begins” represented. Growing sentimentalization of Western lore paralleled the “closing” of the frontier. (New Mexico and Arizona joined the Union as the 47th and 48th states in 1912.) Philleo’s friend, Margaret St. Vrain Sanford, recognized a trend in the popular song market but no move to publish occurred until 1917.³² Whatever the proximate cause for her action, Philleo finally submitted the song for copyright, which was granted on 16 July 1917.³³ The exact date of publication is unknown.

Philleo’s friend, Sanford, was a musician as well as a publisher. Sanford (1886–1958) hailed from Weld County, Colorado, and lived in both Greeley and Denver before moving to California. Like Chapman and Philleo, she also worked in the newspaper business as a music critic, writing reviews for the *Denver News* and *Denver Times*.³⁴ During World War I Sanford joined the Red Cross and travelled to Europe. She began her application in October 1918, received clearance from the War Department the following month, and returned to the United States from Liverpool in July 1919.³⁵

Sanford also sang (soprano) and taught voice, in addition to writing criticism. She likely performed with Philleo from time to time. Her obituary states, “She sang at numerous public gatherings and wrote the music for ‘Out Where the West Begins.’ She sang it for the first time at the First Methodist church.”³⁶ Despite being erroneously credited with composing the music, Sanford likely sang it in Greeley and elsewhere. Her collaboration with Philleo seems to have ended shortly after she married Lloyd Neill in January 1920; the couple moved to California shortly thereafter.³⁷ Sanford did not publish any more of Philleo’s music after 1919. Little else is known about Sanford except that she died of cancer in Los Angeles in 1958.³⁸

“Out Where the West Begins” was published sometime in 1917, copyrighted by Estelle Philleo, although the title page lists “M. St. Vrain Sanford publisher.” The imprint also includes Clayton F. Summy Co. of Chicago as “sole distributors.” Summy, a long-standing Chicago publisher, was one of the top ten firms publishing songs by women during the period from 1890 to 1930.³⁹ The song was sold in Denver music shops and became a hit according to *Music Trades* magazine in a short article titled “Having a Record Run.”⁴⁰ “Out Where the West Begins” was listed as a “hit song” by ASCAP for 1917 as well; it was one of forty-four hits of the year.⁴¹ Before 1917 ended, the song was picked up by Forster Music—another major publisher of popular

songs—also located in Chicago. The Forster edition was highlighted in *Variety Music Cavalcade* as a big seller that same year.⁴²

After Forster took over publication, the song no longer bore Sanford's imprint. However it did continue to reflect her role in its publication through the series. The title page declared it part of the "SS series," which was the brand of the Sanford family's ranch, still in existence today.⁴³ This "brand" was also included on two other Western songs by Philleo that Sanford issued, "Roundup Lullaby" and "Trails," both from 1919. According to her father's obituary, their Double S Bar ranch was "the most popular headquarters for travelers between Fort Morgan and Greeley" and the "Double S Bar herds were known in practically every corner of Colorado."⁴⁴

The use of the brand on the sheet music would certainly have caught the eye of Colorado audiences and helped give it a Western flair. Sanford only seems to have published Philleo's music. In addition to these Western songs, she also published two World War I pieces, which will be discussed later. Apparently Sanford's publishing enterprise was a strictly local affair, since distribution and marketing was left to the more established firms Summy and Forster.

Several bibliographically distinct editions of "Out Where the West Begins" were published between 1917 and 1920. Often the differences are limited to the art and/or the advertisements present on the sheet music. Collector Gerry Chudleigh lists five editions in his book and on his website.⁴⁵ He links to a bibliography compiled by Wayne and June Way citing fifteen different editions.⁴⁶ All the art used on the first edition of the sheet music was created by Harold Bell Wright.

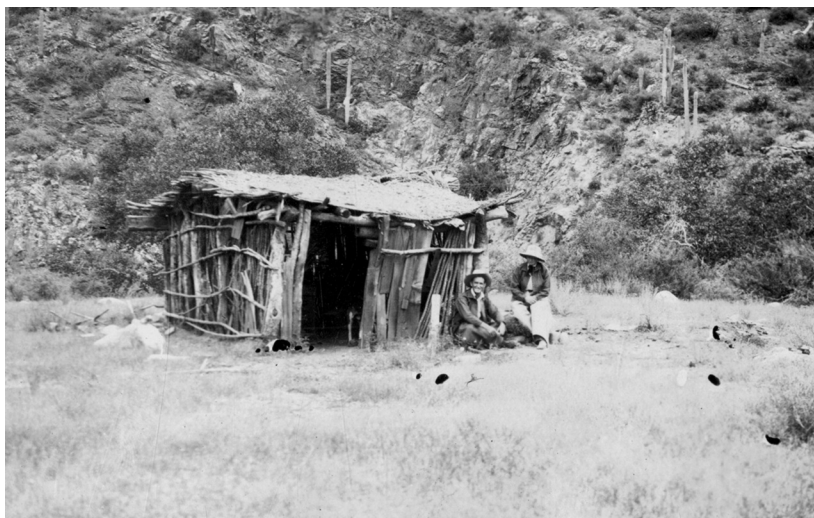
Though little known today, Wright was quite popular as a novelist during the early twentieth century. Also an artist, he provided pen and ink drawings to illustrate his 1916 Western novel, *When a Man's a Man*.⁴⁷ This book is said to have sold about a million copies, and Wright's popularity was well established before this mid-career book was published. When he died in 1944, one obituary claimed, "By 1917, his novels commanded more public demand than any other writer of the day" (see Example 5).⁴⁸

Wright's two most popular novels, *The Shepherd of the Hills* and *The Winning of Barbara Worth*, were published in 1907 and 1911, respectively. Each was later made into a film. First came *The Winning of Barbara Worth* in 1926, starring Gary Cooper. John Wayne starred in *The Shepherd of the Hills*, released in 1941.

When a Man's a Man extols the benefits of life in the West, like Chapman's poem, with a strong dose of masculinity added in. No wonder Philleo chose Wright's art to illustrate her song. As expressed by Robert L. Gale, “Wright wrote what mainstream America wanted: fiction criticizing urban evil, praising nature's open spaces, and flooded with sweetness and light.”⁴⁹ Perhaps even better than commissioning an artist to create original drawings, Philleo's choice of Wright's art for the sheet music was a savvy business decision that capitalized on the popularity of the novelist.

Like both Chapman and Philleo, Wright was not a native Westerner. He was born in 1872 in Rome, New York, and worked for a time as a preacher and painter before settling on becoming a writer. He came west for health reasons, and lived in Missouri, Kansas, and California. To prepare himself to write *When a Man's a Man*, Wright immersed himself in ranch life near Tucson, Arizona, a place he called home “longer than he lived anywhere else.”⁵⁰ In 1928, Philleo traveled to Tucson and met Wright. Perhaps this visit inspired Philleo's song “In Old Tucson.”⁵¹ Wright went on to write several more novels. His final years were spent in California, where he died in 1944.

Philleo obtained permission from the publisher, Book Supply Company (Chicago), to use three of Wright's drawings in the first edition of “Out Where the West Begins.” The first appears on the title page with the credit “Skyline sketch by Harold Bell Wright from ‘When a Man's a Man.’”⁵² This drawing



Example 5. Photo of Harold Bell Wright (1872–1944) taken ca. 1920 in the Catalina Mountains near Tucson. Image courtesy of Northern Arizona University, Cline Library [NAU.PH.96.11.112].

appears in the novel on page 323.⁵³ The next page includes the poem in full, along with a second drawing, one of a fence, found on page 46 of the novel.⁵⁴ At the bottom of the page is another credit: “The three sketches are reproductions of original pen sketches by Harold Bell Wright, made to illustrate his recent novel ‘When a Man’s a Man’ and are used by permission of his publishers, the Book Supply Company.” The third sketch—two horsemen riding toward the horizon—appears on the last page of the music above an advertisement for another Philleo song. This drawing is from page 238 of the novel.⁵⁵ By clearly crediting both Wright and Book Supply, Philleo and Sanford used their names to marketing advantage.

The Forster editions of the song include only two of the sketches, the horsemen sketch from the final page being omitted. The credit line cited above still appears, however, mentioning three sketches. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this art further, it should be noted that Philleo used the same three sketches to illustrate additional songs and advertisements, presumably with Wright’s permission. One of the most notable examples is her use of the horsemen sketch in her advertisement for her Western music program titled “Setting the West to Music.” This ad appeared on songs such as “Colorado Cabin,” published in 1930 by the Baldwin Piano Company in Denver.⁵⁶ Both the horsemen sketch and the fence sketch appear again in later Forster editions of the sheet music for Philleo’s songs “Roundup Lullaby” and “Trails.”⁵⁷

Earlier in this article, sheet music sales were cited as evidence that “Out Where the West Begins” became and remained popular. In addition to sales, however, major performances and recordings are also significant indicators of longevity and lasting appeal, as noted by Reynolds.⁵⁸

An early performance of mainly local interest was given by acclaimed tenor Evan Williams (1867–1918) during the dedication of the organ at the Denver Municipal Auditorium on 21 March 1918. Williams sang “Out Where the West Begins” as one of his encores, and it stole the show. The review in the *Rocky Mountain News* begins, “Welsh Artist Scores Greatest Triumph of Evening in ‘Out Where the West Begins.’”⁵⁹ (Built in 1908, the auditorium is still in use today as part of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts complex.)

Another performance on 16 June 1926 at the International Rotary Convention in Denver featured Philleo at the piano.⁶⁰ The singer on this occasion was Donald Wilson (also from Denver), and the introduction by the Rotary chairman included a plug to sell autographed copies of the song. The city’s newspapers were filled for days with news, programs, and promotions for the Rotarians, indicating the local significance of this convention.⁶¹

The popularity of “Out Where the West Begins” during World War I perhaps contributed to the song’s fame among servicemen, especially Westerners away from home, in a way that transcends single performances. Mumey writes, “In 1919, Estelle Philleo was asked to go to New York to help welcome the returning service men at the Rocky Mountain Club.”⁶² According to Mumey, she attended. The affair was the “Victory” dinner held on 8 April 1919 at the Waldorf Astoria hotel to welcome home the 91st Division (nick-named “Wild West”) and to celebrate the birthday of King Albert of Belgium, who had supported them.⁶³ An article in the *New York Times* briefly described the evening’s entertainment: “The program will range from two noted entertainers from a New York roof garden to a boxing bout featured by two featherweights representing the Army and Navy.” Performance of “Out Where the West Begins” has not been independently confirmed, but seems likely since Philleo made the trip.⁶⁴ Mumey goes on to mention performances of the song in San Francisco, including one at an American Legion convention.⁶⁵ The veterans’ organization held their national meeting there in 1923, naming John R. Quinn as the new national commander. Described by the newspapers as a “cowboy and a typical Westerner of the open plains,” his appointment was most likely the occasion for the performance.⁶⁶ If the song was performed in both New York City and San Francisco, claims for its popularity from coast to coast would not seem to be exaggerated.

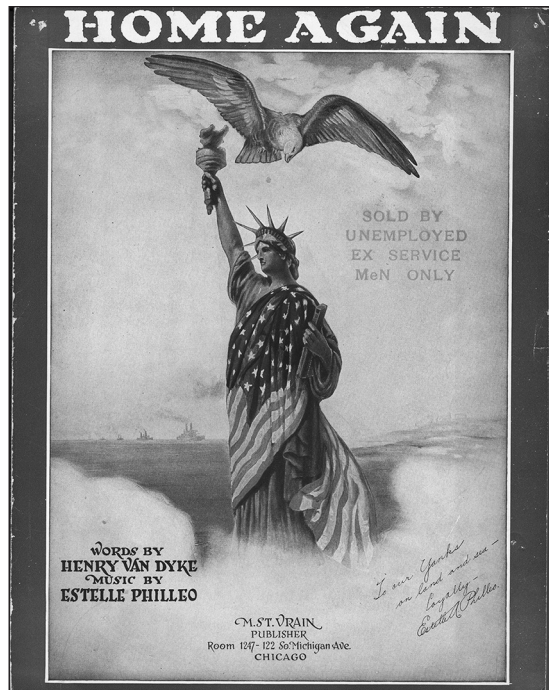
A number of recordings of the song have been made over the years. As the market for popular songs shifted from sheet music sales to recordings, these were important in sustaining the song’s place in the public eye. Three early 78 rpm discs are notable because of the performers involved. American baritone John Charles Thomas (1891–1960) recorded the song on the Vocalion label in 1920.⁶⁷ Another from the same year is the Columbia recording by tenor Charles Harrison (1878–1965).⁶⁸ Both recordings were supplied with an orchestral transcription to replace the piano accompaniment. The Criterion Quartet recorded a male quartet arrangement (also with orchestra) on the Victor label in 1922.⁶⁹ Much more recently, the song was interpolated in an opera by German composer Heiner Goebbels, *Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten*. Composed in 2002, the opera was recorded on the ECM label in 2007.⁷⁰ This is perhaps the best recording of the song available today.

While the popularity of “Out Where the West Begins” with servicemen may have come as a surprise to the creators, Philleo and Sanford’s postwar collaborations in 1919 are undoubtedly linked to the military in a personal way. As Reynolds notes, “Women all over the country saw music as one way of making a patriotic contribution.”⁷¹ Both Philleo and Sanford were personally touched by the war. Philleo’s half-brother, Norman Philleo, served between

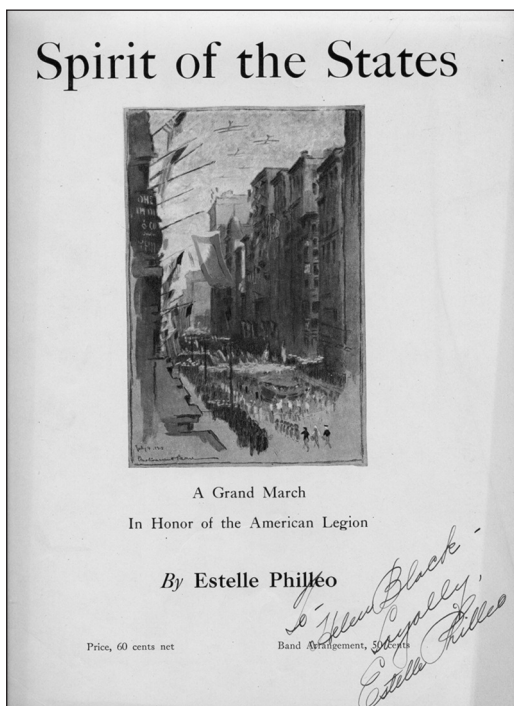
1918 and 1921.⁷² Sanford's brother, Brainard, died in the war.⁷³ Her husband, Lloyd Neill, fought in the war as well.⁷⁴ No wonder Sanford served in the Red Cross.

Philleo and Sanford collaborated on two pieces published in 1919 that were clearly inspired by the conflict, again with Philleo as composer and Sanford as publisher. "Home Again" featured a text by Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933) associated in the popular mind with glowing patriotic sentiment. His poem "America for Me" was published in a book of patriotic readings called *America First* in 1916.⁷⁵ The cover of the sheet music is stamped "Sold by Unemployed Ex Service Men Only." The second piece is a piano march titled "Spirit of the States: A Grand March in Honor of the American Legion." Interestingly, the piece was copyrighted 3 November 1919, about a week before the official founding of the group.⁷⁶ Neither of these war pieces attained the popularity of "Out Where the West Begins," but Philleo continued to compose songs through the 1920s.

Chapman's poem, Philleo's music, Wright's art, and Sanford's business acumen combined to create the song that appealed to the public in 1917 and still communicates to us today. Romantic to be sure, it reflects a timeless love of the West and the specific historical period of its creation. Several indi-



Example 6. Autographed cover of *Home Again*. Courtesy of the Music Library and Sound Recordings Archives at Bowling Green State University.



Example 7. Autographed cover of *Spirit of the States*. Courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

cators of the song’s popularity have been discussed here: sheet music sales, major performances, recordings, and longevity. By each measurement, “Out Where the West Begins” was a success. The song combined poetry, music, and art in a manner that not only appealed to the Denver public in 1917, but became a national hit, a rallying song for servicemen and veterans, and a Western classic. Even today, who would not want to live “Where there’s more of singing and less of sighing, / Where there’s more of giving and less of buying, / Where a man makes a friend without half trying”?

That’s where the West begins.

NOTES

1 Arthur Chapman, “Center Shots,” *Denver Republican*, 3 December 1911, 4.

2 See Nolie Mumey, *Estelle Philleo: 1881–1936* (Denver: Artcraft Press, 1955), 3. Philleo’s year of birth is frequently given as 1881, but her birth was officially recorded in 1880. See, for example, Ohio, Births and Christenings Index, 1800–1962, Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com, accessed 17 July 2013.

3 See, for example, “Having a Record Run,” *Music Trades* 58 (8 November 1919): 40 and *ASCAP Hit Songs* (New York: ASCAP, 1977), 9.

⁴ “Out Where the West Begins” is available for sale as a digital download from OnlineSheetMusic.com, accessed 22 July 2013. Newspaper articles continue to be written in Colorado papers about the song. For example, see Frances Melrose, “Composer Left Us Songs of the West,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 7 February 1993; Rita Healy “Her Song Lives On: Dumont Rededicates the Grave of Composer Estelle Philleo,” *Clear Creek Courant*, 10 July 2008; and Ian Neligh, “Hats Off to Women of the Past—Historical Society’s Fund-Raiser Features Famous Colorado Females,” *Clear Creek Courant*, 15 May 2012.

⁵ For example, multiple versions are posted on YouTube.

⁶ See, for example, *Proceedings Seventeenth Annual Convention of Rotary International, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., June 14–18, 1926* (Chicago: Rotary, 1926), 349.

⁷ “Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990,” U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/pop1790-1990.html, accessed 20 July 2013.

⁸ “Harold B. Wright, Novelist, 72, Dead,” *New York Times*, 24 May 1944, accessed 10 July 2013.

⁹ Carl Abbott, Stephen Leonard, and Thomas Noel, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State*, 5th ed. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013), 231.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹² “Colorado Highways: History,” www.mesalek.com/colo/history.html, accessed 17 July 2013.

¹³ “Victory Highway,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_Highway, accessed 17 July 2013.

¹⁴ Cody’s death was featured as one of thirty-five events that “shaped the Centennial State” by author James Crutchfield. See his *It Happened in Colorado*, 2nd ed. (Guilford, CT: TwoDot, 2008), 111–114.

¹⁵ Arthur Chapman, *Out Where the West Begins, and Other Small Songs of a Big Country* (Denver: Carson-Harper, 1916).

¹⁶ Arthur Chapman, *Out Where the West Begins, and Other Western Verses* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1917).

¹⁷ Arthur Chapman, *The Story of Colorado: Out Where the West Begins* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1924).

¹⁸ Dennis Wepman, “Chapman, Arthur,” *American National Biography Online*, www.anb.org, accessed 19 June 2013.

¹⁹ Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 203. Postcards of the poem are still common on Ebay today.

²⁰ Mume, *Estelle Philleo*, 3. The authors have not confirmed Philleo’s employment as a newspaper critic.

²¹ “Arthur Chapman, Journalist, Dead,” *New York Times*, 5 December 1935, accessed 10 July 2013.

²² *Ballenger & Richards Thirty-Fourth Annual Denver City Directory for 1906* (Denver: Ballenger & Richards, 1906), 988.

²³ Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 2.

²⁴ Beth Benson and Linda Sommer, “History of the Colorado State Music Teachers Association 1921–2012,” www.comusicteachers.net/index.asp (accessed 29 July 2013), 4.

²⁵ Christopher Reynolds has compiled a database of songs composed by women from 1890 to 1930; he lists thirteen songs by Philleo. The database is available at <http://n2t.net/ark:/13030/m5br8stc> (accessed 23 July 2013). The authors have examined a few additional songs. Several more are mentioned by Mumey, but the authors have not confirmed them. The best collection of Philleo’s music identified so far is at the Denver Public Library.

²⁶ Leo Edwards, “That’s Where the West Begins” (New York: Chappell, 1918).

²⁷ Frank La Forge, “Where the West Begins” (New York: H. Flammer, 1920).

²⁸ Samuel Richards Gaines, “Out Where the West Begins,” ([Boston]: C.C. Birchard, 1926).

²⁹ David Hamilton, *Songs for the Open Road* (Auckland: D. Hamilton, 2000).

³⁰ Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 3.

³¹ Abbott, Leonard, and Noel, *Colorado*, 157.

³² In his study of women song composers from 1890 to 1930, Christopher Reynolds has noted the height of publication during the decade from 1910 to 1919. Within that period, however, the market experienced a dip after 1914 which began to reverse beginning in 1916. Since Philleo composed the song in 1915, while the market was unfavorable, waiting to publish made sense. Reynolds has documented over 15,500 songs by 1,607 women composers. See Christopher Reynolds, “Documenting the Zenith of Women Song Composers: A Database of Songs Published in the United States and the British Commonwealth, ca. 1890–1930,” *Notes* 69 (2013): 671–687. See especially Table 2 on p. 685.

³³ Library of Congress, *Catalogue of Copyright Entries, Part 3: Musical Compositions, 1917, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 7* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 816.

³⁴ In November 1914, Sanford wrote a sympathetic review of a performance by Native American singer Tsianina in the *Denver News*. See Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 213 and 282. Denver historian Henry Miles cites two reviews in his book *Orpheus in the Wilderness: A History of Music in Denver 1860–1925* ([Denver]: Colorado Historical Society, 2006). In April 1915 Sanford gave a positive review of a chamber music concert in the *Rocky Mountain News*. But Miles described Sanford’s 1920 assessment of Geraldine Farrar in the *Denver Times* as “a most unsympathetic, unkind review.” See Miles, 106 and 186–87.

³⁵ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; *Passport Applications, January 2, 1906–March 31, 1925*; Collection Number: ARC Identifier 583830 / MLR Number A1 534; NARA Series: M1490; Roll #: 730, Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com, accessed 18 July 2013. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at Boston, Massachusetts, 1917–1943*; Microfilm Serial: T938; Microfilm Roll: 249, Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com, accessed 18 July 2013. Mumey states that Philleo volunteered for the Red Cross as well in France, but no passport or other documentation for her has been located. See Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 2.

- 36 "Margaret Neill, Native of Weld, Dies in Calif.," *Greeley Tribune*, 13 January 1958.
- 37 "Margaret St. V. Sanford," *Lyceum Magazine*, June 1920, 31.
- 38 "Margaret Neill, Native of Weld, Dies in Calif.," *Greeley Tribune*, 13 January 1958.
- 39 Christopher Reynolds, "Documenting the Zenith of Women Song Composers," *Notes* 69 (2013): 685.
- 40 "Having a Record Run," *Music Trades* 58 (8 November 1919): 40.
- 41 *ASCAP Hit Songs* (New York: ASCAP, 1977), 9.
- 42 Julius Mattfeld, *Variety Music Cavalcade, 1620–1969*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, [1971]), 354. Philleo's song was one of seventy-nine listed as top hits of 1917.
- 43 Much of Sanford's family story is related in a 1920 newspaper article from Estes Park, Colorado. See "Out Where the West Begins," *Estes Park Trail*, 30 July 1920. The double S brand very likely stands for Stewart Sanford, Margaret's father. Caroline Blackburn of the Greeley City Museums confirms that the ranch is still in existence today as the Eagle's Nest Ranch. Blackburn, email to Sampsel, 25 June 2013.
- 44 "S. Sanford Dies Tuesday After Lengthy Illness," *Greeley Tribune*, 24 January 1928.
- 45 Gerry Chudleigh, *Harold Bell Wright's Books: A List of Editions and Collectibles* (Newbury Park, CA: Chudleigh, 1992), 27–28. See also his website, "Harold Bell Wright: The Best Selling American Author of the Early 20th Century," www.gchudleigh.com/index.html, (accessed 24 June 2013).
- 46 Gerry Chudleigh, "Sheet Music," "Harold Bell Wright: The Best Selling American Author of the Early 20th Century," www.gchudleigh.com/index.html, (accessed 24 June 2013).
- 47 Harold Bell Wright, *When a Man's a Man* (Chicago: Book Supply, 1916).
- 48 "Harold Bell Wright, Once Best-Selling Novel Writer, Dies," *Denver Post*, 25 May 1944.
- 49 Robert Gale, "Wright, Harold Bell," *American National Biography Online*, www.anb.org, accessed 7 July 2013.
- 50 M. Scot Skinner, "Hated by Critics, Wright's Novels Sold by the Millions," *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*, 30 September 2010.
- 51 Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 7.
- 52 Estelle Philleo, "Out Where the West Begins," Chicago: M. St. Vrain Sanford, 1917.
- 53 Wright, *When a Man's a Man*, 323.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 46.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 238.
- 56 Estelle Philleo, "Colorado Cabin," (Denver: Baldwin Piano Co., 1930), [4].
- 57 Both songs were published by Forster, "Roundup Lullaby" in 1919 and "Trails" in 1920.
- 58 Reynolds, "Documenting the Zenith of Women Song Composers," 683.

- ⁵⁹ “Singing of Williams Captivates Audience,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 22 March 1918.
- ⁶⁰ Rotary International, *Proceedings Seventeenth Annual Convention of Rotary International, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., June 14–18, 1926* (Chicago: Rotary, 1926), 349, 494.
- ⁶¹ Philleo’s song “Spirit of Rotary” was also performed. *Ibid.*, 403.
- ⁶² Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 3-4.
- ⁶³ “Dinner to Welcome 91st,” *New York Times*, 4 April 1919.
- ⁶⁴ “Rocky Mountain Club Dines Tonight,” *New York Times*, 8 April 1919.
- ⁶⁵ Mumey, *Estelle Philleo*, 3.
- ⁶⁶ “Quinn of California Heads the Legion,” *New York Times*, 20 Oct 1923.
- ⁶⁷ John Charles Thomas, “Out Where the West Begins,” Vocalion A 60025, 1920, 78 rpm.
- ⁶⁸ Charles Harrison, “Out Where the West Begins,” Columbia A 3315, 1920, 78 rpm.
- ⁶⁹ Criterion Quartet, “Out Where the West Begins,” Victor B 26177, 1922, 78 rpm.
- ⁷⁰ Heiner Goebbels, *Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten*, ECM 1811, 2007, compact disc.
- ⁷¹ Reynolds, “Documenting the Zenith of Women Song Composers,” 680.
- ⁷² “Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) Death File.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com, accessed 29 July 2013.
- ⁷³ “S. Sanford Dies Tuesday After Lengthy Illness,” *Greeley Tribune*, 24 January 1928.
- ⁷⁴ “Margaret Neill, Native of Weld, Dies in Calif.,” *Greeley Tribune*, 13 January 1958.
- ⁷⁵ Jasper McBrien, *America First, Patriotic Readings* (New York: American Book Co., [1916]).
- ⁷⁶ Library of Congress, *Catalogue of Copyright Entries, Part 3: Musical Compositions, 1919, New Series, Vol. 14, No. 9* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 1373.

Deborah Hayes

Nadia Boulanger, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, and American Music

Musicians who came to America from Europe and Britain in the 1930s and 1940s to escape political upheaval and war at home exerted various influences on American music. The renowned French teacher, organist, conductor, and composer Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979) lived in the United States during the Second World War, arriving in 1940 and returning to Paris after the war ended in 1945. She made several visits to America before and after the war as well, to teach, lecture, and conduct; she was often the first woman to conduct a particular orchestra. In her early years she composed music, although her younger sister, Lili Boulanger (1893–1918), is probably better known than Nadia as a composer. Lili was ill most of her life and died at the age of twenty-four. After Lili's death, Nadia ceased composing and continued to promote Lili's work.

Many Americans travelled to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger.¹ By the 1920s she was already known for bringing out a neophyte composer's own voice. She also conveyed a distinctive view of European classical traditions.

Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912–1990), an Australian who studied with Boulanger in Paris in 1937, immigrated to the United States in 1941, with Boulanger's help. Glanville-Hicks stayed for almost twenty years, became a U.S. citizen, and made her career in New York City as a leading composer, respected critic, and successful producer of concerts and recordings of new music.

If Boulanger represented old-world traditions in America, Glanville-Hicks was a new-world figure—an Australian by birth—who was drawn to the not-quite-so-new world of America by its musical opportunities. Unlike Boulanger, she held no academic positions; she taught only occasionally. She played piano but did not perform publicly; neither did she conduct.

Besides composing music, she published hundreds of concert reviews and long articles about new music and aesthetics; she was adept at publicity and public relations. Both Boulanger and Glanville-Hicks, however dissimilar as people and as musicians, are nevertheless apt to be described similarly as “exceptional women”—exceptions to the general rule that women and their



Nadia Boulanger. Photo from the Don Campbell collection, American Music Research Center.



Peggy Granville-Hicks. Photo from the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Collection.

work are not worthy of public recognition. Although the description is absurd and demeaning on its face, Glanville-Hicks in particular seems to have endorsed it, often claiming to be the only female composer of any merit.

Glanville-Hicks often cited her study with Boulanger as a crucial element in her life, but she did not give many details. She said that with Boulanger she completed her musical training, made contacts with American members of the “Boulangerie” who would later welcome her to the United States, and began to understand her status as a woman in the male-dominated professional world of music. Glanville-Hicks explained her admiration of Boulanger in a letter she wrote in 1948 upon hearing that a representative of UNESCO’s International Fund in Paris was looking for young musical talent. She advised him to consult Mademoiselle Boulanger, whom she described as follows:

She is, and has always been, a meeting point for the creative avant-garde musicians of all ages and of every country, and she has been, during these past years, a great spiritual light to many of us also.

More than anyone in our time has she guided and fostered and tirelessly maintained the standard of excellence in musical purity and integrity. And if there are those among her pupils who have sometimes fallen short of her concepts, they have at least never left her hands without a full consciousness of those standards.

When I think of her many annual journeyings back and forth, back and forth between the New and Old Worlds in the years before this war; of the pupils, now famous names in every country, who went to her, or of those she came here to discover; when I consider, as I often do, the immense pyramid of knowledge and aesthetic judgment that she carried stone by stone across the Atlantic; I am humbled, as I always am in her presence, at the spectacle of one solitary and wholly creative human’s achievement in an epoch of chaos and destruction. Truly the Hindus are right: We are never without prophets.²

The author of this extraordinary tribute was born Peggy Hicks—she later added her father’s middle name, Glanville, and the hyphen—in Melbourne, Victoria, where her parents were fairly prominent; her father held an influential civic position and was a journalist for two daily newspapers. From 1930 to 1932 Peggy attended Melbourne’s Albert Street Conservatorium of Music, where she was considered a promising young composer. Her next step, as for many ambitious Australian women of her generation, was “to try her fortune in London,” in the then common expression.³ She decided to study composition with Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) at the Royal College of Music and was awarded the RCM’s Carlotta Rowe Scholarship for women

composers for each of her four years there, 1932–1936. In her later years she liked to say that the prize had never been awarded before she came along, but actually many other gifted women had been recipients.

In October 1936 an Octavia Traveling Scholarship from the RCM took Peggy to Vienna to study with Egon Wellesz (1885–1974), a student of Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951). She soon tired of atonalism and the twelve-tone method, however, and in January 1937, just after turning twenty-four, she took the train to Paris in hopes of being accepted as a student by the renowned Nadia Boulanger. Peggy shared the traveling scholarship with a fellow RCM student, Stanley Bate (1911–1959), a precocious young English composer and pianist whom she would later marry. Bate used his share to study with Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) in Germany, but when Peggy wrote to Stanley that she was enjoying Paris, he decided to join her; he began studying with Boulanger in February, soon after he arrived there. Peggy's lessons began a month later.

Glanville-Hicks's Australian friend and biographer James Murdoch (1930–2010) discusses her study with Boulanger in his book, *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Transposed Life*. He reprints a letter of recommendation that Vaughan Williams sent to Boulanger: "She is very musical, has I believe a distinct gift—up to the present she has been occupied too much in the romantic, not the formal aspect of music—but she realizes now romance alone will not do. She is a charming person . . . and most intelligent."⁴ Murdoch also reports that Glanville-Hicks first met Boulanger socially, perhaps with Vaughan Williams, and told Boulanger of her seriousness. This encounter may have occurred at a salon hosted by Louise Dyer, another Australian, who ran Editions de l'Oiseau-Lyre (Lyrebird Press) in Paris and had published some of Glanville-Hicks's earlier pieces.⁵

In later years, Glanville-Hicks often recounted how she kept showing up "on Boulanger's doorstep" with Boulanger claiming to have no space in her schedule. Finally the teacher relented and offered her a lesson at 11:00 pm. Murdoch reports that their first meeting, on 10 March 1937, did indeed take place at 11:00 pm. Boulanger "sent her a pneumatique, summoning her . . . at the only 'free' time she had."⁶ Indeed, at a 2004 symposium at the University of Colorado, *Nadia Boulanger and American Music*, several participants affirmed that Mademoiselle (as her students called her) scheduled lessons from early morning to late at night, including lunch periods; peculiar lesson times, someone observed, may have been a French pedagogical tradition and not just a Boulanger idiosyncrasy. Glanville-Hicks's subsequent lessons took place during daytime hours.

According to her diary (appointment book) annotations, Glanville-Hicks had fourteen lessons altogether, from March through October. The lessons were sporadic. Boulanger was away in America and England for extended periods; Glanville-Hicks spent six weeks in Italy on holiday with Bate in April and May and returned to England in May and August. She also attended three of Boulanger's famous Wednesday afternoon sessions at her apartment, 36 Rue Ballu (now Place Lili-Boulanger) where the teacher played and analyzed Renaissance choral music and new compositions with select groups of students. "Rue Ballu Choral Class" is the diary entry for October 20 and 27 and November 3.⁷

Boulanger was known for requiring students to work hard, and Peggy was productive, completing seven scores during 1937. Unfortunately, six of these are now lost—*Prelude and Scherzo* for orchestra, Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, String Quartet No. 1 (her only string quartet), Three Preludes for piano, a song, and a ballet for chamber orchestra titled *Postman's Knock* (after the painting *The Wedding Party* by Henri-Julien-Félix Rousseau, 1904–1905, in L'Orangerie, Paris).⁸ The surviving 1937 work is the five-movement *Choral Suite* for women's chorus SAA, oboe, and strings, to poems of John Fletcher (1579). Glanville-Hicks submitted it to the jury of the International Society of Contemporary Music; two movements were accepted for performance at the ISCM festival held in London in June 1938. The concert, broadcasted on the BBC, presented works of seven composers representing seven different countries and included Hungary's Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Austria's Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), and England's Benjamin Britten (1913–1976). It was Glanville-Hicks's first international performance, and the *Choral Suite* was the first Australian work performed at an ISCM festival. On the printed program, and for many years to come, she substituted "P." for her first name, employing a common strategy for women fearing gender discrimination. L'Oiseau-Lyre published the miniature score and released a live recording of the ISCM festival performance.⁹

Why was Boulanger reluctant to teach Glanville-Hicks? Interviewed for a documentary filmed shortly before her death, the younger woman recalled Boulanger saying, "I know from my sister, Lili, this is not a career for ladies." A life as a composer was too onerous or risky; women faced too many obstacles.¹⁰ Indeed, Murdoch notes, Boulanger readily accepted Stanley as a student, while Peggy had to wait another month afterward (until March 1937). Boulanger considered it impossible that a woman (or a man) should have a career in music along with marriage and children; she believed that a woman should only consider such a life after weighing and comparing "the joys of a family and the joys of a life dedicated to art"—her own choice being

the latter.¹¹ At the Colorado symposium cited above, several participants insisted that Boulanger treated women students no differently from men. Kendra Preston Leonard has reported that males were advised to take mistresses rather than marry and risk being distracted by family life. American composer and oboist Patricia Morehead recalls that after informing Boulanger that she was to be married to a fellow student, her private lessons were mostly given over to discussing her duties as a good wife.¹²

What did Peggy Glanville-Hicks learn from Nadia Boulanger? In 1990 she recalled that with Boulanger, “I wept bitterly, because she found all the things that were lacking and told me how to put them there. And so she was a tremendous teacher.”¹³ What her music lacked is not made clear. Glanville-Hicks may have been referring to any number of techniques or new ideas that then lay outside of her British training. In the *Choral Suite* one can find instances of contrapuntal textures and angular lines somewhat resembling gestures in the music of Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), whose music Boulanger championed.¹⁴ Glanville-Hicks evidently did not undertake the extensive training in keyboard harmony and counterpoint that other Boulanger students described—and demonstrated—at the AMRC’s 2004 symposium.

In a 1983 interview Glanville-Hicks gave a description of Boulanger’s teaching that has been echoed by many of her protégés: “She taught each composer to become what it was they potentially were.” Perhaps thinking of Stanley Bate’s experience, she noted that while Hindemith taught “technique only in terms of his style, producing school room after school room of little Hindemiths,” Boulanger was different. “Perhaps because she was a woman, she took quite a long time to find out what your own trends were, your inclinations, your feeling for style. And then she showed you technically how to get there.”¹⁵ In the 1980s, Aaron Copland (1900–1990), who studied with Boulanger in the 1920s, expressed similar views. He remembered that although it took courage for him as a young composer to decide to study composition with “a woman”—he maintained that there were no great women composers in history—Mlle Boulanger was “a terrific exception, not because she composed herself, but because she had that kind of sensitivity to music which could tell you . . . what the possibilities were of the sketches you brought to her. So you felt you were in very sure hands—hands that you could trust to guide you along the paths that were needed.”¹⁶

Yet this approach is not limited to female teachers nor was it the sole property of Boulanger. Vaughan Williams, Glanville-Hicks’s principal teacher, was described in the same terms by his student Elizabeth Maconchy (1907–1994):

His teaching, though he never said it in so many words, was always directed towards making his pupils think for themselves in their own musical language. He fully recognised the importance of an adequate technique, but for him the purpose of technique was how to give the clearest expression to the musical ideas of each individual composer in his [or her] own way.¹⁷

Furthermore, some of Boulanger's students felt they were being guided into "her own pet channels," as another of her American students in the 1920s, Virgil Thomson (1896–1989), put it. Her stylistic affinities were with Stravinsky (as noted earlier), her teacher Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), and her sister, Lili.

Was it Glanville-Hicks's idea or Boulanger's to discontinue the lessons after a few months? Murdoch speculates that Glanville-Hicks "felt she had acquired sufficient technique (perhaps more confidence than technique) to support her needs, and, with some clarity of thought, to achieve her own style."¹⁸ She returned to London, perhaps intending to stay. She made a visit home to Melbourne for three months in early 1938 and was quoted in the press about the superiority of English music. During 1938 she completed two film scores and *Sinfonietta No. 2*, and she and Stanley were among the six "young British composers" commissioned to write new recorder pieces for early music specialist and recorder virtuoso Carl Dolmetsch (1911–1997).

Peggy married Stanley in November 1938. He proved difficult to live with, and their relationship grew increasingly tumultuous, but for several years she enjoyed the role of muse to genius. Vaughan Williams, who had taught both of them, considered her as good a composer as Stanley. Yet she neglected her own career in his favor.¹⁹ Long after their divorce, Peggy continued to extol his music and recalled fondly his beautiful face and his lovable helplessness in practical matters.

When war broke out in 1939 and Boulanger went to America, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Bate remained in London. The next year they sailed to Australia, where Stanley played piano concerts and Peggy managed his career. Back in London, her piano "dropped three floors when her London home was blitzed" in the 1940–41 bombing raids, but (she later claimed) the instrument miraculously survived.²⁰ With England at war and Australia offering few employment prospects for the couple, Peggy began writing Boulanger in America, seeking work there for Stanley. When Boulanger turned up a lecturing appointment for him in Boston, Peggy used her family's contacts in Australia to procure passage. As she told the story, a U.S. immigration official inadvertently gave them a quota visa, making them eligible for permanent residency.²¹

After a few weeks in Boston, they moved to New York City in April. Peggy again wrote to Boulanger that “New York life is even more fantastic than I had anticipated,”²² and she continued asking their teacher to help her husband. “Peggy’s hubris on behalf of Stanley knew no bounds,” Murdoch writes. “When finally she recovered her wits about Stanley and struck out on her own, she had to overcome the resentment engendered by her tedious over-promotion of [him].”²³ Eventually he left America; she took U.S. citizenship in 1948 and divorced him in 1949. She later recalled, “Going to New York was like coming home! Having come from the ‘new world,’ it was much more my cup of tea [than Stanley’s]. After only a few months, I knew it was for me forever—or so I thought.”²⁴

In New York City during 1941, Peggy took a number of jobs to support herself and, for a few years, Stanley as well. In 1943 when she asked Boulanger for a letter of recommendation to make a fellowship application on her own behalf, Boulanger prevaricated.²⁵ Undaunted, Peggy gradually built her own network of useful contacts in the arts establishment, an ordinarily difficult process that she later described as ridiculously easy, given her previous acquaintance with Americans in France. “Two, three generations of American composers all went to Paris to Boulanger, so that when I finally lit out for America, it was sort of ‘come on in, welcome home!’ And it took no time at all, and was no trouble at all, to settle in there.”²⁶ Many American composers had found their way to Paris in 1937: David Diamond (1915–2005), Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990), Arthur Berger (1912–2003), and probably several others.²⁷ Once in New York, her principal contact was Virgil Thomson, music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*, who hired her as a stringer beginning with the 1947–48 concert season and became her close friend and confidant.

In 1944, three years before she began working at the *Herald Tribune*, she completed a set of *Five Songs*, her first new title since 1939, and resumed composing in earnest. Her goal (often stated in letters) was to build a respectable works list and earn some income from royalties. In 1945 she completed the *Concertino da camera*, for flute, clarinet, bassoon, and piano, in which she adopted a Stravinskian style in honor of Boulanger. The work was premiered in 1946, in a Melbourne radio broadcast organized by her father, who desperately wanted her to have a good recording to further her career. He told the Federal Controller of Music for the Australian Broadcast Corporation (apparently quoting his daughter) that Aaron Copland had seen the score and commended it.²⁸

The *Concertino da camera* was chosen for performance at the June 1948 ISCM festival in Amsterdam. The critic for the *Times* of London found the

work “pleasant,” while describing most of the other composers represented at the festival as “shipwrecked” in deep waters of stylistic “doubt and disillusionment” and clinging to “fragile rafts”—twelve-tone, polytonal, polyphonic, neo-classic, expressionist. Another London critic commented on its French “clarity, lightness, concision and simplicity” at a festival otherwise dominated by the “Teutonic tradition in decline.”²⁹ Peter Gradenwitz in the *New York Times* found the piece “entertaining.” H. H. Stuckenschmidt in *Musical America* wrote that it reflected the weaknesses of the Boulanger school and a misunderstanding of Stravinsky.³⁰ An Amsterdam critic judged it not “modern” enough for the festival, though noting that it was a “success” with the audience³¹—always an important consideration for Glanville-Hicks. She also reviewed the festival, apart from her own piece, for *Musical America* and in a Sunday feature for the *Herald Tribune*.

In October 1948, in her first public concert in New York, the *Concertino* was performed at a Composers’ Forum program, along with her song cycles *Profiles from China* (1945) and *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (1948). Each forum featured two composers, some of them fairly untried (Glanville-Hicks was paired with Irwin A. Bazelon [1922–1995]); performances were followed by audience questions and discussion. In his review, Arthur Berger, a fellow composer and *Herald Tribune* colleague, suggested that she was “in a transitional stage of reviewing the many directions open to one today in order to give greater depth to her creative approach.”³²

L’Oiseau-Lyre published the *Concertino* in 1950. In 1955 Glanville-Hicks organized a recording of the work for an LP in Columbia’s American music series. In her liner notes she writes that the *Concertino* “was my swan-song” as a student, “the last of my works which show traces of the Paris neoclassic schoolroom.” Actually she produced one further piece, a parody titled “Stravinsky” in *Thomsoniana* (1949), settings of five excerpts from Thomson’s *Herald Tribune* concert reviews in the respective styles of the people being reviewed; scored for soprano or tenor, flute, horn, piano, and string quartet, the work was a birthday present for Thomson.³⁴ In August 1950 Glanville-Hicks traveled to Colorado for a performance of *Thomsoniana* at the Colorado College Summer Music Festival, which that year featured works by and about Thomson, who attended as well. The *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* called the piece the “biggest surprise of the evening.”

Although Glanville-Hicks continued to consider the *Concertino da camera* as one of her best works, by 1955, when she wrote the liner notes, she felt she had thrown off the layers of training and expertise³⁵—including Boulanger’s—to fashion her own personal style. She now regarded neoclassicism, with atonalism, as reactions against nineteenth-century tonality and diaton-

ic harmonies, as unpromising directions for the future. Instead, as might be expected from a world traveler, she adopted a variety of ancient and non-Western ideas, including a “melody-rhythm” structure, suggested to her by the *raga* and *tala* systems of India; unusual percussion instruments; and traditional melodic idioms from Spain, Morocco, North America, Greece, and elsewhere. Her harmony, “demoted” from its Romantic prominence, is mostly consonant and modal, features she attributed to Vaughan Williams’ influence. The real avant-garde composers, she wrote, were those who, like her, were discovering new sound materials and exploring new musical paths.³⁶

From the 1940s through the late 1960s, besides composing, Glanville-Hicks wrote hundreds of concert reviews and magazine articles. She managed the New York Composers’ Forum. She contributed most of the entries on American composers in the fifth edition of Grove’s *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1954). She knew whom to approach and cultivate for funding. “Fame and widespread importance have much to do with luck and management, and not necessarily to do with quality and magnitude, when it comes to serious music,” she observed in 1956.³⁷ Though in public statements she made light of the sexual discrimination Boulanger warned her about, Thomson wrote that Glanville-Hicks “believed, upon some evidence, that the world was out to crush women composers.”³⁸ To avoid being categorized as an inferior species, she avoided association with other women, including composers, and worked almost exclusively with and on behalf of men.

By the 1960s, quite exhausted by her struggles in New York City, she had moved to Greece, where she could live well for less and thus have more time to compose music. She maintained her American contacts and secured more American commissions and grants; she wrote two operas set in ancient Greek and several ballets. Then, in the late 1960s, on a visit to New York for a premiere of one of her works, she underwent surgery for a brain tumor, after which she composed almost nothing. In 1975 James Murdoch, founder of the Australian Music Centre in Sydney, persuaded her to return to Australia. She moved into a lovely house in Paddington, Sydney, Murdoch appointed her the AMC’s Asian music liaison, and for fifteen years she enjoyed the status of celebrated expatriate now returned. Since her death her Paddington home has been held in trust as a Composers’ House, which each year offers an emerging composer a year’s residency.

So what is to be made of Peggy Glanville-Hicks’s 1948 “hymn of praise,” to use Murdoch’s term, for Nadia Boulanger? On first reading it seems a simple statement of fact, albeit a particularly eloquent and dramatic one. Glanville-Hicks imagines Boulanger building a pyramid of Old World tradi-

tions “stone by stone” in the New World, describes her as a “meeting point” for the international avant-garde, and cites the “musical purity and integrity” and “spiritual lights” that Boulanger gives her students. Perhaps Boulanger was on her mind in 1948 as her Parisian work *Concertino da camera* made its way into the larger concert world. She could guess that Boulanger would hear of or see her comments in print and be reminded of her. Perhaps Boulanger would come to recognize her not only as a “good wife,” but also as a legitimate composer.

In managing to be accepted as a student by Boulanger, who accepted few women and even fewer Australians, Glanville-Hicks became part of a select group and, through new professional contacts, was able to advance in her career. Most of all, Boulanger evidently inspired her in an almost mystical way. Boulanger occupied a unique space in her life—as one of very few musical women whom Glanville-Hicks even deigned to acknowledge, let alone praise. And Glanville-Hicks may have felt sympathy for her as a woman, as well as admiration for her as a musician. If Glanville-Hicks was the exceptional woman who composed good music, Boulanger was the exceptional teacher.

NOTES

An earlier version of this essay, “Nadia Boulanger’s Influence on Peggy Glanville-Hicks,” was read at the University of Colorado Boulder, the American Music Research Center’s Fourth Triennial Symposium, *Nadia Boulanger and American Music*, 8 October 2004.

¹ Lisa Cook has updated Bruce Brown’s 1974 list of American composers in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd ed., 2001) who studied with Nadia Boulanger, www.nadiaboulanger.org/nb/amstudents.html. Many of her American students are not in *The New Grove*.

² Glanville-Hicks (in New York City), letter to Luiz Heitor Correa de Azevedo (in Paris), 17 September 1948, quoted by James Murdoch in an email to the author 15 March 1995. Glanville-Hicks typed her letters and kept a carbon copy.

³ Angela Wollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), discusses Glanville-Hicks as one among tens of thousands.

⁴ Murdoch, *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Transposed Life*. *Lives in Music*, no. 5. (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 23; the letter is in the Boulanger Archive, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Murdoch’s title refers to Glanville-Hicks’s opera *The Transposed Heads* and to her lifelong practice of “transposing” herself from continent to continent.

⁵ The lyrebird is among Australia’s unique fauna.

⁶ Murdoch, 22–24. A *pneumatique* is a printed message sent in a capsule through subterranean tubes; propulsion is by compressed air or by suction creating a vacuum.

⁷ Suzanne Robinson, email message to the author, 16 September 2012; Victoria Rogers, *The Music of Peggy Glanville-Hicks* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 35–6. Rogers dismisses Glanville-Hicks's tale of an 11:00 p.m. lesson as fanciful. Robinson thinks it unlikely but does not rule out that Boulanger may have taught at that hour.

⁸ Suzanne Robinson's definitive list of Glanville-Hicks's works is linked from www.conservatorium.unimelb.edu.au/PGH. The website also links to Robinson's updates of the bibliography and discography from Deborah Hayes, *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990).

⁹ L'Oiseau-lyre OL-100, 1940, a 78 rpm ten-inch disc with the BBC Singers, Boyd Neel Orchestra, with Adrian Boult, conductor. Recorded live by on 20 June 1938.

¹⁰ Glanville-Hicks, interviewed in documentary film *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Modern Odyssey* (Sydney: Juniper Films, 1991).

¹¹ Boulanger, quoted by Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1982), 101.

¹² Kendra Preston Leonard, "'Excellence in Execution' and 'Fitness for Teaching': Assessments of Women at the Conservatoire Américain," *Women and Music* 11 (2007): 43. She quotes from Morehead, "An Interview with IAWM President Patricia Morehead," *Journal of the IAWM* 9 (2003).

¹³ Glanville-Hicks, documentary film *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Modern Odyssey* (Sydney: Juniper Films, 1991).

¹⁴ Rogers, 38–45.

¹⁵ Glanville-Hicks, interview by Diana Ritch, 6 July 1983, Sydney; transcription in the Australian National Library, Canberra.

¹⁶ Copland, interviewed by Cole Gagne and Tracy Caras, *Soundpieces: Interviews with American Composers* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1982), 112–13.

¹⁷ Maconchy, "Vaughan Williams as a Teacher," *Composer* 2 (March 1959): 19; quoted by Erica Siegel in "'I'm not making this up, you know!' The success of Vaughan Williams's students in America," paper for the North American British Music Studies Association 5th Biennial Conference, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 26–28 July 2012.

¹⁸ Murdoch, 24.

¹⁹ Murdoch, 38.

²⁰ Glanville-Hicks, interviewed by Liz Hickson, "Peggy Glanville-Hicks: Operas are Her Children," *Woman's Day* (Australia), 8 September 1986: 8-9.

²¹ Murdoch, 37.

²² Quoted by Murdoch, 38.

²³ Murdoch, 38.

²⁴ Glanville-Hicks, in *A Modern Odyssey*. 1991.

²⁵ Suzanne Robinson, "On the Auto/Biography of Peggy Glanville-Hicks: Telling a Life—Or Lies?" *Australasian Music Research* 4 (1999):105, refers to a letter dated 9 October 1943, in the Nadia Boulanger Papers, Bibliothèque Nationale.

²⁶ Glanville-Hicks, interviewed by Ritch, July 1986.

²⁷ Robinson, in a personal communication with the author, 16 September 2012, observes that access to Boulanger's diaries would be needed to make a complete list.

²⁸ Suzanne Robinson, "Four Cheers for Glanville-Hicks: A Survey of Her Australian Reception to 1975," *Australasian Music Research* 8 (2004): 11.

²⁹ Desmond Shawe-Taylor, "New Music in Amsterdam," *New Statesman and Nation* (London) 35, no. 903 (26 June 1948), 519.

³⁰ H. H. Stuckenschmidt, "Amsterdam Host to I. S. C. M.," *Musical America* 68 (August 1948), 6.

³¹ Bertus Van Lier, "Muziekfeest I. S. C. M., Tweede en laatste Kamermuziekavond," *Het Parool* (Amsterdam), 11 June 1948, 3.

³² Berger, "Composers Forum Gives First Concert of the Season," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1948, 13.

³³ Carlo Bussotti, piano; New York Woodwind Ensemble; Carlos Surinach, conductor; Columbia LP disc ML 4990 (1955).

³⁴ *Thomsoniana* is reprinted in *Soundings* 14–15 (Santa Fe, NM, 1986): 195–223. The text is from Thomson's 1948 review of a performance of Stravinsky's music conducted by the composer and Robert Craft. *Thomsoniana* has been recorded by Linda June Snyder, soprano, with University of Dayton instrumentalists, Equilibrium CD EQ15 (1998).

³⁵ Glanville-Hicks describes the process in these terms in the documentary film *A Modern Odyssey*.

³⁶ Glanville-Hicks, "Musical Explorers: Six Americans Who Are Changing the Musical Vocabulary," *Vogue* 116 (16 November 1950): 112–13, 134, 137, 139, discusses John Cage (1912–1992), Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000), Colin McPhee (1900–1964), Paul Bowles (1910–1999), Lou Harrison (1917–2003, and Edgard Varèse (1883–1965). In April 1959 she praised Harry Partch (1901–1974) on the same grounds in a long letter published in the *New York Times*. In a 1948 essay Glanville-Hicks was one of the first to recognize Cage's importance, according to Robinson, "Homage to a Non-Harmonic Genius: Glanville-Hicks on Cage," *Musicology Australia* 28 (2007): 1.

³⁷ Glanville-Hicks, "'Willie' Has a Silver Spoon." *Hi-Fi Music at Home* 2 (January–February 1956): 24.

³⁸ Thomson, *Virgil Thomson* (New York: Knopf, 1966), 344–45.

Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ

By Mark Katz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Mark Katz's *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of hip-hop. The book will find a broader audience as well because Katz grounds his history in the stories of real people, leading their real lives, yet he balances these specific, personal details with the description of large, cultural shifts. In the introduction, he clearly expresses the goal of *Groove Music*: "The purpose of this book is to chronicle and investigate the rise of a new type of musician—the DJ—who developed a new musical instrument—the turntable—and in doing so helped create a new type of music: hip-hop" (p. 5).

The eight chapters of the book are organized chronologically, and Katz moves from one chapter to the next when DJs take on new functions within the context of hip-hop. Chapter 1 features DJs who repeat the "breaks" of records for teenage dancers in the Bronx. The historic shift to turntables as musical instruments, when DJs develop techniques such as scratching and needle dropping, is explored in chapter 2. Chapter 3 recounts a time when emcees gained national attention, often at the expense of their DJs. Katz discusses a generation of influential Philadelphia DJs and the establishment of national and international DJ competitions, or "battles," in chapter 4. Chapter 5 focuses on the techniques and philosophies of some performative DJs, especially Filipino DJs in the San Francisco Bay area, and how their practices developed into turntablism, a movement that operates largely independently of both dancers and emcees. One niche aspect of DJing, the DJ battle, happens when artists experiment with technique and stars are born, and battles are the subject of chapter 6. Chapter 7 recalls a time when vinyl record scratching goes mainstream, appearing in such disparate places as Gap commercials and Carnegie Hall, and a scratch notation system develops. Chapter 8 revolves around (no pun intended) the turn of the twenty-first century, when analog technologies finally give way to digital, Katz earns his diploma from a scratch academy, and women play a more central role on the hip-hop DJ scene.

One of the strengths of *Groove Music* is Katz's ability to advance the plot of DJ history while simultaneously interlacing several historical subplots. With a slightly different emphasis, the book could have become a history of scratching techniques—from the baby scratch to beat juggling to “the brainsplitter”—or of hip-hop DJs' gear—from home stereo equipment to specialized needles and mixers to Serato, computer software for digital DJing. Although the founders of hip-hop and the best-known DJs are all men, a major subplot that appears throughout *Groove Music* traces the roles of women artists. Katz devotes a section near the end of the book exclusively to women, especially Kuttin Kandi and Shortee (pp. 241–264), but women are part of the story all along. Readers learn about such women as rappers Sha-Rock (pp. 22, 75) and Lady B (p. 101); early DJ Baby Dee (p. 22); half a dozen battlers, including Jazzy Joyce, Pam the Funkstress, and DJ Sparkles (pp. 103, 160, 171, 177); composer of turntable music Nicole Lizée (pp. 207–208); and DJ Killa-Jewel, who, among her several contributions to hip-hop, now trains new female DJs in scratch classes (p. 235). Even in the well-known, hallowed origin story of hip-hop—Kool Herc's first party as DJ, held 11 August 1973 (to be precise, at 9 o'clock in the evening, at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue)—Katz emphasizes the role of women. Cindy Campbell, Herc's sister, organized the party, and a hand-drawn invitation, shown in the book's Figure 1.2, lists her (“Cindy C.”) as one of the party's special guests (pp. 17–19).

Although the book contains a good deal of history and biography, Katz draws on his background as a musicologist to address musical specifics as well. Readers learn on pp. 24–25, for example, some of the sonic characteristics shared by early breaks, even though the songs that contain these breaks may not sound at all alike on the surface. In a later chapter, Katz offers a close reading of one of DJ Steve Dee's battle routines, including a transcription of Steve's “wordplay,” the technique of altering the lyrics of one or more records by mixing certain words in or out. In this routine, Steve chops up the line “This is how it should be done,” and then demonstrates beat juggling, his signature technique. At one point Steve “slows the tempo from about 112 to 76 beats per minute while changing the rhythm from straight eighth notes to a swung pattern of dotted eighth and sixteenth notes” (pp. 118–119). In other words, this musically rich display of DJ virtuosity is “how it should be done.”

Katz borrows a number of useful terms from Western art music to focus his analysis. For example, he describes DJ Shadow's approach to “The Number Song” as “composerly” because Shadow uses the technique of “stating a theme, varying it, departing from it, and then returning to it” (p. 196). He compares *Wave Twisters*—DJ Qbert's 1998 album and the soundtrack for a 2001

film of the same title—to opera, even going so far as to refer to some of the tracks as recitatives or arias (pp. 186–187). Earlier in the book, Katz describes a battle routine that Grand Wizzard Theodore performed in handcuffs. “Theodore won by handicapping himself. He showed the crowd that he was so skilled that he could beat his opponents even when he was handcuffed” (p. 50). Is this so different from a young Mozart playing keyboard blindfolded, or violin virtuoso Paganini performing with one (or more) broken strings? Similarly, Katz describes how Mix Master Mike and DJ Qbert learned new DJing techniques by imitating the most advanced practitioners of the art (p. 139), a pedagogical method that composers of art music—and indeed all art forms in many cultures—have employed for centuries. Katz’s descriptions of hours of solitary scratching or of an exacting mentor (p. 170) will sound familiar to anyone who’s spent much time in a practice room or worked with an applied music instructor. Like music courses in colleges across the country, scratch academies have homework; teachers correct performance deficiencies such as poor scratching posture; and students who do well earn a diploma. Referring to the 2005 premiere of a Raúl Yañez’s *Concerto for Turntables*, Katz writes, “It may have only been ten miles between Carnegie Hall and the birthplace of hip-hop, but the trip took nearly thirty years” (p. 205).

Most of Katz’s research comes from interviews he conducted, and his subjects’ different versions of history are filled with inconsistencies. Katz resolves some of these discrepancies through additional research whenever possible, but when he is unable to resolve them, he presents the conflicting versions of a story and points out the contradictions, without pretending to reveal a series of incontrovertible truths; instead, he lets the messiness of faulty memories, missing documentation, and human pride show through. For instance, Katz considers evidence that at least six DJs deserve credit for inventing the technique of beat juggling. The easy solution would simply be to credit DJ Steve Dee, the innovator most sources recognize. Rather than artificially resolving the question in this way, however, Katz frames the competing claims as the “tension between individual and community. . . . It is the community that decides who gets credit for bringing a new technique to the world. The process by which these decisions are rendered is complex, rarely unanimous, and never truly final” (p. 120). Similarly, Katz describes the 1991 DMC (Disco Mix Club) World DJ Championship battle between DJs David and Qbert. In a controversial decision, the judges selected David as the winner, but for Katz, the story doesn’t end there. He writes, “Look at the hundreds of comments accompanying the YouTube videos, and even after twenty years there’s no clear consensus” (p. 158). The history of this event is still

evolving among the community of hundreds of thousands who have watched, are watching, and will watch the footage on YouTube.

At times, Katz revises earlier hip-hop histories significantly. To cite just one example, in his *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, author Jeff Chang groups Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash as “the three kings, the trinity of hip-hop music.”¹ Katz, by contrast, puts Herc and Bam together, in chapter 1, but he discusses Flash in later chapters, explaining, “First, Herc and Bam came earlier, and had been spinning for at least two years when Flash arrived on the scene. Second, Flash’s approach to DJing was markedly different—not only an extension of what came before but also a reaction *against* it” (emphasis original, p. 51). By dethroning one of “the three kings,” Katz demotes Flash, but only somewhat; he gives Flash plenty of credit for looping and clock theory, among other innovations, and Katz provides a richly detailed musical description of Flash’s “The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel,” which he calls “the DJs’ Declaration of Independence” (p. 83). Rather than denigrating Flash, then, Katz’s reorganization clarifies and bolsters the position of the DJ that Katz discusses alongside Flash, Grand Wizzard Theodore. Although Theodore—the inventor of scratching and needle dropping—is only a minor character in Chang’s book, Katz places him next to Flash, in a seat of honor.

Katz supports his thoughtful historiography with compelling writing. While cultural theories underlie his work—see especially his discussion of the constructed nature of technology (p. 9), anti-essentialism (pp. 9, 147), sound studies (pp. 34, 39), and an individual’s agency in determining history (pp. 9, 23, 41, 65)—he keeps academic jargon to a minimum. Like a good joke teller, Katz often constructs his writing to give maximum impact to the punch line, and he obviously cares deeply about his interview subjects. Describing DJ Qbert, who has won multiple DJing world championships, Katz writes, “I can’t think of another equally accomplished musician, whether DJ, rock guitarist, or concert violinist, whose home, techniques, and practice sessions are so freely open to others” (p. 145). In the middle of chapter 6, Katz varies his approach by imagining a composite story of an American DJ preparing for battle (pp. 166–175). It’s a surprising and refreshing change of presentation, and although fictional, it succeeds in vividly painting a portrait of what a year in the life of a battle DJ might be like. Katz also allows his sense of humor to show in a few passages. For instance, Katz addresses the apparent discontinuity between himself, “a not-exactly young, not-exactly-hip white guy with a Ph.D. in musicology,” and the hip, underground musical culture he studies in this book. He deadpans, “I’m cooler than I look” (p. 5).

Later, he advises readers to “Try this experiment at home, or better yet, at someone else’s home” before he goes on to describe destroying records and needles (p. 128).

A memorable and haunting passage revolves around DJ Shadow’s award-winning album *Endtroducing . . .* (1996). In the documentary film *Scratch*, Shadow describes digging through crates of records at a record store in Sacramento. He says,

Digging is much more than just the acquisition of records—it involves unending hours of listening, ears open to every possibility. . . . you’re looking through all these records and it’s sort of like a big pile of broken dreams, in a way. Almost none of these artists still have a career. . . . Ten years down the line, you’ll be in here—so keep that in mind when you start thinking, like, ‘Oh yeah, I’m invincible and I’m the world’s best,’ or whatever. Because that’s what all these cats thought (pp. 197–198).

Using this quotation to set up his analysis, Katz then describes “Building Steam with a Grain of Salt,” Shadow’s track that samples “I Feel a New Shadow” by Jeremy Storch. Katz writes, “The one-time philandering addict Jeremy Storch surely thought he was invincible, only to end up largely unknown and nearly dead, his fading musical traces buried in great piles of moldering vinyl” (p. 198). For readers seeking a gateway into DJ music, “Building Steam with a Grain of Salt” is the song I recommend.

The figures in the text clearly illustrate major arguments well. For example, Katz discusses how the Cross Bronx Expressway “displaced thousands of residents” and left heavy traffic and resultant noise in its wake. Figure 1.6 is a map showing the path of the Expressway and its relation to various hip-hop landmarks in the Bronx, and Figure 1.7 is a photograph that elucidates just how much traffic he means (pp. 37–38). These figures visually prove Katz’s points. Similarly, Katz suggests that in the late 1970s, emcees became more prominent, whereas DJs became less prominent. He illustrates this transition with Figures 3.1 and 3.2. Figure 3.1 shows an emcee rapping next to a centralized DJ, as if the emcee is the DJ’s sidekick. Figure 3.2 shows five emcees at the front of the stage; the DJ stands so far behind them that he’s not pictured at all (pp. 70–73).

Small speaker icons appear throughout *Groove Music* to indicate the presence of supplemental materials on the book’s free companion website. The companion site provides significant added value to the text, with approximately one hundred audio or visual examples. The book describes the site but does not provide its web address—a strange oversight—nor the pass-

word needed to access it—probably omitted intentionally so that the password can be changed. The site is hosted by Oxford University Press, at www.oup.com/us/groovemusic, and fortunately, it provides instructions to crack the password. While the majority of items on the site link to videos on YouTube, there are also audio or video examples on other websites, customized Google Maps, and photographs, often taken by the author. A few of the items are especially remarkable, such as Item 2.3, a YouTube video of Grand Wizzard Theodore demonstrating the extremely delicate technique of needle dropping, or Item 3.2, a treasure trove of hundreds of hip-hop fliers from the 1980s.

The site has much to recommend it, although I would have liked to see it organized a bit differently. Each resource on the site has an item number. The first digit refers to the relevant chapter in the book, and subsequent digits refer to the item's order within the chapter. For example, the second resource in chapter 5 is Item 5.2. Usually a single item number refers to a single resource; where an item number refers to multiple resources, the resources are organized alphabetically. This organizational scheme is not intuitively obvious because the item numbers do not appear in the text at all, and if, for example, one visits the site to hear "classic breaks," Item 1.1, she finds twenty examples listed in alphabetical order, rather than the order in which Katz discusses them. Organizing the resources by page number would be more helpful for readers because it would more strongly connect the companion website to the text.

One of the principal benefits of an online resource is simultaneously one of its main drawbacks: it can change instantaneously. YouTube videos in particular are notorious for appearing and disappearing with frustrating regularity. When I first started using the site, I noticed a small error, and I emailed Oxford's customer service to suggest a correction. Within twenty-four hours, I received a kind response thanking me for my feedback and noting that the correction had been made. At the time that I completed my review of the site, twenty-two links were nonfunctional. While I have complete confidence that Oxford will fix all of these links, others will surely break in the future. Therefore, the companion website will require ongoing efforts to maintain its functionality, but given the excellent resources assembled on the site, it's worth the trouble.

My criticisms of the book are few and mostly slight. Katz's history sometimes seems overly romantic, and he occasionally sidesteps moral or legal questions. For example, Katz infers the motivation of DJs to be "imagination and ingenuity, drive and desire, turntables and records, and above all, music"

(p. 41). But this view masks the potential for some DJs to have less altruistic motivations, such as money, fame, or sex. When he attributes more violence to 1990s hip-hop than to 1970s hip-hop (pp. 48–49), Katz glosses over the early DJs who stole their first turntables and mixers, the armed crews needed to protect the equipment, victorious battle DJs who damaged or looted as spoils their vanquished opponents' equipment, and, rarely, serious criminal convictions. And in his discussion of battle organizer Tony Prince's business of making and selling cassette tapes (p. 111), Katz fails to mention that Prince, among many others, apparently violated copyright law. In chapters 7 and 8, a few sections read a bit too much like lists and not enough like stories or arguments. These sections only stand out because the rest of the book is so keenly focused.

Like Katz's last book dealing with music and technology,² *Groove Music* will likely succeed with both critics and general readers alike. In the Acknowledgments (p. vii), Katz writes that the book is for hip-hop DJs. But he's wrong about that; it will capture a much larger audience. As he concludes, "The broad strokes of the DJ's story illuminate the condition of modern musicians in general, who must invent and reinvent themselves in order to make their way in a world of rapidly changing technologies, media, and tastes" (p. 253). Strongly recommended.

Reviewed by Joseph R. Matson

NOTES

¹ Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 90.

² Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

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