A Note on Music Imagined

Philadelphia’s Musical Legacy
by Marjorie Hassen

The New Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: First Impressions
by Mark Germer

Compiled by the Music Library Staff

Mark Germer: Music Librarian
Lars Halle & Aaron Meicht: Circulation Supervisors
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References are common to the sustained-often explicit-literary inspiration that lies at the heart of numerous musical works in the Western canon, from absoute Berlioz’s *Harold en Italie* to Britten’s *Metamorphoses*. Composers are assumed to have assimilated the texts they set in songs, choruses, and operas, mining them for the opportunities they present for musical expression and formal coherence. But there is an equally diverse and extensive tradition of exploring musical themes, including the very meaning of human music-making itself, in Western literature.

The musical components of the short stories of E.T.A. Hoffmann—praised in his day as both a writer and a composer—are well appreciated, if remembered now mainly thanks to the dramatization of three tales in a comic opera by Offenbach. But the use of fiction as a peg on which to hang meditations on style in music, the nature of creativity, or the role of the musician in society reaches back at least to the philosopher Denis Diderot (in *Le Neveu de Rameau*, of ca. 1760) through the poet Eduard Morike (*Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*, 1855) to Romain Rolland’s *Jean-Christophe* (a work of 1916 that won its author the Nobel Prize) and Franz Werfel’s *Verdi* (1924, rev. 1930)—the last of which has even been given partial credit for the rebirth of interest in a hitherto neglected musical genius. Perhaps the most infamous example of musical fiction is Thomas Mann’s imagining of a modernist composer’s struggles in his late masterwork *Doktor Faustus* (1947), which earned for Mann something less than the gratitude of Schoenberg.

With these intersections in mind, the UA Music Library has begun a modest effort to identify and acquire worthy literary works that demonstrate the fascination with music on the part of contemporary fiction writers, especially when they have interacted in some notable way with the history of music. Among modern works with powerful commentaries on matters musical are Thomas Bernhard’s fictionalized remembrances of Glenn Gould (*The Loser*, 1983); Michael Ondaatje’s attempt to account for one of jazz’s mysterious founders, Buddy Bolden (*Coming Through Slaughter*, 1976); and Herbert Simmons’s evocation of a figure resembling Miles Davis (*Man Walking on Eggshells*, 1962). There are more to be (re)discovered. One new work, Vikram Seth’s *An Equal Music* (1999) will even be issued in conjunction with a compact disc containing music that plays a role in the novel’s plot!
Pennsylvania’s Quaker settlers had little interest in music; it was, rather, William Penn’s hospitality to other religious groups that ensured the establishment of a musical life in the Colony. From its early days the most populous city, Philadelphia sheltered a thriving community of immigrant musicians, and over the course of the eighteenth century, as musical performances extended from the church to the concert hall, the city became one of the principal centers of music in the New World.

Public subscription concerts were presented in Philadelphia as early as 1757, organized chiefly through the efforts of a native son, Francis Hopkinson. Hopkinson was a member of the first graduating class of what was then the College of Philadelphia—later the University of Pennsylvania. A lawyer by profession and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, he was also an accomplished amateur harpsichordist, organist, and composer. His Seven Songs for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano, published in Philadelphia in 1788, includes a dedication to George Washington, in which the composer asserts, “I cannot, I believe, be refused the credit of being the first native of the United States who has produced a musical composition.” The Library’s copy of this publication was Hopkinson’s own—a gift of the patriot’s direct descendent, Edward Hopkinson Jr.—and is part of a sixteen-volume collection presented to the University between 1948 and 1950.

The Hopkinson Collection, as it has come to be known, includes printed and manuscript music amassed primarily by Francis (1737-1791), but also by his grandson Oliver (1812-1905). At the heart of the collection are three volumes of holograph music manuscripts, copied by Francis Hopkinson for his own library: a songbook fragment containing sixteen works primarily for voice and keyboard (dated 1755 in Hopkinson’s hand); forty-six works for keyboard (copied ca. 1763); and a volume of 115 Lessons for keyboard (copied ca. 1764). It is unknown whether Hopkinson himself was responsible for the many arrangements that are present in these volumes, but it is clear, given the breadth of the collection, that he was familiar with the forms and styles of European vocal and instrumental music of his day. His transcriptions include popular dance and march tunes as well.
as works by the leading English and Continental composers of the eighteenth century, among them Karl Friedrich Abel, Thomas Arne, Arcangelo Corelli, Francesco Geminiani, George Frideric Handel, Johann Adolf Hasse, Domenico Scarlatti, John Stanley, and Johann Stamitz.

These manuscript volumes are supplemented by thirteen volumes of printed music that preserve an extraordinary compilation of contemporaneous American and European editions. Here too, nearly all the important composers of the eighteenth century are represented. Among the works that date from the elder Hopkinson's time are several Handel oratorios, arranged for voice, harpsichord and violin (London, 1784), and the solo string parts of some fifty concerti grossi of Domenico Alberti, Corelli, Geminiani, and Antonio Vivaldi (London, ca. 1730), which were performed by Hopkinson and his friends at concerts in Penn's College Hall during his student years.

A “gentleman amateur” of high social standing, Hopkinson frequently joined with immigrant European professionals in both private and public music performances, a circumstance illustrative, in Richard Crawford's words, of “the partipatory atmosphere of music-making in colonial Philadelphia” (see the article on Hopkinson in The New Grove Dictionary of American Music (1986), v. 2, p. 421). This atmosphere continued into the early years of the nineteenth century and was the impetus behind the establishment, in 1820, of the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia by a group of professional and amateur musicians—still held today to be the oldest American music benevolent society in continuous existence.

The musical climate in Philadelphia at the time of the Society's founding was engagingly described by the organization's first Secretary, the attorney and amateur musician, John K. Kane. Looking back from the midpoint of the century, he remembered:

*The state of music in those days, and musical taste!--Hupfeldt used to give his “Annual Concert,” the crack musical phenomenon of the year, at which he annually played his Concerto by Kreutzer, while the ladies chatted and laughed in ancient tea-party fashion, and gentlemen stood upon the benches with their hats on, or walked round the room to exchange compliments and retail the last joke.*

Yet we had our Quartette party, - three violins, all professional except Dr. La Roche, - a tenor or two, - and a couple of basses; ... and we used to meet round at each others' houses of a Saturday night, fifteen or eighteen of us, to hear Haydn, Mozart, Boccherini, sometimes to boggle over Beethoven, and then to eat crackers and cheese, and drink porter or homoeopathic doses of sloppy hot punch. We were a delightful little club, the elite of the time, and the veritable germ of the Musical Fund.

*(From The Autobiography of the Honorable John K. Kane, 1795-1858 [Philadelphia 1949], entry for 20 Jan. 1849)*
The Society developed out of these “quartette parties,” adopting as its objectives “the relief of decayed musicians and their families, and the cultivation of skill and diffusion of taste in music.” And while its formal documents indicate that benevolent work was foremost in the minds of the Society’s founders, the level of musical activity within the organization throughout the first half of the nineteenth century suggests that its focus was in large measure the promotion of concerts.

The significant role played by the Musical Fund Society in the growth of musical performance in Philadelphia, particularly over the course of the nineteenth century, is documented in its archives. Donated to the Library in 1991, this material offers unique insight into Philadelphia’s cultural milieu and includes minute books, engagement books, concert programs, and papers from the Society’s 1820 founding through the present. Also preserved is an extensive collection of manuscript and published music, dating primarily from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth, much of it used for performance in Society concerts.

Maintained originally by the Society in its offices, the music collections were placed on deposit in the Free Library of Philadelphia in 1936, although ownership remained with the Society. The minute books, papers, and other historic documents were divided between the Society’s offices in Philadelphia and a bank vault until 1952, when the Society vacated its offices. At that time some of this material was deposited with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In 1986 the items held in the Society’s bank vault were relocated to the Free Library of Philadelphia and, in 1991, the complete collection (excluding the materials held by the Historical Society) was donated by the Society to the University of Pennsylvania Library.

The documents that comprise what is known as the Records of the Musical Fund Society provide unique details about nineteenth-century Philadelphia’s musical life and its active participants. The tenets of the Musical Fund’s founding members, who viewed the organization as a framework within which Philadelphia’s musical elite could “reform the state of neglect into which the beautiful art of music had fallen” (from the report of 1831), became, in turn, the Society’s formal objectives. The most celebrated member of this group of “musical elite” was arguably the composer, organist, and music publisher Benjamin Carr, whose description of 1820 Philadelphia as “very barren of any thing like public spirit as it relates to music” (from a letter in the John Rowe Parker correspondence in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library), goes hand in hand with John Kane’s comments, noted above. Among the other founders of the Society were the composer, ‘cellist, and music teacher George Schetky who, with Carr, edited the *Musical Journal for the Piano Forte*, the first major American music publication in magazine form; the composer, organist, conductor, and singer, Benjamin Cross, who was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a student of Benjamin Carr, and who later (in 1841) conducted the first American performance of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*; and Thomas Loud, of the piano manufacturing firm Loud and Brothers, which was
among the most prolific in America, producing close to 600 pianos annually.

Members were classified, upon acceptance into the Society, as either “professional” or “amateur,” with the former category entitled to “relief” benefits in the manner of a monthly allowance when “disabled by age, sickness, or any other infirmity from attending to business.” Not until 1939 was the “professional” category of membership abolished, when the Society turned its attention exclusively to the goal of “promoting a sound and critical musical taste in the community.”

Engaged in an extraordinary level of musical activity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the Society gave eighty-six “regular” concerts, as well as a number of special performances, between 1821 and 1857, with professional members serving as the foundation of the Society’s Orchestra and Chorus. Often elaborate affairs requiring large forces of instrumentalists and singers, the programs usually combined works of the leading European composers of the day with those of local composers. Much of this music was new to American audiences and the Society’s concert programs boasted a number of Philadelphia or United States premieres of works by, among others, Beethoven, Rossini, Mozart, and the Philadelphia composer Henry Fry, whose 1845 opera Leonora—considered to be the first grand opera by a North American composer—was premiered under the auspices of the Musical Fund.

To support its performance activities, the Society began almost immediately to build a music library. The minutes of the May 1820 meeting of the Directors, in fact—just three months after the Society was established—includes a resolution to create a committee to “procure such music as they consider necessary for the use of the Society” (from Minutes of the Directors for May 1820). From this date through the middle of the century, a substantial sum would be spent for printed music, as well as for hand-copying music that was unavailable for purchase. Great quantities of orchestral and chamber music were imported from the firm C.F. Peters in Leipzig and, when only a score was available, individual instrumental parts were hand-copied. On other occasions a score would be made from the purchased printed parts. The society also made copies of performance materials borrowed from such organizations as the Handel and Haydn Society of New York and the Moravian Brethren in Bethlehem. The result is a collection rich in first and early published editions of music as well as in contemporaneous manuscript copies that document the performance history of the Society.

Also counted among the Society’s holdings are two distinct sheet music collections acquired in the 1930s: the Edward I. Keffer Collection of American sheet music and the Newland-Zeuner Collection. Edward Iungerich Keffer (1861-1933), Vice president of the Society from 1927 until his death, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine in 1883. For fifty years he was one of Philadelphia’s most devoted music patrons, taking a leading role in the formation of the Philadelphia Orchestra. As an accomplished amateur violinist, Ke-
fer served as concertmaster of the Philadelphia Symphony Society from 1893 to 1900, and during the years following the turn of the century, he hosted weekly chamber concerts in which the city's most highly-regarded musicians participated.

Donated to the Musical Fund Society during his lifetime, the Keffer Collection consists of close to 2,500 items bearing publication dates that range from the 1790s through the late nineteenth century. Approximately half of the titles were printed in Philadelphia by such publishers as John Aitken, G.E. Blake, Benjamin Carr, George Willig, and Lee and Walker. Included among them, as might be expected, are many works composed by Musical Fund Society members. The collection's importance, however, reaches well beyond the boundaries of Philadelphia in its representation of one hundred years of the music publishing trade.

Purchased by the Musical Fund Society in 1931 from the antiquarian book dealer Charles T. Nagy, the Newland-Zeuner Collection contains manuscript and printed music dating from 1784 through 1875, of both American and European origin. The collection was acquired by Nagy from the estate of William Augustine Newland (1813-1901), an English-born Philadelphia musician, who was at once an organist, conductor, composer, teacher, and publisher. A portion of Newland’s music library came from Heinrich Christoph (Charles) Zeuner (1795-1857), a German-born organist and composer who settled first in Boston before moving to Philadelphia in 1839. While the major portion of the original collection was sold to the Library of Congress in 1930, a smaller group of materials--numbering approximately 1,200 items and similar in nature to the Keffer Collection--remained in the possession of Nagy. At the urging of several members, including Edward I. Keffer, the Musical Fund Society acquired these materials to assure their preservation in Philadelphia.

Of particular significance for the Society, both financially as well as artistically, was the construction, in 1824, of Musical Fund Hall. It was designed by the eminent architect and founding member of the Society, William Strickland. The hall was built on Locust street between Eighth and Ninth Streets and served not only as a concert hall for the Society’s performances but, owing to its extraordinary acoustics, was also the favored Philadelphia venue for major touring artists of the day. The programs and engagements books for Musical Fund Hall record appearances by the singers Maria Malibran, Adelina Patti, Henrietta Sontag, and Jenny Lind; the violinists Ole Bull and Henrik Vieuxtemps; and the pianists Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Sigismond Thalberg. Its large seating capacity was also well suited to political meetings and lectures, and the Hall was host to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention (1837), the first convention of the National Republican Party (1856), and to such distinguished speakers as William Makepeace Thackeray, Horace Mann, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, and Henry Ward Beecher.

In 1857, with the opening of the Academy of Music, the Hall’s use as a performance venue decreased markedly, as did the activities of the Society. In 1918, when it was
clear that income from the Hall was no longer sufficient to support its maintenance, the Society embarked on what was to be the lengthy process of selling the building. It was not until 1982, however, when the Hall was renovated for condominiums that its fate was sealed, with only the facade remaining to serve as a reminder of the building’s rich and varied cultural history.

At the end of the nineteenth century the activities of the Musical Fund revived, but now its mission focused on the sponsorship of concerts, educational programs, and competitions. Among its endeavors were the creation of a Choral School (1885), the sponsorship of the Germania Orchestra concerts (1895-1899), and the support of the newly-formed Philadelphia Orchestra (1900). The Society’s first competition, named for the attorney, composer, and Musical Fund member Edward Garrett McCollin, was announced in 1925 with the aim of encouraging the composition of new chamber music works (to date, seven McCollin competitions have been held). The first prize was awarded jointly to the Italian composer Alfredo Casella (for his Serenata) and Béla Bartók (for his Third String Quartet). Following the December 30, 1928 American premiere of the works at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, the original performance materials remained in the possession of the Society, a stipulation of the competition rules.

In 1990, before discussions concerning transfer of the Musical Fund Society’s Archives to the University of Pennsylvania were initiated, the Society made the decision to sell the Bartók performance material and to use the proceeds of the sale, which they anticipated would be substantial, to support their current activities. This manuscript material, which includes an autograph score of the quartet, a second manuscript score partially in the hand of the composer, and a set of parts, was purchased for the Library by Margaret Ormandy, who had three years previously proven to be a generous benefactress through her donation of the papers and music collection of her late husband, Eugene Ormandy. One of very few major works by Bartók not in private hands, this set holds particular value as the composer’s working manuscript. Each of the three components incorporates changes, additions, and corrections to the music, including several overpasted pages.

Together the documents and music collections that comprise the Musical Fund Society Records provide a wealth of detail, relating not only to the operation of the organization itself, but also to musical taste and orchestral performance practice in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Over the course of the next century, the Philadelphia Orchestra would be—and continues to be—the focal point of concert activity in the city. The Library’s collections of music and personal papers of the two long-term conductors of that ensemble, Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy, document that musical activity, and they offer insight into orchestral performance practice and the prevailing musical tastes of twentieth-century Philadelphians.

Eugene Ormandy (1899-1985) served as Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, from 1938 until his retirement in
1980, when he was appointed Conductor Laureate. After his death, the conductor’s widow, Margaret Ormandy donated to the Library the Maestro’s scores, professional papers, letters, photographs, recordings, and memorabilia. At the same time the Philadelphia Orchestra and Philadelphia radio station WFLN jointly contributed the complete set of Philadelphia Orchestra concert tapes, broadcast from 1960 to 1981 on WFLN.

Preceding Ormandy on the Philadelphia podium was Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977), who arrived in the city in 1912 and remained until 1941, overlapping Ormandy’s tenure for several years. He maintained a remarkably active career following his departure from Philadelphia, conducting and recording on both sides of the Atlantic until just before his death in England in 1977. Soon after, his music collection and surviving professional papers were placed at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia by Stokowski’s heirs. In 1995, the Curtis Institute approached the University of Pennsylvania Library about relocating the materials to Penn for the purposes of preservation. A formal transfer was executed in July 1997.

The history of the Philadelphia Orchestra is naturally entwined with its principal resident conductors. The successive tenures of Stokowski and Ormandy extended over a 68-year period, from 1912-1980, covering more than two thirds of the Orchestra’s one hundred-year existence. With Stokowski’s 1912 debut, the Philadelphia Orchestra crossed over the threshold into its first era of national significance with a conductor whose distinctive musical talent and flair for the theatrical were contrasted with his German predecessors, Fritz Scheel and Carl Pohlig. Trained as an organist and choir director, Stokowski came to the United States from his native England in 1905 to serve as organist at New York’s St. Bartholomew’s Church. His ambitious nature soon led him away from organ loft to the conductor’s podium and after three seasons in New York, followed by a brief stay in Europe where he pursued his conducting interests, he was engaged in 1909 to conduct the Cincinnati Symphony. His extremely successful revival of that orchestra, which had been resurrected after a two-season hiatus, brought him to the forefront when the Philadelphia Orchestra was searching for a new conductor in 1912.

One of the most influential conductors of his generation, Stokowski was at the same time one of the most controversial. His progressive views, his flamboyant presence on the concert stage, and his innovative approach to music-making provoked both the epithets “genius” and “charlatan.” His interest in sound reproduction and transmission resulted in pioneering recordings utilizing the latest technological developments, and in his pursuit of the perfect balance and blends of color in the concert hall, he often experimented with the placement of players’ seating by moving sections of the orchestra to different parts of the stage. Himself an advocate of everything new, Stokowski attempted with almost messianic fervor to bring Philadelphians the most challenging and experimental orchestral works of his day. His devotion to the “music of our time,” in fact, led him consistently to program contemporary
compositions alongside more canonical fare throughout his career, despite occasional public protestations.

It was Stokowski’s broad interests in technology and his desire to bring music of the “masters” to the greatest number of people that led him to Hollywood and his eventual collaboration with Walt Disney on Fantasia. In the end, it drew him away from Philadelphia. Stokowski’s gradual departure, however, set in motion the ascent to the podium of Eugene Ormandy, and a new era for the Orchestra.

Ormandy was a child prodigy who began his musical career as a violinist in his native Hungary. Following a series of performances in France and Austria in 1921, a promised United States tour of 300 concerts for $30,000 enticed him to New York in December of that year. The expected contract did not materialize, however, leaving the twenty-two-year-old violinist marooned and penniless. He found work as a member of New York City’s Capitol Theater movie palace orchestra and was assigned a seat at the back of the section, advancing to the concertmaster chair within one week. He made his conducting debut at the Capitol in September 1924, when the orchestra’s conductor fell ill, and two years later was appointed associate director. Under the guidance of the influential manager Arthur Judson, Ormandy began to expand his conducting activities, working with radio orchestras and conducting summer concerts with the Philharmonic Symphony at New York’s Lewisohn Stadium and the Philadelphia Orchestra at Fairmont Park’s Robin Hood Dell, where he was well-received.

The turning point in Ormandy’s career came in October 1931 when illness prevented Arturo Toscanini from fulfilling his guest-conducting commitment in Philadelphia. Ormandy was approached after several established conductors, who did not want to risk their careers by substituting for the revered Maestro, refused the engagement. The concerts were a huge success, and word of Ormandy’s triumph quickly traveled across the country, catching the attention of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, whose conductor Henri Verbruggen had suffered a stroke. At the end of his week-long Philadelphia engagement Ormandy left for Minneapolis and what would be a five-year commitment. As Stokowski had done in Cincinnati at the outset of his career, Ormandy revitalized the Minneapolis Orchestra, vastly improving the quality of its playing and expanding its repertory. He was also largely responsible for arranging its 1934 recording contract with RCA Victor, the results of which propelled Minneapolis from a provincial ensemble to international standing and elevated Ormandy to national prominence.

Ormandy had first appeared as guest conductor in Philadelphia beginning in 1932, but after Stokowski’s 1934 announcement that he would conduct only half of each future concert season, Ormandy participated in the steady stream of guest conductors during the following two years. Then, in the spring of 1936, he was formally appointed co-conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. For the next five concert seasons Ormandy and Stokowski shared the Philadelphia podium while maintaining a cordial, if distance, relationship. In 1938 Ormandy advanced
one step closer to sole proprietorship of the Orchestra when the Board name him Music Director, but it was not until 1941 when Stokowski finally severed his ties to Philadelphia that the “Ormandy era” officially began.

Diminutive in stature, energetic yet graceful on the podium, Ormandy was known for his infallible ear and prodigious memory. He rarely conducted with a score and was widely recognized as an unsurpassed accompanist to the many soloists with whom he and the Philadelphia Orchestra performed. His training as a violinist governed much of his conducting technique, such that the richness of tone that he drew from the Orchestra was so distinctive it became known as the “Ormandy” or “Philadelphia” sound. Particularly noteworthy under Ormandy’s leadership was the extensive program of touring and recording undertaken by the Orchestra, which served to establish its international reputation.

Stokowski is perhaps best known for his orchestral arrangements, which include works written for other media, “symphonic syntheses” of operatic literature, and reorchestrations of existing instrumental works. The practice may best be considered in the context of the modernist interest in music of the past and of similar works of reclamation by Ottorino Respighi, Igor Stravinsky, and Arnold Schoenberg. Stokowski’s reworkings of J.S. Bach keyboard compositions are the most commonly encountered examples, yet they represent but a fraction of the total number, which ranges from Jean-Philippe Rameau to John Philip Sousa. Close to 200 of these survive in the collection, dating from ca. 1915 to the 1960s, the majority only in manuscript. Ormandy, too, practiced the “art of transcription,” though in smaller numbers and on a much smaller scale, concentrating primarily on the works of Bach and Handel. The process he followed in creating his thirty-four surviving transcriptions is well-documented in the Archive, which includes scores of works in their original form bearing Ormandy’s markings, as well as his completed arrangements, often in multiple versions.

While both of the original collections have been supplemented by individual gifts of letters, recordings, and photographs, particularly significant are the oral history collections devoted to the two conductors.
The Eugene Ormandy Oral History Project was conducted from 1988-1997 by the University of Pennsylvania Library with funds contributed by the Presser Foundation. Interviews were recorded with ninety-one of the conductor’s associates, including Philadelphia Orchestra musicians and administration, soloists, composers, recording engineers, concert managers, close friends, and family. The Stokowski oral history materials came to the collection as part of the Oliver Daniel research files. Gathered by Daniel, Stokowski’s principal biographer, during the writing of his book, *Stokowski: A Counterpoint of View* (1982), the files were subsequently donated to the Stokowski collection while it resided at the Curtis Institute. The clippings, correspondence, programs, financial data, and photographs are highlighted by 575 interviews conducted or collected by Daniel that include the recollections of relatives, friends, composers, conductors, performers, agents, and critics. Not simply general conversations, these interviews are often focused discussions of specific events or issues, resulting in a wealth of detailed information about the two conductors. An interview with the dancer Martha Graham, for example, reveals the numerous obstacles encountered in bringing to the stage the 1930 American premiere of Stravinsky’s Le sacre du printemps, which Stokowski conducted at the Academy of Music. The former Philadelphia Orchestra Associate Conductor William Smith sheds light on Ormandy’s conducting technique and the challenges it presented for Orchestra members, and various composers describe their experiences while preparing new works for performance. The intersection of the two conductors and their individual influence on the development of the Orchestra is, in fact, particularly clear from the oral history interviews, which include conversations with a number of Philadelphia Orchestra members who played under both maestros.

This extensive chronicle, documenting six decades of the Philadelphia Orchestra and its conductors, is mirrored and extended in another of the Library’s major holdings, the Marian Anderson Papers and related music collections. The Penn Library is the principal repository for material related to the life and career of the Philadelphia-born contralto who gained international recognition not only for her supreme vocal talent but also for her commitment to social issues. Anderson herself made the original gift to the Library in 1977, followed by two additional donations in 1987 and 1991. The final group of materials was presented after her death in 1993 by her nephew, the conductor James De Preist. The collection documents Anderson’s extraordinary career and includes correspondence, professional papers, recital programs, clippings, scrapbooks, over 4,400 photographs, awards, recordings, and an extensive collection of music.

Born in 1897, Marian Anderson grew up in South Philadelphia in a close-knit community whose financial support made it possible for her to take voice lessons beginning around 1915. Her earliest performing experience was as a six-year-old member of the junior choir at Union Baptist Church and as her voice matured, she was invited to participate in special concerts. By her twentieth birthday she had begun to tour professionally, and in 1924 she made her New York debut in a Town Hall recital. While this appearance
was not particularly well-received, she triumphed the following year, taking first prize in a vocal competition against more than 300 other singers. The prize, a performance with the New York Philharmonic in Lewishohn Stadium, gained her overwhelmingly positive reviews and national exposure.

Anderson traveled to Europe on several occasions, beginning in 1927, to further her study of both languages and repertoire, and was invited to tour Sweden and Norway in 1931. Her return to Scandinavia two years later occasioned a meeting with the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, for whom she sang. Sibelius was so affected by Anderson’s voice that he later composed a song for her. The work, “Solitude,” remains unpublished and is preserved only in manuscript as part of the Anderson collections.

Under the personal guidance of the celebrated concert manager Sol Hurok, with whom she became associated in 1934, Anderson’s concert appearances in the United States and Europe increased, and she maintained a grueling schedule throughout much of her career. Despite her growing reputation as an artist, however, she did not escape the indignities of racial discrimination in her country. The most famous example occurred in 1939 when she was barred from singing in Constitution Hall by its owners, the Daughters of the American Revolution, an action that precipitated her now legendary Easter Sunday performance at the Lincoln Memorial. Some years later, in 1955, she was once again thrust into the limelight as the first African-American to be cast at the Metropolitan Opera. Singing the role of Ulrica in Giuseppe Verdi’s Un ballo in maschera, Anderson made her operatic debut just before her 58th birthday and, though her performance met with critical acclaim, her vocal accomplishments were somewhat overshadowed in the press by the historic importance of the event.

The Marian Anderson papers reflect the remarkable breadth of the singer’s career, which spanned almost fifty years, as well as the active public service role she played throughout her life. More than 6,000 individual correspondents are represented in the collection, including family members, to whom she wrote while on tour; composers, conductors, performers, and many other prominent figures and organizations with ties to humanitarian, educational, religious, and arts causes in which she was interested. Anderson’s extensive vocal repertory is documented in the collection of concert programs and music, a testimony to her wide-ranging musical interests. During her career Anderson acquired over 2,000 music manuscripts and close to 3,000 pieces of printed sheet music of art songs, opera and oratorio excerpts, international folk music, and spirituals. Often the manuscripts were submitted to Anderson with letters from the composers or lyricists, many of whom were women. Of particular interest are the works of Florence Price (1888-1953), the first African-American woman to gain widespread recognition as a symphonic composer with the 1933 performance of her E-minor Symphony by the Chicago Symphony orchestra. She is perhaps best known, however, for her songs and spiritual arrangements, some of which she composed specifically for Anderson.
The contralto’s vast collection of spirituals in both published and manuscript form testifies to the central role they played in her development as a concert artist. All of the major names of the day are represented including Price, Nathaniel Dett, Hall Johnson—a 1910 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania—Roland Hayes, Hamilton Forrest, and Harry T. Burleigh, a close friend of Anderson’s since her teenage years. Anderson’s printed music collections also include hundreds of folk songs, most of which she collected during her European tours, and multiple editions of standard vocal repertory. Found here are the songs of Brahms, Schubert, Sibelius, and Richard Strauss, and opera and oratorio excerpts of Bach, Haendel, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Verdi.

The Anderson collections include, in addition to commercial recordings, over 150 hours of private recordings, arguably the most extraordinary part of her legacy. Among the tapes and discs are interviews, performances of complete works for voice and piano, vocal coaching sessions, rehearsals—notably a session in which Hall Johnson coaches Anderson on her interpretation of his arrangement of the spiritual “Lord, how come me here”—and solo and accompanied vocal exercises, chiefly recorded in Anderson’s home studio in Danbury, Connecticut. The numerous hours of practice sessions that are preserved here provide an intimate portrait of the singer, at the same time documenting the technical means she employed in her practice. Of related interest are the more than 100 test pressings Anderson recorded in New York (for RCA) and Paris (for La voix de son maître) between 1935 and 1966. These recordings of art songs, opera excerpts, and spirituals were rejected for release by either the recording company or Anderson, and were never issued commercially, yet they are an integral part of the contralto’s remarkable performance history, a history that the University Library has endeavored to preserve.

Viewed together, the Library’s music-related collections travel considerable distance toward an extensive documentation of Philadelphia’s musical past. The papers of the Musical Fund Society, the nineteenth-century manuscript and printed music collections, and the constellation of materials associated with Stokowski, Ormandy, and Anderson bequests, testify to the rich history of cultivated music-making in the city’s two-and-a-half centuries.
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by Mark Germer

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“Eine Enzyklopaedie wird nicht fur den Augenblick abgefasst,” wrote Friedrich Blume in 1951 (1), taking a tone at once lofty and pragmatic: such an enterprise, best conceived as a potentiality, can come to a halt but not to completion. And so the unfinished-finished product may realistically be judged according to what it accomplishes, but not by what it neglects (thus far) to take into account. There must remain something, he continued elsewhere in a much remembered quip, for our grandchildren to do (2). Those who have taken cognizance of that monumental edifice known as MGG (3)--have tended to echo this view, and it is indeed difficult to imagine how one’s frustrations with this somehow amorphous sextadecalogue could not ultimately be salved by gratitude for the wealth it does bestow. Blume was only too conscious of the work’s imbalances (4). But even the slightest appreciation of the improbable odds under which the small editorial staff worked, in the first decades after the near-annihilation of European learning, engenders something more than mere admiration. In short, no undertaking of this ambition should be allowed to disappear into a cloud of self-deprecation, for, as Ludwig Finscher now reminds us, the old MGG played, even as it evolved, nothing less than a formative role in shaping the humanistic and socio-logical disciplines of music study as they are conceived and taught today (5).

This, at least initially, was the MGG of the most influential generation after that of the founding fathers—the MGG of Friedrich Gennrich and Jacques Handschin, of Heinrich Hueschen and Heinrich Besseler, of Otto Gombosi and Paul Nettl, of Henry George Farmer and Thurston Dart, of Federico Ghisi, Higini Anglés, and Charles van den Borren (a men’s club, mainly, were it not for Naenie Bridgman and Anna Amalie Abert). A great many younger post-War scholars, of course, helped to fill the fourteen principal volumes issued by the end of the 1960s, their multilingual and trans-Atlantic exchanges contributing perhaps almost as much as ubiquitous conference rituals to the very creation of an international discourse on musicology. Encyclopedia editorship, however, requires efforts more herculean than the convening of congresses, for the random elements—the interests and abilities of willing contributors—must be aligned or discounted in favor of an internally consistent whole; Blume’s achievement was a first distillation of a rapidly accelerating conference, held over the course of an entire generation, into an ordered representation of the field.

Blume doubted, at least for a time, that anything like the old MGG would ever be attempted again, since the dawning age
of splintering specialization would render the grand synthesis impracticable, if not simply quaint and obsolete. Perhaps it was he who unwittingly commenced the intonation so often heard now that sweeping histories unified by a single vision will soon no longer satisfy our agile sensibilities. I recall the clever talk that greeted Gerald Abraham’s one-volume survey in 1979 as no doubt the last masterful overview from the era of omnivorous all-rounders (6), and indeed few readers will have missed noticing that collections of essays of various authorship do seem to have gained a certain ascendancy.

Yet even if we disregard trade or study texts (7), there would be little point in denying the appeal of published generalists, especially if they are provocative—its would be difficult to avoid mention of Carl Dahlhaus as an example—including a few atavistic ventures that keep something called the “Abendland” from its penumbral rest (8). (There is no “Abendland” in the new MGG, interestingly enough, presumably in recognition of the awkwardness of the term, even though the alleged dichotomy between Eastern fantasy and Western rationality has played a role in the historiography of European music from Charlemagne to Stockhausen.) There have sounded funeral tocsins for life-and-works biographies of the monumetal sort, too; a few years ago I was told by a most prominent scholar that collections of essays on specific analytico-biographical problems would take their place. Trouble is, someone forgot to tell Maynard Solomon (9).

Finscher is well-advised, then, to point out that the need for synthesis in this age of specialization appears not less but perhaps greater than ever, and that MGG has proven, through its reliance and emphasis on the Austro-German musicological tradition, an exceptionally successful venue for historical—and historicizing—summary (10). One does not turn to MGG for definitions of terms or explications of concepts, unless those terms or concepts happen perchance to be the pegs on which a theoretical, codificatory, or aesthetic disquisition must be hung. Rather, here are found the central themes and ideologies at the core of the field, nobly embraced on the widest possible franchise, if arrayed also to capture and reflect the radiance of a titled elite (the parallel to Baroque imperialism seems inescapable: these volumes celebrate the reach and rapacity of musicology’s expanding realm).

Above all one finds charted throughout MGG the philological and style-critical underpinnings of Continental humanistic scholarship, especially such socio-aesthetic constructions as “Epochenglie-derung” that Blume himself took responsibility for assaying in his (dare one say, epoch-making) articles on “Renaissance,” “Barock,” “Klassik,” and “Romantik.” For tracing the phylogeny of “Gattungen” there may well be no better place to go. And those who fretted that the New Grove Dictionary had failed to deliver on the very idea of music itself may now anchor some optimism in the strengths of German intellectual convention (11).

But the new MGG, so far as one can tell (12), will offer its synthesis with less grandeur. Silke Leopold’s sober handling of the term “Barock,” ten pages to Blume’s
thirty-one, leaves the notion of advancing new conceptualizations behind, and so—and here I do not know whether to say *mirabile dictu* or *horresco referens*—actually reads like an encyclopedia entry; its utility lies not in its (solid) scholarship but in its rhetorical presentation, that is, in its clarity, its restraint, and its sense of proportion. Indeed the temptation is to wonder whether the ultimate gift of the new MGG will be its adherence to simple standards of tautness and intelligibility. It is too early to say, but the departure proves noticeable as well in the physical layout of pages and paragraphs: gone are the strange interruptions of diminutive and variously-spaced type that made certain pages of the old MGG sheer torture. The ascetic charm of those old tomes was that, lavish in size and appearance (they even felt substantive), they conceded nothing to ease of use: “Scholarship is hard,” one was supposed to say, squinting. The new MGG, by contrast, itself no tribute to the bookmaker’s art (13), nonetheless advertises the modern virtue of approachability.

Altogether less monumentality, then, but it would not be fair to say less generosity. The thirty columns dedicated to “Augsburg” lack the several facsimiles and plates of the old article but contain nearly twice the amount of text; the ten columns in the old MGG devoted to Hans Hickmann’s “Afrikanische Musik,” supplemented with six line-drawings seem a bit pallid next to Gerhard Kubik and Arthur Simon’s “Afrika suedlich der Sahara,” with 145 columns, two maps, 69 black-and-white and seven color plates, and approximately two dozen music examples or notational illustrations. The comparison is unfair, of course (as a glance at the post-1950 bibliogra-

phy demonstrates), but no less striking for that.

Equally impressive—and illustrative of German musicology’s broad compass—are the essays for which no counterparts existed in the old MGG, and so will inevitably serve to mark the distance traveled in forty years: “Altamerika,” “Amerika” (meaning Latin America and the Caribbean), “Afroamerikanische Musik” (meaning that of the entire hemisphere), “Altslawische Musik,” “Biblische Musikinstrumente,” “Blues.” For me the presence of these articles seems as salient a characteristic of the new MGG as the fact that all subject entries will be divorced, Riemann-like, from people and institutions (14). Nor am I dismayed by the German bias (15): article assignments (“Banjo”) based chiefly on reputation within the German orbit; near-exclusive concentration on the Germanic components of multi-ethnic traditions (“Baenkel-sang”); disproportionate reliance on German-language bibliography (“Blues”)—for it is ironically this very asymmetry that, in the end, provides balance to the critical reference literature, taken as a whole. I look forward to the prospect of an article on jazz whose bibliographical slant I may not be exposed to otherwise.

More than that, the idiosyncracies of coverage and coordination in any such feat of synthesis, in my view, are to be relished rather than lamented. For good or ill, they constitute the historiography of the field as much as any other feature, and we should be loath in most circumstances to preordain or proscribe them. In any case it seems unclear what purpose would be
served (other than pedantry) by pointing out peculiarities of omission or commission unless they conflict with the ultimate objectives of the whole. Many readers will judge the entry on “Autograph” to be slight—though in fairness they should wait for the article on “Editionstechnik” in order to see how well the two work together—but the argument cannot be sustained that the subject’s treatment is ill-conceived or wrong-headed.

Similarly, some may wonder, while not necessarily bemoaning the choice, why the articles on “Argentinien” and “Australien” have separate subentries on rock music but not, say, on the local jazz traditions of these countries; others will simply find the discussions of national popular musics superficial (16). Yet at times there is present, I believe, an undertow that flows against the editorial intent, and it does have to do with encyclopedic comprehensiveness. It is most easily felt in the articles devoted to modern nation states or ethnic groups wherein persist the vague (but still not wholly vapid) dichotomies between “Kunstmusik” and everything else. Would that MGG had brought us to a point of sophistication beyond this.

The slippage can also be discerned in the essays on conceptual categories or on the methodologies of music study: “Atonalitaet,” fine as it is on the Second Viennese School, offers nothing on atonal jazz; neither “Analyse” nor “Auffuhrungspraxis” depart from Western constructs to consider the not inconsequential ethnomusiological literature on these topics (17); and “Begraebnismusik” could surely have provided fertile ground for comparative discussion (of, say, music integral to bereavement ritual in several cultural contexts)—and had it done so, would have become a more substantial entry.

But then integration is one of the objectives of synthesis, and both are desirable if we are not to become entrapped by our specializations. Even within our sub- and interdisciplines many experience what Clifford Geertz has plaintively described as the “radical variousness of the way we think now (19).” Possibly the directed effort to provide synthesis and summation—of which MGG is a conspicuous example and not, one hopes, solely a response to some craving for voluminous academic reference books—expresses a widely held faith in the communicative energy latent in the vocabulary and rhetoric of generalization, though the dialects of professional discourse be many. In that case, volume 1 of the new MGG both provides a standard of intelligibility to look to and also suggests what must yet be transcended. It remains to be seen whether the twenty volumes will themselves appear in a way that transcends the fixity of print; should that happen, we shall be closer than ever to Blume’s ideal of an encyclopedia existing in potentia.
“Vorwort,” volume 1 of the “old” Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopaedie der Musik (Kassel: Baerenreiter, 1949-51), p. vii. Ludwig Finscher refers to this monument as “die alte MGG” in his foreword to the new edition (Kassel: Baerenreiter; Stuttgart: Meltzler, 1994- ), and I shall follow that lead hereinafter. The twenty volumes of the new MGG are scheduled to appear in two parts: a “Sachteil” in eight volumes, followed by a “Personenteil” in twelve. Volume 1 of the new MGG covers subject entries A-Bog.

In his “Postlude,” accessible in English in Notes 24 (1967-68): 217-44, here at 244.


The editor's “Postlude” and “Preface to the Supplement” (notes 2-3) both contain references to changes of direction and the resulting asymmetries.

It is an important point, to which I shall return presently: “Die MGG hat aber auch inhaltlich nicht nur den Forschungsstand in allen Bereichen des Faches zusammengefasst, sondern die Forschung weitergetrieben--allen durch ihren enzyklopaedischen Anspruch, den Zwang, ein umfassendes Bild der Musik “in Geschichte und Gegenwart” zu entwerfen, Luecken in diesem Bild aufzufinden und zu schliessen, vernachlaessigte Fragen neu zu stellen, neue, aus der systematischen Absicht des Ganzen sich ergebende Fragen zu verfolgen.” [But as regards content, the MGG has not only summarized the state of research in all areas of the discipline, but in fact has acted as a goad to research--through its claim to encyclopedic breadth, its aim to limn a comprehensive picture of music “in the past and in the present,” to seek out and fill lacunae in this picture, to formulate neglected questions anew, to follow up new questions arising from the systematic purposefulness of the whole.] “Vorwort,” new MGG, pp. vii-viii.


It strikes me as relevant in this context that Grout-Palisca retains a high profile in its fourth edition (Donald Grout and Claude Palisca, A History of Western Music [New York: Norton, 1988] and Woerner likewise in its eighth (Karl Woerner, Geschichte der Musik [Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993]).


At the time of this writing, Solomon's Mozart: A Life (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) has just been described (by Edward Said, in The New Yorker [13 March
1995: 99) as “a compelling--indeed often harrowing--synthesis.”


(12) I should perhaps state emphatically that my impressions here recorded cannot, proleptically, constitute a review of the new MGG. Far too many questions remain unanswerable at this stage to do more than take courteous notice of a momentous project. Serial publication of the old MGG worked against the kind of reception history reviews provide, and it may prove interesting to see whether that problem will resurface for the new MGG, for--in keeping with my theme thus far--it is often in the review literature that scholarly synthesis occurs.

(13) It may not bode well for volumes so likely to be used heavily that the paperboard covers of my copy were disfigured in shipment. Alarming, too, are confirmed reports that volume 2, which I have not seen, has been printed on acidic paper.

(14) If there is an ideological rationale for this, I have failed to grasp its significance: it is not clear to me why two alphabetical sequences are better than one. But since the opportunity exists, I would like to be able to recommend that libraries and individuals with limited resources might consider subscribing to the subject volumes only, especially in light of the traditional strengths of German music scholarship. This may in fact be a good strategy for some, but little reflection is required to realize that the potential for self-reference within the encyclopedia is great: presumably readers of “Konzert” will be sent to Vivaldi. Also I should point out that institutional histories are not found among the “Sachteil” entries, so that investigators of music publishing will look for the firm Arteria in the “Personen” volumes. (It is not yet possible to comment on whether the sound-recording and electronic publishing industries will be similarly represented.)

(15) Though I am confused about the choice of towns and cities (Altdorf and Ansbach have individual entries; Athens, Baghdad, and Bogota do not).

(16) The exception thus far is “Aegypten,” shared by Ellen Hickmann and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, surely one of the jewels of volume 1.

(17) On the subject of analysis, see section IV of Ann Biegleb Schuursma’s Ethnomusicology Research: A Select Annotated Bibliography (New York: Garland, 1992), for citations that are historically important if not fully representative of current thinking. Performance practice has, of course, long attracted theoretical discussion in the fields of folklore and communications as well as ethnomusicology (oral narrative performance alone qualifies
as a discrete area of study, one whose implications for music have been argued in many contexts; see, for example, Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook, ed. Richard Bauman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

(18) “Vorwort,” new MGG, p. ix. I shall sidestep the question whether a European encyclopedia can be anything but Eurocentric, by definition.


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