

Institute for Studies In American Music

Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

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A Commemorative Issue in Honor of H. Wiley Hitchcock (1923-2007)

H.W.H.'s Newsletter (1971-92)

by Carol J. Oja

Paging through over twenty years of the *I.S.A.M. Newsletter*, as I have done in recent days, reveals the emergence of American music as a field of scholarly study. It has also turned out to be a journey of self-reflection. From the moment the Institute opened its doors in the fall of 1971, its founder, our own H. Wiley Hitchcock, directed his new venture towards the future. Wiley defined I.S.A.M.'s mission pluralistically, and he gamefully challenged entrenched academic assumptions about race, ethnicity, social class, and geography. His zeal for an all-embracing sweep of American traditions was infectious, and he carved out for himself the roles of entrepreneur and activist.

I.S.A.M. quickly became a kind of Bell Labs for a new area of study. Interlocking programs of Junior and Senior Research Fellowships were devised and funded. Monographs started to be published. Conferences took shape. Amidst this activity, the *I.S.A.M. Newsletter* appeared as a kind of networking hub, striving to bridge an acute "communications gap in our field," as Wiley articulated it in the first issue. In an era before the Internet, digitized research resources and communication technologies weren't even a pipe dream. Responses to a questionnaire sent by I.S.A.M. to music departments around the country revealed extraordinary interest in teaching and studying American repertoires. Yet the most rudimentary tools—whether editions, bibliographies, or full-fledged scholarly studies—were scarce. That first issue of the *Newsletter*, then, looked plain and thoroughly pragmatic. Four pages. No photos or jazzy headlines. Simply a sturdy proclamation of an ambitious vision.

Wiley's plans gained traction rapidly, and over the next few years, the *Newsletter* chronicled an astonishing pace of activity. Funding from the Rockefeller Foundation covered stipends for visiting research fellows. Gilbert Chase, then the reigning scholar of American music, held the first such appointment (1972-73). The next year, Richard Crawford became the second Senior Research Fellow. By the fall of 1974, at the beginning of I.S.A.M.'s fourth year, the Ives Centennial Conference was taking place, and a great deal had been accomplished. The *I.S.A.M. Newsletter* reported a "Ragtime Jamboree" that brought together the likes of Eubie Blake, William Bolcom, David Jasen, and Eileen Southern. The first monograph appeared (*United States Music: Sources of Bibliography and Collective Biography* by Richard Jackson). The Charles Ives Society was formed, and Recent Researches in American Music (through A-R Editions) was announced.

Simultaneously, *I.S.A.M. Newsletters* from this inaugural era made it clear that a culture of research and performance in American music was expanding around the country. This was a growth market—a time when idealistic visions yielded long-standing programs. The *Newsletter* announced "The Perlis Project" at Yale, an early stage of Vivian Perlis's *Oral History, American Music*. John Kirkpatrick's edition of Ives's *Memos* appeared. Eileen Southern's *The Black Perspective in Music* started up. Martin Williams's recording set *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* emerged, at the same time as he was appointed to the Smithsonian's Division of Performing Arts.



H. Wiley Hitchcock
photo by John Bentham

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A New Name and a New Fellowship Fund

In his remarks at the moving memorial service for Wiley Hitchcock on 8 March 2008, Brooklyn College Conservatory Director Bruce MacIntyre announced that two major developments in I.S.A.M.'s history were afoot—a request to rename the Institute, and the establishment of a fellowship fund in Wiley's honor. We're delighted both these initiatives have now born fruit.

In their meeting of 18 April 2008, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved the renaming of I.S.A.M. to **The H. Wiley Hitchcock Institute for Studies in American Music**. The Institute will now carry the name of its founder, who inspired our own scholarship in so many ways. The new acronym, "H.W.H.I.S.A.M." would have amused Wiley, particularly with his insistence on spelling out the words of the Institute—I.S.A.M. for him was *always* I-S-A-M. But "The Hitchcock Institute" seems a nice compromise for general use. Accordingly, look for changes in our masthead, stationery and literature this fall. In addition, we are planning a celebration at Brooklyn College to toast this important phase of the Institute's growth. Keep an eye on the I.S.A.M. website for details.

This new chapter in the Institute's history seemed a good time to establish an Advisory Board to help us move forward in the 21st century, and we are happy the following exceptional individuals have agreed to serve in that capacity:

Janet Cox-Rearick (Hitchcock), Distinguished Professor Emerita, The Graduate Center, CUNY
Richard Crawford, Hans T. David Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan
Ellie M. Hisama, Professor of Music, Columbia University, and former I.S.A.M. Director
Carol J. Oja, William Powell Mason Professor of Music, Harvard University, and former I.S.A.M. Director
Katherine Preston, David N. & Margaret C. Bottoms Professor of Music, The College of William and Mary
Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., Associate Professor of Music, University of Pennsylvania
Judith Tick, Matthews Distinguished University Professor, Northeastern University

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are excited to announce the establishment of the **H. Wiley Hitchcock Fellowship Fund**. The fund will support residencies by established experts in American music and junior scholars of exceptional promise who will teach an American music course here at Brooklyn College, engage in the school's intellectual life, and perhaps produce a publication. The inspiration for the program comes from the term-long residencies that were such a vital part of Wiley's tenure at I.S.A.M., and which resulted in most of our monographs. Invitees will be selected by the I.S.A.M. Advisory Board.

Naturally, such a program is an expensive proposition. We are investigating a variety of funding options, and ask that you, the readers of these *Newsletters* and longtime supporters of the Institute, consider a generous gift to the fund. Next to this article you will find a tear-out sheet for your convenience, and we can think of no better way to honor Hitchcock's legacy than to help us realize this vision. Thanks to all of you for your continued encouragement and support.

—J.T.

Support the H. Wiley Hitchcock Fellowship Fund!



The H. Wiley Hitchcock Institute for Studies in American Music is proud to announce the establishment of a fund in memory of H. Wiley Hitchcock (1923-2007), Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY, and founding Director of I.S.A.M. The fund will support fellowships at Brooklyn College for established experts in American music and junior scholars of exceptional promise.

Donations of any amount are graciously accepted. Please make checks payable to "The Brooklyn College Foundation" (memo: Hitchcock Fund) and send them to:

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Conservatory of Music
Brooklyn College
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Brooklyn, NY 11210

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I.S.A.M. Matters

This issue honors the life and legacy of our founding Director. Since we know that after his retirement Wiley continued to read with great interest about the projects and activities with which the Institute and its members had been involved during the preceding term, it seems appropriate to share some of our own recent news. Despite our deep sense of loss last December, it has been an exciting year for all of us, and we suspect nothing would have pleased Wiley more than to be informed of the continued liveliness of this Institute.

Our “Music in Polycultural America” speaker series has continued to address issues of music, culture, and society both here in New York City and throughout the Americas. In Fall 2007, **Carol J. Oja** of Harvard University shared a fascinating presentation on Bernstein’s musical life in Boston and environs, **Black Sage (Phillip Murray)** and friends offered an evening of calypso *picong* (verbal dueling) at a local Brooklyn restaurant, and **Jairo Moreno** of New York University spoke on the reception of the Colombian-born pop sensation Shakira. The fall series finished off with an engaging presentation by **Howard Pollack**, author of *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* (California, 2006), reviewed in our Fall 2007 issue. In addition to discussing his research on Gershwin’s piano music, Pollack shared an exceptional performance of Gershwin’s *Three Preludes for Piano*. This past spring began with a talk on black women and spirituality by Miami University professor **Tammy Kernodle**, and was followed by a powerful performance (with commentary) of selected songs of Libby Larsen by soprano **Ann Tedards** and pianist **Marva Duerksen** as well as an exploration of the popular music legacy of Paul Whiteman by **John Howland** of Rutgers University-Newark. A final highlight of the term was I.S.A.M.’s participation in the **Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium’s 9th Annual Brooklyn Jazz Festival**. A concert and jam session by **The New Cookers**, a group of young Brooklyn-based musicians, was preceded by a presentation on the history of jazz in Brooklyn by I.S.A.M. Director **Jeffrey Taylor**. We look forward to an ongoing relationship with the Consortium and its Jazz Festival.

This has been a busy year for the I.S.A.M. staff too. **Carl Clements**, I.S.A.M. Research Assistant and Managing Editor of this *Newsletter*, has kept up an active performing life on sax and bansuri (Indian flute), presenting concerts here in New York and at various locations in India with a variety of Indian and American musicians, as well as with Sundar Shor, an ensemble he co-leads with guitarist Russ Spiegel. He has also maintained a regular Sunday gig with Spiegel at the 68 Jay Street Bar in Brooklyn. **Salim Washington** spent an enviable term in Brazil, immersing himself in local customs, food, and music, and many of us were the fascinated recipients of frequent emails describing his experiences. His article “The Avenging Angel of Creation/Destruction: Black Music and the Afro-technological in the Science Fiction of Henry Dumas and Samuel R. Delany” appears in the current issue of the *Journal of the Society for American Music*. Finally, congratulations to **Jeffrey Taylor** for winning the prestigious Claude V. Palisca Award from the American Musicological Society for his edition *Earl “Fatha” Hines: Selected Piano Solos, 1928-41*. The work was recently published as part of the *Music of the United States of America (MUSA)* series which, incidentally, Wiley Hitchcock was instrumental in founding.

—R.A. and J.T.

Beginnings

In Spring 1971, H.W.H. put together a flyer with an eye-catching orange heading, announcing the Institute's establishment. It provides the first published account of I.S.A.M.'s ambitious goals. Below is an excerpt from the flyer's Mission Statement:

THE NEED There exists nowhere in the U.S.A. an institution or center where scholarly studies as well as musical production are focused on American music in all its diversity. The establishment of such a center is long overdue. Perhaps no nation in the world is as ignorant of its musical past as is our own; on the other hand, no nation has as rapidly expanding a musical present. Our musical past and present, at many cultural levels—"classical" and "popular," cultivated and vernacular, white and black, inner-American and inter-American—demand the kind of investigation, documentation, preservation, and propagation that only a great university can provide.

In recent years vast new areas of scholarly need have opened in American music: in the music of formerly neglected composers like Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Scott Joplin, William Billings, and Charles Ives; in the music of black American gospel hymnody and the spiritual songs of the camp meetings, ragtime, dance tunes, and band marches; in Latin American music; in mission music and meetinghouse music; in the music of rock and roll, jazz, and pop. Research studies carried out by trained scholars, not just enthusiastic partisans, are badly needed in all these musics.

American studies in general are on the increase in colleges and universities. So, too, are American music studies, for long the most neglected area of American musicology. It is time for the establishment of an academic institute to focus on and spearhead this growing subdiscipline and to serve, if not as its coordinator, at least as an informational nerve center for it.

THE AIMS The basic aim of the Institute for Studies in American Music is to provide a suitable academic framework in which to encourage, support, evaluate, and propagate research projects in American music. Projects will be undertaken at every level of study: undergraduate and graduate (M.A.), within Brooklyn College; doctoral, through the Ph.D. programs of music of The City University of New York, in which Brooklyn College actively participates along with the other senior colleges of the CUNY system; and post-doctoral, through faculty members and Fellows appointed to the Institute. Specific types of projects which the Institute may foster are almost numberless.

The flyer continues with a long series of planned projects, an impressive number of which have been realized by either I.S.A.M. or other institutions.

Below is a reprint of H.W.H.'s cover article for the initial I.S.A.M. Newsletter that appeared in November 1971. Besides introducing this new publication, he notes the impressive response to the initial flyer.

Almost obligatory in the first issue of any new periodical is a high-minded, visionary, virtually inspirational statement of the reasons why the publication is desperately needed and the ways in which it is going to meet brilliantly those needs. For once, though, let's put it simply: The *I.S.A.M. Newsletter* aims at communication . . . in the interest of inter-communication.

Communication: of all imaginable items of information about studies and other activities in American music that are going on, have gone on, or ought to go on in this country and elsewhere.

Inter-communication: among students, teachers, scholars, and performers interested in American music, whose work can be stimulated, broadened, focused, aided and abetted by a publication reporting on the aims and accomplishments, the work completed and the work-in-progress, of all who share those interests.

That such a newsletter may indeed be needed, or at least that it may be useful, is suggested by an experience of the past summer.

Our Institute for Studies in American Music was inaugurated, as such things often are, by a flyer announcing its establishment at Brooklyn College. The flyer began with this statement: "There exists nowhere in the U.S.A. an institution or center where scholarly studies as well as musical production are focused on American music in all its diversity . . ."

Response to the flyer, which was distributed widely, was extraordinary: everywhere in this land, it seems, and even abroad there are workers in the vineyards of American music eager to be in touch with others; full of reports on and ideas for research projects, performances, and editions; pleased to hear of such a focal center of communication as the I.S.A.M. hopes to become.

Two of the responses, however, were startling. One was a letter of congratulations from Professor Jack L. Ralston, of the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri in Kansas City . . . and director of its Institute for Studies in American Music! The other was a similarly congratulatory letter from Sister May Dominic, of Dominican College in San Rafael, California . . . and head of its American Music Research Center!

Our flyer's initial statement—"There exists nowhere . . ."—was inaccurate; we are pleased to retract it. But it was a statement made in good faith and sincere belief. That it could have been made at



The first page of the inaugural I.S.A.M. Newsletter, November 1971

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I.S.A.M. Matters (1992)

In Fall 1992, as he prepared for retirement, Wiley contributed his final piece as editor of the Newsletter. In his editorial comment he mentioned he was “exercising some prerogatives: moving the regular ‘I.S.A.M. Matters’ column to page 1 from page 3, signing it with a byline instead of leaving it anonymous, and making sure that the double meaning of the column’s title is clearly understood.” His article provides an eloquent retrospective of what had taken place at the Institute during the twenty-one years of his leadership.

I.S.A.M. matters. You bet it matters. It’s mattered for a long time. And it will go on mattering, I’m happy to say, having suffered the equivalent of Hamlet’s “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” not to mention his “sea of troubles.” With a lot of help from our friends—among them many of our *Newsletter* readers, Brooklyn College’s brand-new president Vernon Lattin, and the director of its Conservatory of Music Nancy Hager—the continued existence of the Institute has recently been reassured. In view of the longevity of the Institute and its newly secured future life at a watershed moment, perhaps some recollections of its founding director are in order.

Many of our younger readers may not be too clear about the beginnings and the early years of I.S.A.M., so first I’ll provide a bit of history.

I.S.A.M. was the brainchild, not of me, but of Sherman Van Solkema, who back then (about 1970) was chair of Brooklyn College’s music department. It’s true that he was sparked by a somewhat smart-alecky article of mine in the November 1968 issue of *Notes*; its title asked, “A Monumenta Americana?” It came down on the negative in answer to that query, but it urged other kinds of action by individuals and institutions to combat the neglect of American music studies, not to say disdain for them, by the musicological establishment. A notorious expression of such disdain had been Joseph Kerman’s sneer, at the 1964 meetings of the American Musicological Society:

The student of Beethoven [or] Marenzio or Louis Couperin is concerned with music that can be brought to life; but Francis Hopkinson or Lowell Mason or Theodore Chanler [and here Kerman pointedly chose composers from all three centuries of American music]—surely they would defy all efforts at resuscitation. Man, they are dead.

Van Solkema, an old friend from our overlapping graduate-school days together at the University of Michigan, had a characteristically bold, visionary reaction to my article: he persuaded his college president that a research and information center focused on American music was needed; he then crossed the East River to persuade me to leave my position at Hunter College and move sideways within the CUNY system to join the Brooklyn College faculty and become Director of the new center.

Thus was I.S.A.M. born in 1971, with a firm commitment from the college and initial extra support from The Rockefeller Foundation. Its goals were expressed, in rather lofty language, in an announcement brochure:

The basic function of the Institute is to provide a suitable academic framework in which to encourage, support, propagate, and evaluate research in music of the United States ... past and present, cultivated and vernacular, classical and pop, jazz and rock, white and black, inner-American and inter-American.

Those multiple goals of I.S.A.M., in a context of affection and respect for *all* American musics, have been energetically pursued for

more than two decades. There is not the space here to give a full account of the many ways in which the pursuit has been carried on. A couple of years ago, needing a fundraising document that would tell the whole story but in a summary way, I prepared a curriculum vitae of the Institute. (You can imagine the headings: Name; Address; Date of Birth; Field of Specialization; Staff; Academic and Professional Recognition; Publications; Conferences; Concerts, Colloquia, and Colloquia with Concerts; Lecture Series and Single Lectures; Research Fellowships, Senior and Junior, Bibliography.) The I.S.A.M. c.v. runs to twenty pages, much too long to print here. But I can’t resist glossing a few items in it—moments and memorabilia in the Institute’s past:

¶ I.S.A.M.’s first public event (Spring ‘72), all about ragtime. (Those were the early days of the ragtime revival.) An afternoon colloquium with panelists Rudi Blesh, William Bolcom, David Jasen, and Eileen Southern was followed by an evening jamboree with six pianists: one by one, Bolcom, Jasen, Bob Seeley, Trebor Tichenor, and Dick Wellstood led up to a climactic appearance by Eubie Blake. (What an evening!)

¶ During the 1972-73 academic year, Gilbert Chase’s sometimes prickly but always stimulating and provocative presence, in seminars and out, as I.S.A.M.’s first Senior Research Fellow. (Rockefeller Foundation support enabled us to bring him, and others, during our first three years; thereafter, the college provided the support, and Chase was followed by a remarkable parade of Fellows, both male and female—not only scholarly stars but composers of distinction, our conviction being that, as Milton Babbitt has suggested, composers are often among the most profound musical researchers in our culture.)

¶ During five beautiful October days in 1974, the Charles Ives Centennial Festival-Conference, the first international conference ever centered on an American composer. Co-chaired by Vivian Perlis and co-sponsored by the Yale University School of Music, with more than sixty participants and thirty “discussants,” the Ives F-C was a melange of six symposia and eight All-Ives concerts.



Composer Lou Harrison with H. Wiley Hitchcock and Carol J. Oja at the Henry Cowell Centennial Festival, March 1997
Photo © Jack Vartoogian/FrontRowPhotos

I.S.A.M. Matters (1992) (continued)

For me, the most magical moments were the performances—on the same concert!—of Ives's First Piano Sonata by William Masselos (its premiere performer, in 1949) and the Second "Concord" Sonata by John Kirkpatrick (its premiere performer, in 1939). Kirkpatrick said afterwards that he felt he had been more successful than ever at "letting the music play me, instead of my playing the music."

¶ Our first few I.S.A.M. monographs, published on a shoestring (and priced accordingly) but selling well enough to provide income with which to publish more monographs (they now number thirty-three). With No. 1 (Richard Jackson's *United States Music: Sources of Bibliography and Collective Biography*), I.S.A.M. led off with a clear message of intent to help provide scholarly support for American-music researchers. No. 2 (Gilbert Chase's *Two Lectures in the form of a Pair: [1] Music, Culture. History / [2] Structuralism and Music*) established a precedent: bringing into print Senior Fellows' public lectures. No. 3 (Bruce Saylor's *The Writings of Henry Cowell*) was the Institute's first monograph to derive from a graduate-student essay (and the first in a series of I.S.A.M.'s documentary studies about Cowell—the others so far, Martha Manion's *Writings About Henry Cowell: An Annotated Bibliography* and William Lichtenwanger's *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog*, being the biggest monographs I.S.A.M. has published, with more than 400 pages each).

¶ The *I.S.A.M. Newsletter's* first issues (Vol. I, No. I, appearing in November [more or less] of 1971): miniscule, poorly designed, typographically of dubious distinction ... but mission-conscious, news-filled, proud, and also breezy. (About ten years later, the review journal *Come All-Ye* pleased us by characterizing the *Newsletter* as "one of the best ... witty, irreverent, eclectic, and inventive" and as having "a winning style and thoroughness." Right on! was the cry around the office.)

¶ In 1977, an N.E.H.-supported festival-conference on "The Phonograph and Our Musical Life," the excuse being that a hundred years earlier Edison had invented phonorecording technology, and our lives had never been the same since. The affair went on for several days, with conference sessions, concerts, panel discussions, and other events. We invited John Cage to be the keynote speaker. He declined, saying he would be in Germany at the time of our affair—"but I'll do a piece for you!" And so he did. He came out to the College to choose a space in which the piece might take place. We looked at Gershwin Theater and Whitman Auditorium; Cage commented admiringly on their names and noted especially the huge stage and backstage area of the auditorium. "Let's do it here!" he said, gesturing expansively. ...

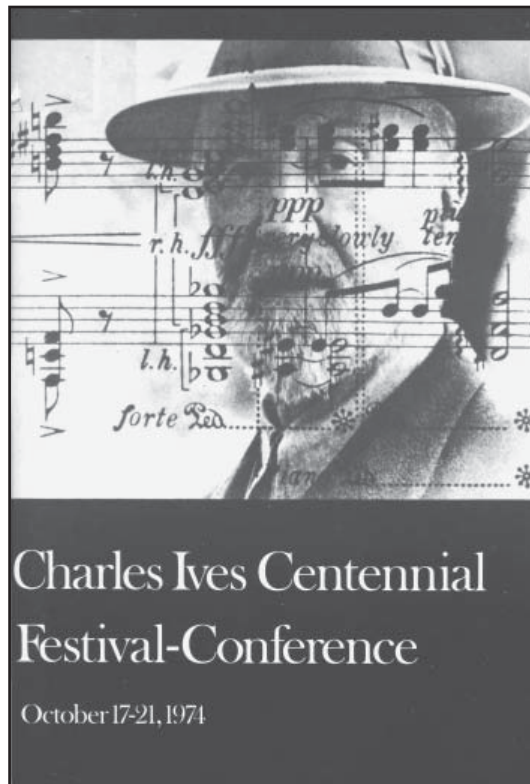
A few days later Cage sent a handwritten set of instructions and a sort of scenario for his new piece, which he had titled *33-1/3*.

In the backstage area we were to assemble a group of about ten tables in a kind of crescent. On each table were to be a long-playing record player (hooked up to loudspeakers), a turntable, and a bunch of long-playing records begged or borrowed from the Brooklyn College Music Library—any records at all, chosen at random and piled at random on the tables. Downstage, in front of this set of tables, was to be another, long one, with microphones for five or six of the scholar-conferees. They were to be seated behind this table facing the auditorium, before its rear doors were opened to the audience members. The latter were to be ushered in a circuitous route through the empty auditorium, to the stage, up some stairs onto it, through a group of musicians at one corner playing some music by Erik Satie (a favorite of Cage's), back past the silent, seated conference panelists, and to the tables with the records and record-players. There each audience member was to approach a table, choose any record she or he wished, put it on the turntable, lower the tonearm, and adjust the volume of the record player ad lib., move on to another table and play another record, etc., etc., and finally walk back down into the auditorium and sit down.

When all of the "audience" had gone through this business and were seated, the "panelists" were to comment on what they had just experienced, in any way they wished. (I put "audience" in quotation marks, since of course they had been the performers of the first part of Cage's piece—which also included, appropriately enough in an academic-conference context, the discussion that followed among the "panelists"—who had been the "audience" during the first part!)

... *33-1/3* had only that single performance, as far as I know. And it was never published. But it was a quintessentially Cagey piece, conceived for particular circumstances, totally relevant to those circumstances yet spontaneous, unpredictable to some degree, and above all invitational—to experience sounds and activities, in a sort of musical-theater environment, and to reflect on and think about it all. Cage honored I.S.A.M., and its centennial festival on the phonograph, and the phonograph itself with *33-1/3*.

¶ Several challenging commissions that came I.S.A.M.'s way: in 1979, one from the National Endowment for the Arts, for an evaluative study of the NEA's Composer/Librettist program; in 1981, one to provide research and editorial assistance to Macmillan (London) in the preparation of the encyclopedia that was published in 1986, in four volumes, as *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*; in 1980, one from the Koussevitzky Foundation for a comprehensive discography of 20th-century American concert music, realized in I.S.A.M.'s book *American Music Recordings*, edited by Carol J. Oja, who had overseen the project from the beginning.



continued on page 14

Mail from Wiley (1961-76)

One of H.W.H.'s early students, Richard Crawford, would himself become a pioneer in American music studies. Below are Crawford's reflections on fifteen years of correspondence with H.W.H.

I have in my cabinet a dogeared manila folder with "Hitchcock" written on the tab. In fact, I have more than one such folder. The oldest piece of paper in any of them is dated 26 July 1961: an attractive blue-tinged form letter signed by the Librarian of Congress thanking Professor H. Wiley Hitchcock for his recent gift:

The Papers of Andrew Law in the William L. Clements Library, by Richard Crawford and H. Wiley Hitchcock. Ann Arbor, 1961. (2 copies).

Paper-clipped to this document is a note to me in the co-author's hand: "We are now filed / and catalogued / in the / Library of Congress. / —E pluribus unum."

Running to about seven pages, Crawford and Hitchcock's booklet was the twenty-six-year-old "senior" author's first publication, its subject suggested by the thirty-seven-year-old "junior" author. Out of this encounter with the life and work of one early American psalmodist flowed a stream of questions: enough to fuel a Ph.D. dissertation, a published biography, a network of bibliographical studies and thematic indexes, and a clearer idea of how organized music making took root in North America. In this endeavor, and all later projects I tackled as a musicologist, I had the good fortune of feeling that my erstwhile junior author would always be there with counsel and criticism, in case I got too full of myself.

I corresponded with H. Wiley Hitchcock over the better part of five decades. In the weeks and months since his death last December, I have revisited the file of our written exchanges with a mix of emotions that comes with losing a beloved friend who lived six hundred miles away, and whom I actually saw only a few days each year. On one of my last visits to see him in New York, I asked Wiley—surely one of the world's most physically robust musicologists—how he was coping with the diminishment and indignities his illness had visited upon him. After a long moment's pause, he answered: "I'm an optimist." From a man who knew and admired eloquence, this hardly amounts to an eloquent response. Yet it was more personal than anything I'd ever heard him say. Now, however, I've come to see the ordinariness of these words as a good fit with Wiley's way of being in the world. Never one to talk much about himself or his thoughts, he was a man of action—of deeds and delights.

I met Wiley in 1958 when, as a graduate student at the University of Michigan, I enrolled in his American music class. In 1961, he left Michigan for Hunter College in New York City. There he emerged as an upcoming scholar of French and Italian baroque music who also had American interests. A letter written on October 26, 1969, brims with news of Caccini and Charpentier, and the scholarly harvest from a fifteen-month stay in Europe that Wiley and his art-historian wife, Janet Cox-Rearick, had just enjoyed. "I invited myself to read a paper on 'Interpreting *Le Nuove Musiche*' at the first meeting of the Glorious Greater New York Chapter of the A.M.S. this fall," he reported. Having arranged to work live performance with singer Robert White into his paper, he had spent the fall "training my hamlike hands to glide smoothly over a harpsichord keyboard." Moreover, spotting a doer when they saw one, music publishers had floated the idea of a "Charpentier *Oeuvres complètes*" in Wiley's presence. The notion of such a project, however, triggered a vision of "years and years of continuo realizations stretching ahead of me," and he'd spotted an escape hatch: "To write a piece called 'A Monumenta Charpentieriana????' and have done with it." "So," he signed off cheerily, "the fate of American-music projects is at present in your hands."



Janet and Wiley Hitchcock

A letter written on 13 December 1970 shows the pendulum of Wiley's scholarly life swinging back toward America. He voiced regret that a sudden illness had forced him to miss the November meeting of the American Musicological Society in Toronto, where he'd been scheduled to chair a session on music in the US and

Canada. He also regretted missing an informal meeting there of "Americanists" (his word)—a previously unrecognized AMS category of specialist. (Had anyone made a list of who showed up?) Then he shared three major news flashes. First, he wrote, "I'm transferring to Brooklyn College next fall." Sherman Van Solkema, the chair of Brooklyn's music department, had convinced him to leave Hunter by offering a lighter teaching load, plus "the directorship of what we're tentatively calling an Institute of Studies in American Music." "No firm plans yet," he wrote, "but lots of possibilities and the sky's the limit; the president of the college is firmly behind the idea." The second piece of news was just as striking. "I've joined the Executive Committee of the 6th Edition of *Grove's Dictionary*. It's planned for 1975: 12 vols., 1,000,000 words per volume, with an emphatically Anglo-American turn to the whole thing." His responsibilities: nothing less than to suggest "all entries having to do with music on the 'American continent,'" and to identify authors for them—"a huge job," he admitted.

Mail from Wiley (1961-76) (continued)

Finally, AMS president-elect Claude Palisca had asked him “to head an AMS committee to plan some sort of musical or musicological observance” of the US Bicentennial in 1976. The letter’s last paragraph tersely noted the shifting tide in his own scholarly bailiwick: “Charpentier and Caccini are having trouble keeping their heads above water.”

In 1972, a flow of Hitchcock letters poured in, many having to do with Grove articles I had agreed to write, and most written on I.S.A.M. stationery, with letterhead info in a bright, distinctive blue. In 1973-74 my family and I moved to the New York area, where I served for a year as Senior Research Fellow at the Institute: an assignment tendered by Professor Hitchcock, and gratefully accepted. Since I was on the scene, and we saw each other far more than at any other time in our lives, not many letters were exchanged that year. But one sent my way on 11 November 1973, showed clear symptoms of Grove fatigue. “My Dear Professour Crawford,” it began:

Odd how things happen, is it not? I was on the point of requesting a brief autobiographical statement from you for submission to the editours of Grove 6 (as we familiarly refer to the forthcoming edition of that dictionary) when Lo! The very same was fourthcoming—albeit unsigned, alas—from Ann Arbour.

After another paragraph of similar stripe, the letter closed, over Wiley’s signature, with a lordly snippet of condescension:

Kindly advise whether the last name of the subject is in fact spelt ‘Crawford’ rather than the more widely accepted CRAWFOURD.

Faithfully yours, . . .

The fall of 1974 saw Wiley embroiled in another massive American undertaking: acting as co-director, with Vivian Perlis, of the Charles Ives Centennial Festival Conference, co-sponsored by Brooklyn College’s Institute for Studies in American Music and Yale University’s School of Music. A letter he wrote on 17 September claimed to have caught a whiff of impatience in a letter of mine for his being slow to answer an earlier one. The first paragraph bellies up to the writer’s impeccable reputation as a correspondent and wryly exposes the calculation behind it:

I think I detect a tinge of pique in your latest—probably over my not having acknowledged, let alone acknowledged with the proper appreciation, your second latest. Sorry, but this convention we’re moving into has me straight out and I’ve had to suspend temporarily my program of leaving for posterity a long string of letters proving what a swell, appreciative guy I really am.

By the summer of 1975, however, the scholarly pendulum had swung eastward. A letter from Florence on 29 July 1975, with another thirteen months overseas to go, notes some challenges of being bi-musicological—especially as the US Bicentennial year drew nigh and, back home, American music study seemed to be inching toward respectability. “Here I am, doing my Italian thing

again,” he wrote, “except that there are so many American-music loose ends to knot up that so far it’s been an All-American stay.” Among many, one was that, in his role as editor of the I.S.A.M. Monograph series, he was at work on an item that demanded a rewrite of “almost 100%.” Even so, he admitted, “it’s been fun, sort of like writing a fairy story, to try to do that in Florence, Italy.” With quick messaging still far in the future, “I send off almost daily memos” to Rita Mead—Wiley’s assistant at I.S.A.M.—“to check this or copy out that, and then some.” He also delighted in the well-being of Casta and Diva, the Hitchcocks’ Siamese cats. “They are having a ball—grass, earth, garbage cans, birds, bats!—and are pretty completely Italianized to boot. The other morning Casta said ‘Ciao’ instead of ‘miaou’ . . . to which Diva replied, ‘Basta, Casta.’”

Another letter from Florence, this one written on 27 January 1976, followed a hiatus of a few months in our correspondence. Since summer, Wiley had tied up many American loose ends—chiefly the book manuscript that he and Vivian Perlis had “worked up from the Ives Festival-Conference papers and panels”—while, between October and Christmas, he’d written a short book for Oxford University Press on Charles Ives’s music. The past summer had also seen the death of his mother. (His father had died some years earlier.) “I was with her for the last week, and I think that during the first couple of days . . . she recognized me and knew I was with her; I hope so.” The stateside visit had also enabled him to visit his daughter Susan and his son Hugh. He noted, too, the recent founding of The Sonneck Society for American Music, a group that would hold its first annual meeting in the spring of 1976. Another major American project, New World Records, was taking shape in his absence, though he belonged to its editorial board. In this case, his whereabouts had “effectively prevented me even from reacting to whatever they’re doing” because “minutes, lists, etc.” had been sent to him “by sea mail!!!” And finally, the last paragraph reported another tidal shift: “I’m back into Caccini now.”

As some readers of these words already know, the early 1970s witnessed the building of an infrastructure for American music research, with H. Wiley Hitchcock as chief architect, contractor, and occasional hod-carrier. A chronological list of the enterprises that he began, or led, or contributed to would go a long way toward outlining the story of that achievement. This brief digest of one phase of our correspondence during those years shows that Wiley managed this feat through a divided consciousness: that of a cosmopolitan American, able to alternate his labors between the Old and New Worlds, and to stay productive in both.

Yet another divide also shows up in our correspondence. Or rather, it shows up in our mail, which includes articles and quotations that Wiley sometimes sent my way. The divide in question was a social category that Wiley believed in: the Expatriate Midwesterner (ExMid). The subject’s pioneer researcher is *New Yorker* writer Calvin Trillin, younger than Wiley by a dozen years, a Kansas City native who has lived and worked in New York since 1963, and a self-described ExMid. Not once but twice, Wiley sent me a copy of the same column by Trillin—undated but obviously written during the administration of President Gerald Ford.

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Everbest: Remembering H. Wiley Hitchcock

On 3 January 2008, Susan Feder, who was Editorial Coordinator for the four-volume New Grove Dictionary of American Music (Amerigrove), published an eloquent obituary for H.W.H. in *NewMusicBox*, the online magazine from the American Music Center. The following is an excerpt from that article, reprinted by permission. The article may be read in its entirety at www.newmusicbox.com.

Cultivated. Wiley used the term in his classic textbook *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* to describe the so-called classical tradition of American music, contrasting it with “vernacular” and awarding both traditions pride of place in his thinking and his writings. As general editor of the Prentice Hall series of college textbooks, Wiley had initially anticipated writing the volume on Baroque music, subject of his early scholarly research (as a scholar on Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Giulio Caccini he was as highly respected in the scholarly circles of the French and Italian baroque as he was among Americanists). But lacking an author for the American music volume he had determined to include in the series, he took the project on himself. (My copy is inscribed, in typically mock horror, “What, purchased only in 1981?”). The volume went through four editions, the last one, published in 2000, with the typically modest gesture of ceding the concluding section on post-1980 music to co-author Kyle Gann. The term also fits the man. Born in Detroit, educated at Dartmouth and the University of Michigan, where his teaching career began, Wiley came to New York in 1961 to assume a teaching position at Hunter College. With his wife, the eminent art historian Janet Cox-Rearick, the couple created a highly productive and enviable intercontinental academic lifestyle, summering annually in Italy (with side trips to Paris or the Italian Riviera), where they did their most productive research and writing. They were the consummate New Yorkers, dashing and debonair, at home at the Yale and Century Clubs, Carnegie Hall, or the Met (Museum and Opera). The loss of his “212” phone number, inadvertently reassigned during a summer disconnection, was the cause of a rare display of despair.

Everbest. Anyone who ever received a letter (often handwritten in elegant script) or email from Wiley will recognize his favored signoff, borrowed (with attribution) from Virgil Thomson. It could also be the ideal epitaph for this brilliant, elegant, cheerful, plainspoken man, combining as it does the superlative and the

constancy of personality. He invoked Thomson’s words frequently; after Wiley’s cancer was diagnosed he quoted Thomson in a note to me: “I shall worry constantly, worry being my acceptable form of prayer.”

Ives Thrives. Wiley founded the Charles Ives Society, serving for many years as president and treasurer, and later as chairman. He established the editorial standards and oversaw many of the scholarly Ives editions produced as part of the Society’s mission. His monograph, *Ives: A Survey of the Music* (Oxford, 1977; reprinted as I.S.A.M. Monograph #19), organized by genre, was the first general survey in what is now a robust field of scholarship. How marvelously Wiley captures the essence of Ives’s music:

Stylistic pluralism was characteristic of his music almost from the beginning. Simple and complex, traditional and radical, conventional and experimental, homespun and rarefied, spiritual and slapstick—these and many other dichotomies jostle each other in neighborly fashion throughout his life as a composer. So too do modes of musical expression derived from widely varied sources... his music has roots not only in that of the masters (and lesser composers) of European and American art music and in the friendly vernacular traditions of his native New England (hymn tunes, country fiddling, camp-meeting songs, brass-band marches, piano rags, patriotic and popular ditties, songs of hearth and home) but also in ‘unmusical’ sounds—horses’ hooves on cobblestones, out-of-

tune volunteer church choirs the crack of bat and ball, the special quality of ‘a horn over a lake,’ the clash of two bands opposite sides of a town square each playing its own march in its own tempo—and in untried sounds as well: harmonies in massed seconds or other novel stacks of intervals, microtones, tone-rows, rhythmic and metric serialism, unique instrumental combinations (p. 6).

Wiley embraced it all. Years later, in 2004, his critical edition, *Charles Ives: 129 Songs* was published as part of the *Music of the United States of America (MUSA)* series. It stands as a model of impeccably, and practically, edited scholarly work.

Musician. Wiley’s own description in the introduction to his *Music in the United States* of his “humming, singing, whistling, and playing through three and a half centuries of American music,” sums up perfectly the practical and tactile approach to scholarship



H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie celebrate the publication of Amerigrove in 1986, and look to the future
photo by Henry Grossman

Everbest (continued)

that made his writings and editions so authoritative and so valuable. He learned those lessons well when he studied composition with Nadia Boulanger in the late 1940s. In a *NewMusicBox* interview, he told Frank J. Oteri:

That's where I'm at, the music for itself, less than say the sociology of music or biographies of composers, or things like that. I think my goal as a music historian has been to attempt to reflect the music as it was experienced in its own time, primarily. Also to attempt to reflect what the composer thinks he or she is doing in such-and-such a work and to become, in a sense, a critic myself.

A practical example: recently, as he edited the critical edition of Virgil Thomson's opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Wiley considered restoring an "original" orchestration to a certain passage. When I pointed out that in my own experience publishing contemporary music I found that composers frequently changed their minds, he was quick to acknowledge that possibility, as well as Thomson's own sense of pragmatism, which ultimately held sway in Wiley's final editorial decisions. When his close colleagues Richard Crawford, Carol J. Oja, and R. Allen Lott produced a festschrift in Wiley's honor, this *Celebration of American Music* (Michigan, 1990) included not only dozens of articles about American music by the field's leading scholars, but music by a wide range of living composers important to Wiley, including Milton Babbitt, Peter Dickinson, Charles Dodge, Ross Lee Finney, Gordon Mumma, William Schuman, and Thomson.

Symmetry. "HWH" – the elegant balance of the three initials seemed so fitting. Wiley was particularly proud to have been the subject of Virgil Thomson's last completed composition, the portrait *Wiley Hitchcock: Two Birds* (see p. 15). Was it sheer coincidence that Wiley's own last research project was in turn on Thomson's *Four Saints*?

Vernacular. In Wiley's words, the vernacular was "a body of music more plebeian, native, not approached self-consciously but simply grown into as one grows into one's vernacular tongue; music understood and appreciated simply for its utilitarian or entertainment value." Wiley credited his father, who took him from a young age to hear music of all sorts, with his lifelong interest in the vernacular traditions of American music. He played jazz sax and clarinet as a youth, and for a time composed. Even after giving up composition he retained a lively (and highly appreciated) curiosity about new composition and young composers of all stripes.

Wit. That twinkle in his eye illuminated a quick wit. Among my favorites, when Stanley Sadie was named a CBE on the Queen's Honor's List, the telegram sent by Wiley and Janet read: "OK Command British Empire but don't count on colonies." Vivian Perlis recalled her own telegram, on receiving the Kinkeldey Award from the American Musicological Society: "Kinkelgrats." And Wiley's favored "acronym" for his Prentice Hall textbook: *MinUS*.

Amerigrove. When, in the spring of 1981, Wiley pulled my resume from the reject pile of applicants for the position of editorial assistant for a one-volume American music spinoff from

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H.W.H., Cowell, and New Music

Wiley Hitchcock's championing of Charles Ives is internationally recognized. What is perhaps less well known is that Wiley was a supporter of—and in many cases friends with—innumerable other American composers, including Virgil Thomson (whose *Four Saints in Three Acts*, in an edition by Wiley and Charles Fussell, is planned for publication by *MUSA*), John Cage, and Kyle Gann. But perhaps the American composer on whose behalf Wiley expended most energy—much of it covert, and seldom recognized through public channels—was Henry Cowell (1897–1965). Whether Wiley actually knew Cowell I am not sure; but he most certainly knew, corresponded with, supported, and honored Cowell's widow, Sidney Robertson Cowell (1903–1995), not least in the edited compilation of her reminiscences and vignettes, *A Chapbook of Cheer*, which he had published privately in the year of her passing.

Wiley's actual scholarly output concerning Cowell was limited to a single (but masterly) article, "Henry Cowell's Ostinato Pianissimo," published in *Musical Quarterly* in 1984. But as founding Director of I.S.A.M., he commissioned three volumes for its monograph series that are still invaluable to Cowell scholars: Bruce Saylor's *The Writings of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Bibliography* (#7, 1977); Martha L. Manion's *Writings about Henry Cowell: An Annotated Bibliography* (#16, 1982); and William Lichtenwanger's *The Music of Henry Cowell: A Descriptive Catalog* (#23, 1986).

Wiley was also (to crib John Cage's description of Cowell) the "open sesame" to all things Cowellian. My own first proper meeting with Wiley, on the beach during the Sonneck Society's 1993 meeting in Pacific Grove, California, is a typical example of his helpfulness and enthusiasm. I spoke to him about the possibility of an edited collection of essays on Cowell—published in 1997 as *The Whole World of Music: A Henry Cowell Symposium*—and of a fresh printing of the pathbreaking *New Musical Resources*. Wiley became totally committed to these projects—and although he contributed physically to neither, his spirit and example hovered permanently above both. It was Wiley who scrutinized my first tentative proposal for the essay volume, offering constructive criticisms and further thoughts in equal measure; it was Wiley who encouraged me to approach Lou Harrison, whose contributions to the volume proved so memorable; and it was Wiley who put me in touch with several scholars whose work enhanced considerably the end product. As to the 1996 Cambridge edition of *New Musical Resources*—it was Wiley who, like some latter-day *deus ex machina*, obtained for me (via special permission from Sidney) access to those pertinent materials in New York Public Library, which were at that stage supposedly closed to all but Cowell's official biographer. Also at Pacific Grove, we tossed around a few thoughts concerning an event to celebrate Cowell's forthcoming centenary; and although it was Carol Oja and Ray Allen who did most of the legwork in arranging what became the Henry Cowell Centennial Festival and Conference, I think it is fair to say that Wiley did a great deal of behind-the-scenes work in ensuring its considerable success.

The list of Wiley's good works on behalf of Cowell could continue; but rather than turning this reminiscence into a catalog, perhaps I should end by pointing to what was probably the bravest thing Wiley ever did for HC—that being, following the Cowell Centennial Festival, letting Henry grow up, by no longer holding

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Further Reflections on H.W.H.

As a long-time admirer of the Institute, first as a graduate student and then as a young assistant professor in the Midwest, I was both thrilled and terrified when Nancy Hager telephoned me in 1999 to offer me the position of Director. Wiley's and Carol's directorships were tough acts to follow, and the prospect of being handed the primary responsibility for the Institute was admittedly daunting. Here was an internationally recognized research center whose founder managed to edit over 5,000 Amerigrove articles (on a bumpy subway, no less), a lively biannual newsletter, and over thirty richly informative monographs that I had pored over in graduate school, while he also organized groundbreaking conferences with an all-star lineup of musicians and scholars *and* continued to produce his own impeccable research. The triple challenge of writing, teaching, and directing the Institute nearly sent me back to the comforting rhythm of teaching chromatic harmony and post-tonal theory to music majors year after year.

But I needn't have worried. Although I knew Wiley only in passing from conferences, soon after I moved to New York he invited me to lunch at Bistro du Nord, one of his favorite haunts on Madison Avenue. Here and in many subsequent meetings, he generously took me under his wing, as he had so many other young Americanists, teaching me how to forge crucial connections to key figures in American music. Scholars, performers, journalists, and donors —Wiley knew them all. His model of bringing together the cultivated and vernacular, the traditional and modern informed my own approach to programming, editing, and writing.

Popular music, cultural and critical theory, and feminist studies all had a place at I.S.A.M. Reading through some thirty years of the Institute's history recorded in hundreds of fascinating documents provided a fast education. As I soon discovered, Wiley had already begun to think about what I assumed were new directions for the Institute, such as studies of American women composers and current rock and pop. Once he sent me a tape of the Pointer Sisters' bouncy "American Music" which he thought could be the Institute's theme song. Though he wasn't eager to resume the trek to Brooklyn College from the Upper East Side after he retired, he returned on several occasions to participate in I.S.A.M. events. In 2001, he moderated a panel at our Ruth Crawford Seeger centennial festival, which featured his friend Pauline Oliveros as well as Christian Wolff (with whom he wanted to talk about hockey at Dartmouth) and Ursula Mamlok. I treasure his note telling me of his nightmare that everything had gone haywire at the conference and his pleasure when all went off without a hitch; the positive

energy radiated by the event reminded him of I.S.A.M.'s Charles Ives Centennial Festival of 1974.

The last time I saw Wiley at Brooklyn College was in the spring of 2005, when he came to hear his former student and I.S.A.M. assistant Jason Stanyek (now on the faculty of NYU) give a talk on the Brazilian musical diaspora in the U.S. Wiley's voice was barely audible, and he would soon begin receiving treatment for what he initially thought might be an extended case of laryngitis. I told him that rather than to call his voice "small and gravelly,"



Brooklyn College President Christoph Kimmich, composer Tania León, Professor Nancy Hager, and H. Wiley Hitchcock, Brooklyn College, 2006

he should think of it as a "sexy whisper," a characterization he gleefully said he could dine out on. He delighted in the successes of his friends, students, and colleagues, and enjoyed sending warm and humorous notes and emails. (One of the last files he gave me, labeled HUMOR, is a playful assortment of *New Yorker* cartoons, slightly off-color jokes that he had collected, and doctored photos of Cheshire-like cats outfitted with dentures.) For so many of us whose work was shaped by his inclusive, democratic, and eclectic vision of American music, our memories of Wiley will continue to encourage and inspire.

—Ellie M. Hisama
Columbia University

* * *

The last time I saw Wiley was in February 2006, at the ceremony where Tania León was officially inducted as a distinguished professor. When asked to provide a short guest list, I immediately thought of Wiley, another distinguished professor during most of his career at Brooklyn College. Wiley had been undergoing treatment for cancer, so it was a great relief to see him looking so well. A photo of Wiley, Tania, the president of Brooklyn College, and myself captures us smiling at the camera, Wiley dressed in slacks, sports jacket, and trench coat with a jaunty red wool scarf around his neck. One moment from that evening sticks particularly in my mind. After the ceremony, the president invited us to dinner at an elegant and pricey restaurant, a cavernous space meant to impress with its huge flower-filled urns, art deco fixtures, and soft lighting. When a team of attentive waiters brought our orders, Wiley stared for a moment at his and then remarked, "Wow, such a big plate and for such tiny bites." We all burst out laughing. Wiley was justly admired as a great scholar and teacher and, for those fortunate to know him, deeply loved for his playful and waggish wit, his total lack of pretension, and his talent for sharing the delight he took in life.

—Nancy Hager
Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College

H.W.H.'s Newsletter (continued)

permitted. I.S.A.M. could easily have posted a banner over its door bearing Strunk and White's dictum, "Omit needless words."

Learning to shape the *Newsletter's* nuggets presented a challenge. But I loved it. This was an opportunity to pose as a journalist, to keep up with the newest books and recordings—to cut loose! Feature essays by guest authors (or as Wiley put it, "the centerfold") entered the scene in May 1978 and they broadened the coverage to include not only news and reviews but also articles on broad-ranging topics. This eclectic range was not just a founding principle of I.S.A.M., but one which held firm over time. Wiley's only noticeable predilection had to do with contemporary composers. He avidly kept up with new music, as did Rita and I. Milton Babbitt, Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Ross Lee Finney, Roy Harris, Charles Ives,

Ned Rorem, Nicolas Slonimsky, Virgil Thomson, and William Schuman all were featured in the *Newsletter*, as did more experimental figures like Robert Ashley, John Cage, Henry Cowell, Noah Creshevsky, Conrad Cummings, Charles Dodge, Peter Garland, Malcolm Goldstein, Lou Harrison, Meredith Monk, Conlon Nancarrow, Pauline Oliveros, and Roger Reynolds. And then there were the columns, including Mark Tucker's "Behind the Beat" on jazz and popular music, which began in 1982, and Charles Wolfe's "Country and Gospel Notes," which appeared six years later. In fact, Mark's contributions deserve to be singled out, for they extended far beyond that column. His byline first appeared in November 1981 with "The Wolverines Go for SPAM," an article about a student-led American-music initiative at the University of Michigan. Over the years, he brainstormed constantly with Wiley and me, forming part of a conceptual team so thoroughly interconnected that individual agency became irrelevant.

In closing, I want to share a couple of *Newsletter* items that were especially delectable. Wiley enjoyed locating odd bits of Americana, and in the issue of May 1981, he got a huge kick out of reproducing photos from Thaddeus Wronski's *The Singer and His Art, Including Articles on Anatomy and Vocal Hygiene* (New York: D. Appleton, 1921). With bizarre facial contortions, Wronski illustrated the physical posture needed for a singer to convey "horror" or "hypocrisy" or "arrogance." Belly laughs rolled regularly out of Wiley's office as that issue came together. Yet he also took Wronski seriously, tracking down his path from Poland (b. 1888) to the U.S., where he sang with the Boston Opera Company. Eventually, Wronski settled in Detroit—by chance, Wiley's hometown—where this little-known émigré set up a vocal studio and became a major figure in local opera productions.

We also got a kick out of compiling a "centerfold" titled "American Musicians at Home on the Range," with favorite recipes of American musicians (May 1984). This included John Cage's "Baked Rutabaga," Louis Armstrong's "Red Beans and Rice," Colin McPhee's "Nasi goreng," Sidney Cowell's "Simply Extraordinary/Extraordinarily Simple Green Beans," and "The Sonneck Society Elixir: Benjamin Franklin's Orange Shrub Punch." Singer-songwriter Ned Sublette, who happened to be free-lancing as I.S.A.M.'s typesetter at the time, contributed the final recipe, "Elvis Presley's Judgment Day Pancakes." It called for garnishing the pancakes with "some red pills, some blue pills, some black pills, some yellow pills, and some white pills"—a bit of grisly humor about Presley's premature death seven years earlier, spurred by addiction. How many publications emanating from a distinguished research institute would include that?

Wiley adored his *Newsletter* and took great pride in it. As with all of I.S.A.M.'s endeavors, he anchored it in collaborative exchange and a strong sense of community. His colleagues and students were featured, and as the years passed, their bylines appeared with increasing frequency. Lively imaginations had a chance to take flight, and in the process, a "communications gap" disappeared.

—Harvard University



The Phonograph and Our Musical Life 1977 conference, Brooklyn College
Performers of the premiere of John Cage's *Cassette*: from left, Richard Crawford,
Vivian Perlis, Charles Hamm, Stoddard Lincoln, and H. Wiley Hitchcock.

Photo by Suzanne Mead

Beginnings (continued)

all suggests, not that the Missouri or California centers have been inactive or even that we at Brooklyn College are party to the fabled Eastern provinciality, but that there is a communications gap in our field. Good faith and sincere belief are not the only things needed: better communication is, too.

As our announcement flyer stated (and this time we believe with total accuracy!): "American studies in general are on the increase. . . . So too are American-music studies, for long the most neglected area of American musicology. It is time for the establishment of an academic institute to focus on and spearhead this growing subdiscipline and to serve as an information nerve center for it." The *I.S.A.M. Newsletter* will be the main instrument with which we shall try thus to serve.

—H.W.H.

I.S.A.M. Matters [1992] (continued)

Mention of Carol Oja leads directly to my conclusion, after these few ruminations and reflections. As a CUNY doctoral student (working on a dissertation that was to become her prize-winning critical biography of Colin McPhee), Carol succeeded Rita Mead in 1980 as I.S.A.M.'s research assistant. Four years later, she decided to turn to teaching, and was succeeded at the Institute by a chain of dedicated and indefatigable assistants: R. Allen Lott, Emily Good, and K. Robert Schwarz. But Brooklyn College had had the wit (and the good fortune) to appoint Carol Oja to its faculty. And she is now Associate Professor of Music, teaching both at the college and as a member of the doctoral faculty in the C.U.N.Y. Graduate School. Thus she has stayed close to I.S.A.M., and as Contributing Editor of this *Newsletter* she is well known to its readers. Moreover, as of February she becomes Interim Director of I.S.A.M., to serve as such until my official retirement at the end of August. To the post she brings verve and vitality, imagination and resourcefulness, powerful motivation and profound knowledge of American music. I wish her well in the position, certain that she will find it, as I have, one of the most exciting and gratifying imaginable, and that in her care I.S.A.M. will continue to matter.

—H.W.H.

Mail from Wiley (1961-76) (continued)

An ExMid, writes Trillin, “is someone who lives on either coast or abroad but still prefers to think of himself at least partly as a Midwesterner.” Describing the type as male—and probably with a sophisticated wife from the East—he explains that an ExMid differs from other former Midwesterners in harboring a particular fear: “the fear that his mother or aunt or cousin will be cornered by some neighbor at his hometown supermarket and informed that he has become too big for his britches.” Trillin offers President Ford, who for years represented in Congress the part of Michigan that includes Grand Rapids, as an example of the type. “Clues to his attitudes,” he explains, “will be found not in the attitudes of a hypothetical Pontiac dealer in Grand Rapids,”

but in those of the Pontiac dealer's hypothetical brother, a stockbroker on Wall Street who firmly believes that on the day he starts wearing Italian shoes and drinking foreign wine an old high school buddy from Grand Rapids will arrive to make fun of him for doing so.

Mindful of his roots, says Trillin, the ExMid abhors the notion that his move away from “the Mother Country” has “changed” him.

I think of Wiley—born in Detroit, raised in one of its suburbs, and trained in Michigan as a scholar and teacher—as an optimist of the Midwestern kind: the kind who, for all his brilliance, poise, and accomplishment, would remain ever vigilant against the possibility that he might seem to be getting too big for his britches. Traits linking him with Trillin's ExMid outlook come crowding to mind. But rather than listing them, I'll close with a hypothetical. If you knew Wiley well, and came upon a sheet of printed letterhead proclaiming “Institute for Studies in American Music / H. Wiley Hitchcock, Founder and Director” you'd suspect an April Fool's Day stunt with the director as victim.

—Richard Crawford
University of Michigan

Everbest (continued)

The New Grove, he forever changed my life. Little did either of us know that this small eighteen-month project would balloon over the next five years into a four-volume monument to American music. Not only did Wiley oversee the project, commission or write many of the major articles (from Emma Abbott to Tin Pan Alley, with major entries on Art song, Stephen Foster, Histories, Musicology, Notation, Opera, Piano Music, Shaker music, and a group of articles on émigré musicians), but he read every last word at least three times, twice in manuscript and then in galley proofs, whether on the subway to and from Brooklyn College, in Italy, Paris, Los Angeles, or on the beaches of the Caribbean. The growth of the dictionary was at Wiley's insistence that the most prominent American musicians were as deserving of lengthy articles as their European counterparts, and that the vernacular traditions of rock, pop, jazz, and ethnic musics deserved equal pride of place to the cultivated in such an endeavor. His impeccably penned editorial markings (the dictionary was edited in the pre-computer, pre-fax era) gave cohesion to the work of some 900 writers. Wiley also argued (vehemently at times) on my behalf for everything from adequate office space and support staff to title-page billing, and helped me maintain my equilibrium over regular Yale Club lunches where we theoretically were not supposed to conduct business. Wiley dubbed me the dictionary's “linchpin,” a moniker I wore proudly, but he was *Amerigrove's* brain, heart, and soul. Countless of Wiley's students have their own tales of similar support, articles or books read in manuscript, or letters of reference that proved to be turning points in their careers, demonstrations of quiet generosity from this most extraordinary man.

Everbest, Wiley. Your inclusive advocacy for American music of all kinds, and your mentoring and support of generations of younger scholars and musicians, brought out the best in so many of us. We so admired your impeccable scholarship, and loved your generosity of spirit and *joie de vivre*.

—Susan Feder

Cowell and New Music (continued)

his musicological hand (as it were) but rather encouraging scholars to draw their own conclusions concerning Cowell's merits (or otherwise). To champion a neglected figure is brave; to let him subsequently stand on his own two feet is braver still. Wiley was never afraid of doing the right thing, however apparently hard or harsh it might have seemed at the time. I miss him enormously.

—David Nicholls
University of Southampton

A Portrait by Virgil Thomson: Report by the Sitter

In Spring 1996, while serving as Guest Editor of this Newsletter, I managed to convince Wiley to write of this remarkable experience with a longtime friend. It turned out to be the last article he wrote for this publication. In addition, as Wiley points out below, Two Birds was Thomson's last completed work (J.T.).

I saw Virgil Thomson often during his last years, and regularly every summer, when I was in Florence and he came to nearby Montecatini Terme for a few weeks, to take the baths, drink the water, and lose some weight. (He claimed their salutary effect held him through the “silly season”—Christmas and New Year’s.) We had lunches or dinners together; I remember two memorable ones, one at his very grand and tranquil hotel—in fact called the Hotel Grand e la Pace—when he introduced me to Betty Freeman, the other when my wife and I took him to Da Delfina in the hill town of Artimino, overlooking a great sixteenth-century Medici villa, and he brought along David and Karen Waltuck, just beginning their rise to fame as chef and hostess of the restaurant Chantrelle in SoHo. And often, when Virgil’s stay at Montecatini ended, I drove him to the airport at Pisa, to catch a plane for London or wherever he was headed next.

During one of those drives, in the summer of 1986, Virgil murmured, “I’d like to do your portrait.” Nothing could have surprised or pleased me more. To join such earlier sitters as Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Paul Bowles, Dorothy Thompson, Lou Harrison, Dennis Russell Davies!

Those were the last frantic days of AmeriGrove’s preparation. I happened to tell Susan Feder, linchpin of the dictionary’s editorial overseers, about Virgil’s offer. “Wonderful!” she said. “Let’s get him to do it right away and have it premiered at the AmeriGrove launch party in November.” Some Macmillan executive urged the idea on Virgil, who—a famously practical man—struck a deal: OK, a portrait of Hitchcock in return for a free set of the four-volume dictionary and a featured appearance at its launch party.

Back in New York that fall, he called me, and we made a date to meet in his apartment in the Chelsea Hotel on a Saturday afternoon. I arrived on the dot at 2:00 and rang . . . and rang . . . and rang. Finally the door opened. There was Virgil, in a bathrobe, looking exceedingly sleepy. “Oh, damn,” he said. “My secretary is off today, and I didn’t notice our date in my book, and I took a nap, and I can’t possibly work just now. But come in and we’ll have a chat.” We did—but no portrait.

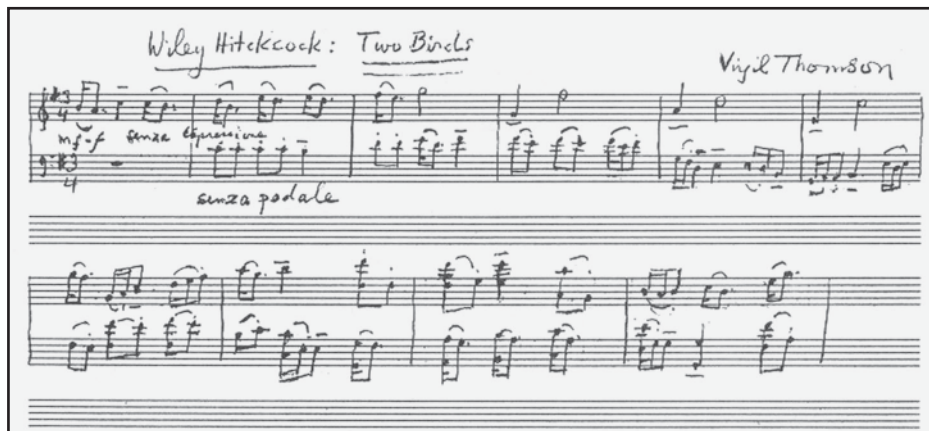
On a spring day about a year and a half later, Virgil called again about a portrait date, to my surprise (I thought he’d forgotten all about the matter), and we made another appointment. No bathrobe this time,

but a similar invitation to sit down in the living room and chat. We must have chatted for a good half hour—I was beginning to think he had forgotten why I was there—when suddenly he said, “Well, let’s get to work. Come on.” He led me to the dining room. There on his long, plain dining table was a sheaf of blank music paper, a jar full of sharp pencils, an eraser or two. He beckoned me to a chair and sat down opposite me, inquiring if I had anything to read. Yes, I did: bound galleys of Tim and Vanessa Page’s book of selected letters of Virgil Thomson. And he went to work, with total immersion in the task, never looking up at me or at anything else except the music paper, occasionally erasing and rewriting, totally silent.

About forty-five minutes later he paused and asked, “Are you getting tired?” No, I wasn’t. Back to work he went. After about another hour, he gave a little cry of pleasure. “Look at this! The end

of the page . . . and the end of the piece! Here, you can look at it—but you can’t ask me any questions about it. And excuse me, I have to pee.”

What I looked at was a one-page, untitled piece of piano music, basically in two-voice contrapuntal texture but with some octaves, a key signature of G major, no tempo indication but the warnings “senza espressione” and “senza pedale.” My portrait!



*Excerpt from the manuscript for Wiley Hitchcock: Two Birds
Reproduced with permission of the Virgil Thomson Foundation, Ltd.*

A few days later a package came, addressed, as was Virgil’s practice, to “H. Wiley Hitchcock, Esquire.” It bore the manuscript—now titled—and a note dated 1 June 1988: “Dear Wiley, This is the original made on May 28. It has been tampered with a little, such as making the notes larger than mere dots and the adding of lots of slurs and other dots. It has also been sprayed with fixative so that it will not smear. I hope you like it. I enjoyed doing it. Happy times in Europe. Yours, Virgil.”

I responded with my own note. “Dear Virgil: I’m pleased and proud to have been a subject for a portrait. The MS arrived yesterday. I can’t play it yet: it looks simple but isn’t, rhythmically. It also looks 100% G-major diatonic—not one accidental on the whole page—but it’s surprisingly acrid. I assume you didn’t necessarily intend me to identify with ‘Wiley’ but I do, and there’s nothing you can do about it. Sincerely, Wiley.”

Virgil didn’t rise to the bait—so cunningly couched, I thought, not as a question but a provocative comment. Nor did I ever learn what sparked the subtitle “Two Birds.” Only later did I discover the piece printed as a contribution to a festschrift for me, published as *A Celebration of American Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) two years later. By then Virgil was gone. My portrait had been his last completed composition.

—H.W.H.



*Composer Pauline Oliveros and H. Wiley Hitchcock, February 1986
Photo by Betty Freeman*

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Carol J. Oja

Richard Crawford

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