

*Library of  
The Harvard Musical  
Association*



**Bulletin No. 26**

**February, 1958**

## Library Committee

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*To the Members of the Association:*

Your attention is called to an article in this issue by Cyrus Durgin.

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The library, and therefore the Association, experienced a great loss in the death last May of Muriel French. She became Attendant in the Marsh Room and assistant to Mary Alden Thayer, then Librarian, in 1929, and on the demise of the latter in 1939 succeeded her after several weeks instruction in the necessary requirements of the profession.

She was a notably efficient and reliable librarian. She possessed a wide knowledge of the classical composers and their compositions and was well acquainted with the moderns. This knowledge provided good judgment in her suggestions for the purchase of music and publications on matters musical; an active initiative produced many changes and innovations advantageous to the library and helpful to visitors; no detail escaped her; her desk was always cleared.

Her personality was appealing and attractive; an informality of manner pleased everyone; invariably good natured in spite of occasional annoying episodes; never impatient; ready to give generously of her time to visitors even on trivial matters that delayed her work; in love with her job which she eagerly looked forward to each day. She had the greatest sense of humor of anyone I ever knew. A rare gift, and gift it is; it cannot be acquired. Peace to her soul.

The Board of Directors passed the following encomium on her.

Muriel French, librarian of the Harvard Musical Association, died May 6, 1957. In 1929 she was appointed Attendant in the Marsh Room and assistant to Mary Alden Thayer, then Librarian, and succeeded the latter when she resigned in 1939. To equip herself for this position she studied for some weeks the procedure and management of a Special Library of Music.

Her administration was notably efficient and auspicious. She was an excellent violinist; her knowledge of the classical composers and their compositions was wide; she had good judgment in the accessions of the works of modern composers and of publications on music. From Miss Thayer, who had kept everything relative to music, she inherited an enormous collection of miscellaneous music and books which required many years to evaluate, to keep

what was artistically or historically of value. Exercising an initiative which was the product of a fertile imagination, she improved the library in many ways; her innovations in cataloguing were of advantage to the visitor; she kept the shelves free of outdated or inappropriate publications. She was willing to assume any unusual service, and her desk was kept clear. Here was a capable and efficient librarian.

Her personality was pleasing and appealing. Invariably cheerful and genial, she welcomed visitors and was ready to give them attention even at inconvenient interruption to her work. Her cordiality never faltered and she never hastened a visitor to the door. Never impatient or hurried and always in good spirits, she was liked by all who met her. People interested her and no one bored her. In all her years of service she neither voiced a complaint nor asked a favor. She was gifted with a grand sense of humor. Conscientious in her work and pursuing it with care and deliberation, she rejoiced greatly in her job, and anticipated with unflagging enthusiasm what each day might produce. Here was an attractive personality.

Through her efficient administration the library has reached a high peak of excellence and such has become its reputation.

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Albert C. Sherman, Jr., Association member since 1937 and for some years Chairman of the Entertainment Committee, has been appointed Librarian and began his duties after Labor Day last year. Fortunately for him he escapes the problems Miss French inherited from Miss Thayer and, after some years, had settled.

The Association has met another loss in the sudden death of Waldo S. Kendall, Association member since 1922. For a number of years he had served as Treasurer. With his knowledge of investments and of the market he has managed the financial affairs of the Association with skill and good judgment. His oral reports to the Association at the annual meetings were models of comprehensiveness, clearness, and sincerity. His successor is Arnold S. Potter, Association member since 1920.

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The Directors have initiated and executed a matter which will be of interest to members. It deals with an award to composers for an original chamber music composition. The printed announcement, sent far and wide, tells the story, as follows.

#### AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

The Harvard Musical Association proposes to make several awards to composers, particularly younger composers, of \$500 each, in the form of a commission to write an original chamber music composition.

The compositions should be of an approximate length of not less than ten nor more than thirty minutes performance time, and may not be previously published nor publicly performed.

Composers who wish to be considered for an award should file an application with the Association on the official application form, of which copies are available on request. The application provides for essential educational and autobiographical data which will be helpful to the Association in making its awards.

Applications will be accepted until December 31, 1957. Award decisions will be made in March 1958, and compositions must be submitted on or before October 1, 1958.

The Harvard Musical Association was organized in 1837 by the members of the Pierian Sodality, now the Harvard University Orchestra, for the purpose of encouraging the introduction of music as a regular branch of instruction in Harvard University. The Association has since continued its activities in furthering the interests of music in the community and in making its facilities available to members, students, and others of the music-loving public.

THE HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION

October 1957

At the time of the deadline date eighty-three replies had been received with the possibility of a few more from persons at a far distance. They came from all over this country and even from over seas—from Rome, Brussels, and a few other localities on the continent.

As a matter of historical fact the effort of the Association to encourage youth in a musical education which the University was apparently not interested in providing proved rather abortive and

had no *direct* influence on what followed some years later. What the Association members did do during its first fifty years was to provide and in many instances to create for a community not well acquainted with various forms of music a notable number of what was termed "public benefits" organized by the members and in some cases administrating and successfully financing them as, for instance, the Harvard Orchestra which they founded, managed, and successfully financed for seventeen seasons. All these I have narrated in my early bulletins.

The project of music instruction by the University, however, was not dropped or delayed. In 1838 the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr. reported for a committee appointed the previous year to consider the matter, and presented three resolutions which were adopted. The Directors forwarded the report of the committee and the resolutions to the President of the University, Josiah Quincy (1829-1845), with the request that he communicate them to the Corporation. There then followed, as far as the records are concerned, on this matter or on any reference to Harvard College a profound silence for twenty-four years. In 1832 Quincy had proposed and the Corporation rejected a professorship in music. The time was not ripe, for one reason.

It is probable that the Association had little direct influence in the appointment in the college year 1855-56 of Levi Parsons Homer as Instructor in Music, presenting a course for the "higher branches of part-singing". Homer died in March, 1862. John Sullivan Dwight in a eulogy in his *Journal* seized the opportunity to urge the establishment of "a *professorship* in academical rank". He harped upon the scheme, mentioning for the position John Knowles Paine, returned from studying abroad and making in Boston a reputation as a concert organist. With Paine's appointment in the fall of 1862 as Instructor in Music began Harvard's Department of Music.

Evidently the Association as an organization had no *direct* influence in this establishment of a music department. S. Lothrop Thorndike, one time President of the Association, mentioning, in his address at the annual dinner in 1895, the objects of the Association originally announced has correctly stated the facts. "I said that what the objects of the Association were then they still are. One indeed—the establishment of a professorship in music at Harvard—has been accomplished by the voluntary action of the college itself, but even to that we contributed somewhat by constant and urgent solicitation". (See Bulletin No. 6)

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The committees of the Association, as I have remarked in the past, are neither somnolent nor lethargic. I think it well for members to know what they are doing. I therefore submit the reports of three committees.

#### REPORT ON THE LIBRARY AND ON THE MARSH ROOM FOR THE YEAR 1957

*To the President and Board of Directors of the Harvard Musical Association:*

This report must be less comprehensive than usual because of circumstances. Miss French always kept me informed on what she was doing and at the time I wrote my annual report we selected for inclusion the most pertinent subjects omitting many less significant. I remember only vaguely what she was doing previous to her unexpected demise in early May. I do know that she had nearly finished cataloguing and shelf listing the publications we had kept from the huge mass inherited from Miss Thayer.

I shall therefore seize the opportunity to make a few remarks on the library. It is correct if repetitious to state that it has reached a degree of excellence in every respect which places it among the best libraries of music. The comprehensiveness of its accessions is notable and its reputation for that is spreading. We have, for example, the complete compositions of twenty-two composers of note, several acquired years ago when and whether by purchase or gift is not recorded. We have many piano scores of operas which are well in demand. Opera presentation in the last ten years or more has greatly increased

all over the country. New York has two companies, Chicago one; in many western cities they have been organized; even high schools have presented operas and in several instances creditably. In Boston the local opera authorities, in trepidation and an anxious eye on the box office, venture one week of the Metropolitan company. Our chamber music collection is extensive and gradually increasing. The same may be said of piano music for 4 and 8 hands, welcomed by those who use the Marsh Room pianos. We neither purchase nor accept as gifts text books. They are suitable only to a school and the Association does not profess to be a school. Nor are popular songs acceptable for obvious reasons, with an occasional exception. From the mass of publications left by Miss Thayer—some of them date back to early years—we kept a few “popular” songs of the day of historical value. A pleasing incident presents the wisdom of the act. A few years ago a visitor asked if we had a certain noted popular song published years ago which she could find nowhere and she was delighted to find we had a copy. The growing reputation that we possess publications sometimes not easily found locally elsewhere is very satisfactory. Books are purchased after careful deliberation of the subject, the author, and with reference to what we already have on a subject. More information I might add but shall not do so.

I proceed now to the unexciting subject of statistics. Perhaps they are of use to some unknown person who examines them comparatively over the years. At any rate, all my predecessors presented them though fewer in topics and often only orally, and I continue this custom that “always has been done”, little as I favor that reason for many actions.

There appear to have been 838 visitors to the library. A hundred five persons borrowed 681 items. Twenty-three of these persons were students, who borrowed one hundred fifty- five items. There were nineteen guests of members.

In the Marsh Room, of 1273 available periods 871 were used and by 83 individuals who by repetition totalled 1153 persons. There were 173 guests on these occasions. Besides the usual many pianists there were 3 vocalists, 2 flute players, 1 cellist, 1 harpsichordist. There were 6 afternoon recitals and several evening concerts. The Apollo Club uses the Room at regular intervals during the season for rehearsals. A Concert Ensemble used it 11 evenings; the H.M.A. Orchestra at regular intervals; the Jewish Women’s College Club one evening; the annual tape night one evening; the annual dinner one evening. Certain piano teachers have used: the Room for years for the closing act of the teaching season, when their young pupils perform before admiring parents and friends and play, as I found when occasionally in the audience, with credit to their teachers.

In closing I will repeat a phrase from last year’s report, a nautical term originating in Great Britain which I then explained: the library is A-number-one.

Respectfully submitted,  
CHARLES R. NUTTER

#### REPORT OF THE ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1957

In 1957 the Entertainment Committee presented the usual twelve Social Evening programs and the entertainment following the Annual Dinner. The two Ladies’ Night programs proved to be joyous reunions with our long-absent former member, Jesus Maria Sanroma. The other evenings met the vicissitudes of New England weather with varying sizes of audience, dependent on conditions beyond our control.

During the year our Committee, and in fact the whole Harvard Musical Association, met with a great loss in the death of George A. Wood. Mr. Wood had been a member of our Association for thirty years, and had given many of those years to work on the Entertainment Committee, first as a helper to his brother Nat, and later as one who helped carry on the traditions which Nat had established. Our members will long remember his cordial greetings and hearty handshakes as he stood near the door to welcome them.

ALBERT C. SHERMAN, JR., *Chairman*

REPORT OF THE ORCHESTRA COMMITTEE  
FOR THE YEAR 1957

After giving generously of his time for more than ten years, John Codman has retired as Chairman of this Committee, leaving us a "going concern" which is a source of continuing pleasure to those who take part in our rehearsals. We would be happy to have more members join us; our standards are high as to enthusiasm and the musical content of what we play, but we are not snobbish in the matter of technical proficiency. Any playing members of the Association are welcome to join us, either occasionally or regularly

For the entire life of the present Orchestra we have had the use of scores and parts from the library of the New England Conservatory of Music, thanks to the academic connections of our two successive conductors. Your Committee feels that we should do something for the Conservatory in return, and has included a modest sum in the 1958 Orchestra budget for the purchase of scores and parts. These would be placed on permanent loan to the Conservatory, with the understanding that when not in use by that institution they will be available to us and to our parent organization, the Pierian Sodality. There is precedent for this sort of thing; the music used many years ago by the Harvard Orchestra, the H.M.A.-sponsored predecessor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has been on permanent loan to the Conservatory for a long time.

No report for the Orchestra would be complete without some expression of appreciation of the efforts of our conductor, Chester Williams. He has brought to the rehearsals a contagious enthusiasm in addition to his skill and patience. His choice of music has given us an occasional sense of worth-while discovery along with the chance to become really familiar with works we all have heard performed in public.

Respectfully submitted  
JOSEPH B. FYFFE  
*Chairman*

My obligation to Cyrus Durgin is decidedly great for his unhesitating cooperation in writing an article for several recent bulletins. For a man, whose day and evening hours are crammed six sometimes seven days a week with duties demanding immediate attention, to consent to write for the bulletin—no quick or easy job—he has always responded willingly. I am again under obligation to him for the following article, and I much appreciate, as I am confident you appreciate, his willingness to write it.

THE CHASOS WE'RE IN

Sean O'Casey's "Capt." Jack Boyle was a lazy, drunken, low-living, no-good paycock, but he did utter one profundity which will go rasping down the ages: "The whole world's in a state o' chasos."

Indeed, yes. Everything is in a state o' chasos no doubt, always has been and always will be. This is as much true of music as of anything else, perhaps even more so—if such is possible.

This is the great day of the symphonic orchestra and a huge public which is said to spend more on music than baseball. Yet the repertory is said to have shrunk to but fifty familiar pieces of undoubted audience appeal. At the same time, living composers are moaning that it is difficult if not impossible to get a hearing and, generally speaking, they are right. Critics are exhorting the public to listen to new music with open ears and tolerant spirit. Various agencies are commissioning composers to write music. At least one person of my acquaintance is vocal in the belief that composers should not be commissioned to compose. If they're any good they'll get a hearing anyway, is the substance of that person's conviction.

So, here we are, in the usual mess and muddle.

What is the solution? Had I the answer, I should propose to some enormously wealthy foundation that I be set up in business as Consultant to the Music Profession and Industry, at a more than

comfortable annual stipend. But there is one thing we can do: keep on listening. Listening and listening and listening, actively, eagerly, stubbornly, patiently and endlessly.

Why? Because without a listening public to absorb what composers create there can be no real progress in music. The music composed in towers, Ivory or Ritz, which goes unheard is only half music and can exercise no effect whatever. Succeeding generations of composers are influenced only by that music which is performed and heard, and that goes for the public, too. We have a real problem, and it is further complicated by the enormous diversity of compositional styles and manners and idioms today. Perhaps the greatest difficulty is caused by the nature of the 12-tone system and its popularity among serious young composers.

In the 12-tone system, all 12 tones of the octave have equal relationships with each other, and in the use of a theme which is a 12-tone "row", or "series", one basic rule is that all 12 tones must be sounded before any of them can be repeated. Such, at least, is the strict theory. The thorough-going 12-tone boys and gals play—or rather write down notes—quite by the rules. There are others who accept what they like of the system and do with that much what their inner natures command. The latter, I suspect, if they really have talent, are the ones who will create real music out of the resources which the 12-tone style (hereinafter called The System) has to offer.

The potential for all manner of dissonance and hard-shelled linear counterpoint in The System is mathematically almost unlimited. You can make all manner of melodic, harmonic and contrapuntal tissues. A great many already have been made! Not many have yet won their way to large popularity, but perhaps there has not yet been time enough.

In general, composers worth the name are individualists, persons of sensitivity and independence. Yet as I have seen it there is today a by no means small number of those who put notes on paper in a formula-istic way whose work suggests that the scientific view, which increasingly rules the world, has carried over into creative art.

Science always has been a foundation of musical process, but in the best music we have known the foundations have been invisible, or perhaps inaudible is a better word. The Three B's, the Three M's (Monteverde, Mozart and Martinu), and any great composer you would care to name, have created imperishable music because it touched a response in the hearing sense and the emotions of the listener. I fear that most of the academic boys forget that. They seem to become immersed in theory, to become engrossed in patterns-on-paper which look very ingenious and evidently prove something to those who made the patterns. The sound that comes out of those patterns can be something else again, as we discovered when Olivier Messaien's "Turangalila" Symphony was performed.

I was able to have a brief look at that score, and Messaien's neat patterns appeared just dandy. But the sound! A large, if not economy-sized tissue of sonorities, in which the ultra-complex play of rhythms, so carefully calculated, was so tightly woven that you heard no more than a jumble of resonance. Hindemith, on the other hand, and Bela Bartok—to my mind the greatest of 20th Century composers, along with Bohuslav Martinu—never made that mistake. Their idiom could be highly dissonant, not readily absorbed upon first hearing, but they had something unmistakable to say which touched the listener's hearing sense and feelings.

What is more, their music moves. Motion is one of the most highly important qualities of any music. Without motion music is not music. A work of an art whose primary appeal is visual is fixed in time and in space, as is a picture or a sculpture. It exists complete by the fact that it exists at all.

But music is not only an art of first appeal to the ear, it is an art which exists in motion and the passage of time. Music moves, and at a given moment you can hear only so much of it as can be emitted by instruments (considering the human voice, of course, as an instrument) in that moment. In the basic physical sense, you never hear the whole of a composition at any one time. You hear it in those moving segments, and those segments are related to each other, in your consciousness, by the fact that you remember what has gone before. At least, up to a point you do. Without aural memory, music would lose

all but that momentary, tiny fragment of its beauty; at least it would be nothing more than a succession of tiny fragments, and the beauty of a composition as a whole would have no true existence whatever.

In our willing and endless listening to new music we are faced with a real difficulty: that of determining for ourselves what is true music for us. The motion of music, I do believe, is pretty much an absolute, something we can recognize. Roger Sessions' Third Symphony, which was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Charles Munch last fall, is a case in point. No matter the nature of the harmonic and contrapuntal effects, the work had what I called in my review in *The Boston Globe* a quality of "stop-and-go". No one movement moved in unbroken line from start to finish. That was sluggish music and to my ear a mass of amorphous sound. If music does not move, we can call it spinach or whatever we choose, and the dickens with it.

But the great, free area in which a composer today can create melody, harmony and counterpoint is something else again. I suppose students are still taught "the rules" of harmony and counterpoint and warned that they can be broken only by someone of genius. Rules and laws generally command a minimum of respect today, and musical rules, to judge by much of the new music we hear, are enforced only in the classroom and obeyed only by timid souls. Well, no matter. "The rules" never were any good except for the guidance of mediocrities. The real talents instinctively went their way to direct and striking expression. Usage is what really counts—effective usage.

That means to the large public willing to hear much new music that they are on their own. They must judge what they like and do not like, for concert-goers who are not musicians have no obligation to compare and evaluate a new work. They seek enjoyment—let's use the dirty word, pleasure. But so varied and complex have become the resources available to composers today, so frequent and different the amount and use of dissonance, that the casual listener without musical training is bewildered.

Here he is inclined to make a fatal mistake. Having been bewildered rather than wholly pleased by a first hearing, he is likely to say he doesn't "understand" it and to dismiss the work from his mind. He does not realize, quite likely, that most great works of art do not become entirely comprehensible at first acquaintance. A masterpiece invariably offers more to the perceptive eye and ear the more it is encountered.

I am fond of citing my own experience with Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde". When I first heard the Prelude and Liebestod, in my early teens, I was aware of a mounting tension and a bitter-sweet texture of sound. It was not altogether pleasing. But it did make effect. It gave a challenge to be heard again. It would not leave me, so I got hold of some old 78rpm records which had been made at a Bayreuth Festival back in the 1920s. I listened and listened and after a time I had it, and to me that music was the greatest that ever had been or could be conceived by man. (At the same time, without knowing it, I learned the vocal part of the Liebestod so well that I discovered I could whistle it practically note for note.)

Later on, when I began to study some music, I got hold of the score and learned it a different way. From there on through Beethoven and Brahms, and eventually Bach and Mozart, it was the same process. Still later, it was the same with contemporary music, often just by listening, for new music takes some time to be published, usually.

If you look back two paragraphs, you will see the sentence: "But it did make an effect." Here is another reliable test, albeit a most partial one: a composition of stature, either old or new, is more than likely to make some sort of effect the first time you hear it. You may like it or not but you will experience some sort of feeling from it. It is only the indifferent and poor music that glances off your ear and leaves no wrack of memory.

So it must be a matter of listening and listening and listening again. But active listening, not passive. No one can ever get into a piece just by letting sound sluice the hearing sense. You cannot get to know music by half-hearing while thinking of something else. The melody, the rhythm, the tone-colors and all the rest that constitute a composition each have their importance to the whole, and each must be

recognized. But in the case of a sizeable work that cannot be done just in one go. You have to keep at it. The fortunate thing is, it becomes easier the more you do it.

Here we are at the end of the reading of these words. We are still in the state of chasos, no doubt, and it's five sharps to three flats that no foundation ever will commission me to accept a lot of money and tidy up the world of music. Therefore I shall do the next best thing: I shall continue to listen.

CYRUS DURGIN

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The following list contains most of the purchases and gifts since the issue of the last Report. An asterisk denotes a member of the Association. The Library appreciates the generosity of donors.

#### PURCHASES

Haydn. Symphonies de Haydn. arr. à 4 mains. 2 Vols. I 1-10, II 11-20.  
Strauss, Richard. Arabella. Lyrical comedy in 3 acts. Eng. text by John Gutman  
Bach, J. S. Brandenburg Concertos 1-6, Cembalo Part.  
Beethoven. String Quartets (complete), parts. Peters Ed.  
Poulenc, Francis. Concerto en ré mineur pour 2 pianos et orch.  
Bacon, Ernst and Luening, Otto. The Coal-Scuttle Blues for two pianos  
Beach, Mrs. H. H. A. Variations on Balkan Themes, op. 60, 2 sets for 2 pfs.  
Gilbert, Henry. Three American Dances, for piano, four hands  
Ravel, Maurice. Ma mère l'Oye, pour piano a 4 mains  
Gould, Morton. Pavanne, from American Symphonette, No. 2. for 2 pfs.  
Schumann, Robert. Twelve Four-hand Piano Pieces. Op. 85  
Offenbach, La Perichole. (Libretto) English adaptation by Maurice Valeney

The Enjoyment of Music. An introduction to perceptive listening. Joseph Machlis  
Mozart's Catalog of his Works. 1784-1791.—Otto Erich Deutsch  
The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book—Zoltán Haraszti  
The Bay Psalm Book. A facsimile of the first edition of 1640  
Corelli, his Life, his Work. Trans. by H. E. M. Russell.—Marc Pincherle  
Mozart in Retrospect—A. Hyatt King  
Essays on Music—Alfred Einstein  
The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn—H. C. Robbins Landon  
The New Oxford History of Music. Vol. I Ancient and Oriental Music—edited by Egon Wellesz  
Instruments of the Modern Symphony Orchestra and Band—Arthur E. Johnstone  
Handel's Messiah—Jens Peter Larsen  
Music for the Piano, a handbook. 1580-1952—James Friskin and Irwin Freundlich  
The Rise of Music in the Ancient World—Curt Sachs  
Ancient European Musical Instruments—Nicholas Bessaraboff  
Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments. C. P. E. Bach Trans. and ed. by Wm. J. Mitchell

#### GIFTS

"Souvenir de Florence" Sextet for Strings—Tschaikowsky. Score and Parts—Anonymous donor  
5 Petits Duos pour Fl., Vln., Pf.—César Cui. Op. 56. Parts—\*W. W. Parshley  
The Flagstad Manuscript—Louis Biancolli—\*Chester W. Ford

CHARLES R. NUTTER