

BOOK REVIEWS

Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion. Edited by Judith Tick, with Paul Beaudoin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Judith Tick's magisterial *Music in the USA* is far and away the best and most wide-ranging anthology of source readings on the music of the United States. Tick significantly expands on the most comprehensive of the earlier anthologies of source readings on U.S. musical life—J. Heywood Alexander's valuable *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of America's Music*.¹ But over the past several decades, many other collections of source readings have also been published, covering a wide range of individual topics and genres, including music in the United States from the Civil War to World War I, American composers and songwriters, popular music and singers, country music, jazz, film music, and African American music.² Anthologies of readings about music and dance in Puerto Rico and Latin America have also appeared, indicating an inter-American interest in this type of publication.³

Bringing together in one large volume excerpts from more than 200 primary sources spanning more than four and a half centuries, Tick has fashioned a history in documents that brims with fascinating details while offering a compelling narrative of music's development on the North American continent from the sixteenth

¹ J. Heywood Alexander, *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of America's Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

² See Bill F. Faucett, ed., *Music in America 1860–1918: Essays, Reviews, and Remarks on Critical Issues* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008); Gilbert Chase, ed., *The American Composer Speaks: A Historical Anthology, 1770–1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966); Thomas May, ed., *The John Adams Reader: Essential Writings on an American Composer* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2006); Benjamin Sears, ed., *The Irving Berlin Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Geoffrey Block, ed., *The Richard Rodgers Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Robert Wyatt and John Andrew Johnson, eds., *The George Gershwin Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); David Brackett, ed., *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Theo Cateforis, ed., *The Rock History Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013); Mark Anthony Neal and Murray Forman, eds., *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011); David G. Dodd and Diana Spaulding, eds., *The Grateful Dead Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Steven Petkov and Leonard Mustazza, eds., *The Frank Sinatra Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Thomas Goldsmith, ed., *The Bluegrass Reader* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Paul Kingsbury, ed., *The Country Reader: Twenty-five Years of the Journal of Country Music* (Nashville, TN: Country Music Foundation Press and Vanderbilt University Press, 1996); Robert Walser, ed., *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Mervyn Cooke, ed., *The Hollywood Film Music Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Julie Hubbard, ed., *Celluloid Symphonies: Texts and Contexts in Film Music History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); James Eugene Wierzbicki, Nathan Platte, and Colin Roust, eds., *The Routledge Film Music Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2012); and Eileen Southern, *Readings in Black American Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983).

³ Donald Thompson, ed., and trans., *Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader's Anthology* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002); Maya Ramos Smith and Patricia Cardona, eds., *La danza en México: Visiones de cinco siglos*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes; Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de la Danza "José Limón"; Escenología, A.C., 2002).

century to the present. One of the leading scholars of music in the United States, Tick first made her mark as a musicologist in 1983 with *American Women Composers before 1870*, followed up in 1986 by *Women Making Music*, a pathbreaking collection of essays by several authors that still stands as a watershed work of feminist musicology.⁴ That book's success lay not only in the quality of the essays themselves but also in the inspired editorial work of Tick and her co-editor Jane Bowers. Now, after a solo performance as author of the prize-winning biography *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*, and after work as co-editor of two more works relating to Crawford Seeger and two books on Aaron Copland, Tick returns to the editorial challenge of corralling disparate voices into a unified whole.⁵ Working with assistant editor Paul Beaudoin, she has assembled an anthology that illuminates the many facets of music in the United States.

Most of the book's 159 chapters consist of an excerpt from a single primary source, but several cite as many as four sources. Each chapter opens with a brief editor's introduction that contextualizes the source material with two or three paragraphs of quick, confident historical scene-setting. A source note follows each reading. When a chapter draws from more than one source, each usually has its own miniature introduction, clarifying the dialogue among sources, which do not always agree with each other, as in the chapter on responses to Dvořák's visit to the United States in the 1890s. The few instances in which these clarifications do not appear sometimes include missed opportunities, as in the excerpt from Nathaniel Gould's 1853 memoir that closes a chapter on William Billings; not all readers will intuit Gould's hostility toward the Yankee tunesmiths in general, an attitude that colors his recounting of second-hand "facts" about Billings. But these oversights are minor and few in number.

Tick organizes her chapters in seven chronological parts. The first, though the shortest, covers by far the longest time period, from 1540 to 1770. Its eight chapters contain first-hand accounts of Europeans' encounters with indigenous peoples, the rise of psalmody, and social music in the British colonies. Particularly vivid is a sampling of newspaper notices announcing public concerts, advertising music lessons, and describing the musical abilities of runaway slaves. The second part, in contrast, covers a mere fifty years, from 1770 to 1830, embracing chapters on sacred

⁴ Judith Tick, *American Women Composers before 1870* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983; Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995); Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, eds., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Tick recently reflected on the vicissitudes of the publication history of this seminal book of essays, and the subsequent development of scholarship in women in music and feminist studies, during a plenary address to the 2011 Feminist Theory in Music Conference (FTM 11) in "Reflections on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of *Women Making Music*," *Women & Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 16 (2012): 113–32.

⁵ Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ruth Crawford Seeger, *Music for Small Orchestra* (1926); *Suite No. 2 for Four Strings and Piano* (1929), ed. Judith Tick and Wayne Schneider, *Music of the United States of America*, Vol. 1; *Recent Researches in American Music*, Vol. A19 (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1993, 2nd. ed., 1996); and Ruth Crawford Seeger, "The Music of American Folk Song" and *Selected Other Writings on American Folk Music*, ed. Larry Polansky with Judith Tick (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001); Gail Levin and Judith Tick, *Aaron Copland's America: A Cultural Perspective* (New York: Watson-Guption, 2000); and Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick, eds., *Aaron Copland and His World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

and secular singing, broadsides and sheet music, and music making in Moravian settlements and Spanish missions. Part 3 spans another half century, from 1830 to 1880, chronicling the emergence of a popular music culture in the form of minstrelsy and parlor song, as well as shape-note hymnody, opera and symphony performances, institutions for music education, the music of African slaves and German immigrants, and songs of the Civil War. Part 4 reduces the time span to four decades, from 1880 to 1920, focusing on such colorful personalities as Amy Beach, Irving Berlin, Antonín Dvořák, Henry Higginson, Charles Ives, Edward MacDowell, and John Philip Sousa. Alongside the period sources appear some later commentaries, such as William Bolcom writing on ragtime in 1972 and a 1996 description of the Federal Cylinder Project; encountering these later voices among those from the turn of the century is at first disconcerting, but these items have their own value as historical documents pertaining to the later reception of earlier music, and their appearance here is preferable to delaying them for later sections or omitting them altogether.

Arriving at 1920, the book's divisions cover progressively shorter time spans: thirty years for Part 5 (which is also the longest in terms of number of chapters and page count), and twenty-five years each for Parts 6 and 7. That the period from 1920 to 1950 gets the most space seems only reasonable: here are primary sources on jazz, blues, gospel music, and the classic popular song; film and cartoon music; folk and country music; the experimentalists Henry Cowell and Ruth Crawford Seeger; and modernists such as Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Samuel Barber. The quarter century from 1950 to 1975 is hardly less rich, ranging from Chicago blues and rock 'n' roll to urban folk and psychedelia; from modern jazz to electronic music and minimalism; and from Ella Fitzgerald and Leonard Bernstein to John Cage, George Crumb, and Elliott Carter. Finally, Part 7 covers the last quarter of the twentieth century with chapters on performance art, the jazz repertoire movement, roots music, MTV, hip-hop, digital sampling, and Napster.

Tick's *Music in the USA* has a sufficiently clear organization and broad coverage to stand alone as a richly informative work of scholarship. Indeed, the introduction's reference to meeting "the demands of a textbook" (xxxvi) implies that it is intended to function that way. But source readings alone, even with the superlative critical apparatus found here, cannot supplant the historian's work of synthesis and analysis. Fortunately, Tick makes no such claim. Her book's subtitle, *A Documentary Companion*, suggests that it is designed to be read alongside a more standard narrative history of American music, and that is probably how most readers will find it to be of greatest use.

The value of source readings naturally lies in the reader's direct encounter with the voices of those who were there: composers, performers, impresarios, critics, and audience members. In *Music in the USA* these primary voices can be heard loud and clear. Musicians who speak for themselves in these pages include not only such likely figures as William Billings, Theodore Thomas, John Philip Sousa, and Milton Babbitt but also writers less frequently anthologized, such as Amy Beach, Scott Joplin, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Willie Colón. Also valuable are the observations of non-musicians as diverse as Benjamin Franklin, Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, Willa Cather, and Malcolm X. Especially interesting are the musicians who appear here as commentators on the music of others; thus we read

Victor Herbert on Patrick Gilmore, Roger Sessions on Arnold Schoenberg, Copland on Igor Stravinsky, Arthur Berger on Copland, and John Zorn on Carl Stallings. With such a rich web of interconnections, it is no surprise that Tick, as she writes in her preface, came to “hear the sources talk to one another in imaginary conversations” (vii). Equipped with a robust index, her anthology allows the inquisitive reader to dip into its pages at any point and explore lines of inquiry that extend outward in all directions.

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Verdi in America: Oberto through Rigoletto. By George W. Martin. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011.

Opera has been in the forefront of musical genres in the United States almost from its founding. During the early years of the nineteenth century, a number of visiting companies, including the famous Manuel Garcia troupe, the New Orleans Opera Company, and various English companies, toured the East Coast. Lorenzo da Ponte, thrice Mozart’s librettist, was residing in New York, where he formed an opera company, which was not financially successful. As the country’s population grew, the performance of opera was viewed as the indicator of an up-to-date, sophisticated society that was equal to its European counterpart. Italian opera predominated in New York, which, by mid-century, was the largest metropolis in the country. Audiences clamored to hear recent operas, including those by Rossini, Donizetti, and the young talent, Giuseppe Verdi, as well as the best European singers. If the performing forces didn’t fully equal those that could be heard in Europe, they were, at the least, a decent approximation that gave listeners a good idea of the original.

George W. Martin has written a comprehensive book on the performance of Verdi in the United States. His *Verdi in America: Oberto through Rigoletto* is a tour de force. Martin surveys, discusses, and speculates on many aspects of Verdi’s first seventeen operas. The book is divided into an introduction, three main parts, and a conclusion. In a brief preface, Martin enumerates the three purposes of the book: “to describe the reception in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of each of Verdi’s first seventeen operas . . . recounting how opinion of them formed and changed; to show how the so-called Verdi Renaissance of the twentieth century gave new life to some of his operas that previously had failed here while leading seven more to their U.S. premieres; and to provide a context against which the operas’ receptions may be gauged” (2).

Martin’s introduction is wide ranging, as is chapter 7, which introduces the operas discussed in part 2. In the introduction, Martin provides a contextual overview for the ups and downs of Verdi reception not only in the United States, but in Europe as well. He notes, for example, that at the Metropolitan Opera between 1893 and 1896, six of Verdi’s operas were performed forty-two times. A decade later, Wagner greatly