

The Bulletin

of the Society for American Music

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Tucson 2022, Virtually!

Matthew Mugmon



Wide view of Tucson and the Santa Catalina Mountains from Sentinel Peak. Photo by John Diebolt.

The SAM 2022 Local Arrangements Committee looks forward to welcoming you (virtually) to Tucson in March! Tucson, the seat of Pima County and an important cultural center of the Borderlands of the American Southwest, lies in the [Sonoran Desert](#) on the [Santa Cruz River](#), around 70 miles north of Nogales, Mexico.

The conference's host institution, the University of Arizona, [provides the following land acknowledgment](#): "We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service."

Tucson is known for its 350 days of annual sunshine (and its wonderful weather throughout most of the year), for its stunning [night skies](#), for natural attractions like the [Arizona Sonora-Desert Museum](#) and [Saguaro National Park](#), and for its recent designation as a [UNESCO City of Gastronomy](#).

Tucson is also a vibrant musical crossroads, and mariachi music is among the many traditions significant to this region. We are thrilled to be able to recognize [Mariachi Cobre](#) as this year's honorary member. Founded in Tucson in 1971, Mariachi Cobre has represented Mexican music as a featured group at Disney World's Epcot Center since 1982, sharing mariachi music with millions of people over the last several decades.

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2022 SAM Honorary Member Mariachi Cobre.
Photo by Rob Gioromo.

Although we are disappointed that we won't see you in person this year, the Local Arrangements Committee, which consists of Katie Chalstrom, Bob Diaz, Sara Gulgas, Grant Knox, Johanna Lundy, Brian Moon, Jennifer Post, José Louis Puerta, and Matthew Mugmon (chair) is hard at work gathering online resources that we hope will make your virtual visit to Tucson a satisfying one.

See you in March!

Tucson 2022: From the Program Committee

Jacqueline Avila, Program Committee

The Program Committee for the 2022 Tucson Conference invites you to join us virtually for [a robust and varied program of presentations, topics, and scholarly approaches](#). From Broadway and theater to ballads on the U.S.-Mexico border, Mexican and Hollywood film music to viral media, music and incarceration to the American opera scene, this meeting will provide a wide range of themes and topics that reflect the rich and vibrant diversity of contemporary American music scholarship. The program will feature a roundtable led by Susan Thomas and Xóchitl Chávez on their recent collaborative work focusing on the community and soundscapes of Pueblo, Colorado. A new component of this virtual conference will be the addition of 15 minutes

at the end of each session, which will allow participants (both presenters and audience members) in the Zoom room to turn their cameras and microphones on and engage in discussion. We look forward to seeing you virtually in March!



Circa 1930s Postcard from Tichnor Brothers collection in Boston Public Library.

From the President

Daniel Goldmark



Daniel Goldmark, SAM President

Dear Colleagues,

As I write this, we're just a few days into the new year. While the status of the pandemic—and how it affects our lives—changes with each passing day, I'm reminded again and again about the need for mindfulness and patience. Whether we're thinking about how to work effectively in the classroom, as teachers or students, while wearing masks or attending virtually; reconceptualizing how we approach our writing because we don't have access to primary sources, or because our favorite coffeeshop is not allowing folks to sit and write for hours like they used to; if we haven't been able to see loved ones across the country for almost two years, or we're in a situation where our

extended family has been able to "shelter" together—these are just a few of the countless ways in which daily routines have shifted and long-term goals have been adjusted, sometimes with little or no warning. Our ability to support ourselves

and others as the pandemic and its myriad societal effects continue to unfold depends on our ability to think of others and to act when we can.

One way in which our members have supported one another, even in such a precarious time, is our recently completed and successful campaign to raise funds to support student travel. An anonymous donor came to the SAM Board of Directors with a challenge grant: the donor would match up to \$10,000 dollars for every dollar donated to the recently-renamed Michael Pisani Student Travel Fund. A variety of interested parties contributed to the fund, including a wide range of SAM members, as well as friends, colleagues, and close associates of Michael Pisani. Impressed with the showing, the anonymous donor issued a challenge to raise an additional \$2,000 in two days, which was met almost immediately. My sincerest thanks go out to everyone who contributed and/or spread the word of the challenge in support of SAM.

Before we know it, we'll be able to see each other again at the virtual conference in early March. Program committee chair Jacqueline Avila, local arrangements chair Matthew Mugmon, and their teams have been working hard on crafting a conference that has something to offer everyone. I'm looking forward to having time to see friends and colleagues, to hear new and innovative research, and to get the news from the figuratively far corners of our field about what's new and interesting. We may not be able to get together in person, but we can still find pleasure in the simple act of being with and supporting one another.

Post-Political Copland: The Nonet for Strings (1961)

Jennifer DeLapp-Birkett

The Nonet for strings is a relatively unknown, mature Copland work ripe for re-discovery by today's listeners. In this pensive, expressive, 17-minute composition for 3 violins, 3 violas, and 3 cellos, Copland interweaves slow, rich sonorities gleaned from his postwar experiments in twelve-tone techniques with sprightly passages reminiscent of his popular Americana style. The Nonet was warmly received by music connoisseurs from the time of its private premiere in Washington, D.C. on March 2, 1961. Its genesis, commissioning, and first performance illustrate Copland's growing connections with international diplomacy and his increasingly transnational position in American society. Only four recordings of the Nonet exist, all more than thirty years old, making the work perfectly suited for a new, 21st-century interpretation.

Copland's Nonet was commissioned by philanthropists Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss—career diplomats, art collectors, and members of the Washington, D.C. elite—to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. Mildred was the multilingual daughter of a 19th-century Congressman and heiress to a patent-medicine fortune. Robert, son of a U.S. Attorney, met the teenage Mildred when their widowed parents married; their own wedding occurred fourteen years later, on April 14, 1908. The couple lived abroad at diplomatic posts in Paris, Brussels, Stockholm, and Buenos Aires—they were honored by the French government for leadership in medical relief during World War I—before retiring in 1933 to Dumbarton Oaks, a 54-acre estate in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

The location of the Nonet's premiere was private, but by no means obscure. The name Dumbarton Oaks acknowledged the estate's long history, which intersected with European interests in 1702, when Queen Anne granted to a British colonel a large tract of Native American land she titled Dumbarton Rock, after a landmark in Scotland. In the 1820s, U.S. Vice President John C. Calhoun lived on a portion of the land grant in a home called The Oaks. When the Blisses purchased that property in 1920, they combined the previous names, christening it "Dumbarton Oaks." Still living abroad, they directed the creation of formal gardens, outbuildings, and new rooms at Dumbarton Oaks to house their world-class collection of medieval and pre-Columbian art.

When the Blisses retired to Dumbarton Oaks in 1933, they remained active in diplomatic circles while developing the estate as a center for the humanities. For their 30th wedding anniversary, they commissioned Stravinsky's Concerto in E flat, *Dumbarton Oaks*, which premiered there in 1938. The estate also played an important role in international diplomacy. During World War II, at the U.S. President's request, Dumbarton Oaks was the site of meetings between world leaders that ultimately led to the formation of the United Nations. In both instances, as with the later Copland commission, the couple wished to remain in the background, requesting that the estate's name, not their own, be attached to the events. In 1946, the couple moved to a nearby home in Georgetown and donated the estate and its collections to Robert's alma mater, Harvard University, as [a research center](#).

Music was important to the Blisses; they frequently held concerts in the elegant music room at Dumbarton Oaks. The music foundation they established in the 1940s continues to commission new American composers, including Joan Tower (2008) and Caroline Shaw (2015). Copland's teacher Nadia Boulanger was a longtime friend of the couple. Not only had she arranged for the 1938 Stravinsky commission, but she also conducted its premiere at Dumbarton Oaks when the composer fell ill. Boulanger may have arranged the Copland commission, too. She was scheduled to conduct the premiere at Dumbarton Oaks on the Blisses' 50th wedding anniversary during her 1958 tour of the United States. That January, however, [Copland wrote to inform her](#) that the work would not be done in time. He ultimately finished it on December 28, 1960. The private premiere took place at Dumbarton Oaks in March 1961, with Copland conducting nine members of the National Symphony Orchestra. Though Boulanger was not on hand to conduct it herself, she was represented in Copland's dedication: "To Nadia Boulanger after forty years of friendship." Robert died the year after the Nonet's premiere, just days after his and Mildred's 54th anniversary.



Aaron Copland in 1962. Photo by CBS Television.

The Nonet commission coincided with Copland's political rehabilitation in Washington after the precarious 1950s. At the time the Blisses' foundation asked Copland for a new work, his reputation was just recovering from a bruising encounter with McCarthyism. Because of Copland's involvement in progressive causes in the 1930s and 1940s (and likely because of his homosexuality), his name had appeared in blacklists, McCarthy accused him of communist sympathies, his music was publicly struck from the 1953 presidential inaugural concert, and his passport was denied renewal. In that context, the endorsement of Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss—Republicans with a distinguished fifty-year diplomatic career—was no doubt both encouraging and helpful to Copland. Robert Bliss had publicly condemned McCarthy's efforts to censor U.S. cultural diplomacy, so his support of the politically beleaguered Copland may well have been intentional. Between the time Copland accepted the Dumbarton Oaks commission and the Nonet's first performance, his reputation in diplomatic circles received another boost: the U.S. State Department—which had previously confiscated his passport—sent him to Russia in 1960 as a Cold War-era cultural ambassador.

Musically, the Nonet shows Copland's search after World War II for a new sound that was less reliant on American folk influences than his famous works of the late 1930s and 1940s. His popular works like *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, *Appalachian Spring*, the Clarinet Concerto, and his Hollywood film scores either quoted American folk tunes or alluded to them. Most of them had clear pitch centers and harmonies based in tradition. But after the war, he told Leonard Bernstein, "I need more chords. I've run out of chords."¹ With the 1950 Piano Quartet, he turned to Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone method to find them. The Nonet is not a twelve-tone work, but its first and last movements are built from three chromatic chords that bear striking similarities to the sonorities of the Quartet. Copland described the Nonet's source chords as "crowded, rather sober, and perhaps somewhat lugubrious."²

While the Nonet's eight-minute central movement does feature Copland's trademark lively rhythms and open textures, the two outer movements are slow and serious. The first movement begins with a slow statement of the three source chords in a low register, their upper voices ascending stepwise. According to Copland, the chords themselves suggested the instrumentation, as they seemed well-suited to a low-range string timbre. As the first movement continues, repeated statements and variations of the chords build to a climax. Double stops, chromaticism, and thickening harmonies contribute to a prolonged expressive angst that is uncommon in Copland.

At the four-minute mark, the middle movement begins with sprightly, imitative syncopation and an open texture. Tonal centers emerge, shifting frequently. Wide-ranging, lyrical, Coplandesque melodies overlap as the texture gradually thickens. The tempo slows as sustained chords appear in a higher register, peppered with stepwise melodic fragments. The movement becomes more sober, its motives heavier, its harmonies denser, and its rhythms simpler. The playful mood that

¹ Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 448.

² Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *The Complete Copland* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2013), 286.

opened the movement returns only briefly before the music veers into an otherworldly, *pianississimo*, *sul ponticello* passage (marked “dragging somewhat”). Bits of lyrical melody float in and out of the texture, followed by a large *ritardando* and the cancellation of all key signatures.

The last movement, like the second, begins without pause. The opening movement’s mood and textures return, but in reverse order. At first, the music is dense, strong, rhythmically active, and emotionally wrought. Over the course of four minutes, steadiness and calm increase, leading back to solemn three-voice chords like those that opened the first movement. One early reviewer, somewhat surprisingly, heard echoes of *Appalachian Spring*.³ Both works do seem to suspend time in their closing minutes with their meditative, unhurried unfolding of chords. Yet *Appalachian Spring*’s spaciousness and sparkling winds are absent from the warm, dense, exclusively string texture of the Nonet. The relative dissonance of the Nonet’s final chords color its ending with greater ambiguity and complexity.

Several traits of the Nonet resonate with Dumbarton Oaks’s emphasis on European and pre-Columbian culture. In addition to housing the Bliss’s extensive collections of artwork and antiques amassed during decades living in Europe and South America, the mansion and grounds had been thoroughly remodeled to create an old-world ethos. The music room was elaborately decorated and furnished in an Italian Renaissance style. Analysts have located references to European music history in the Nonet’s classic arch form, its ensemble’s approximation of a Renaissance-era viol consort, and the *chaconne*-like repetition of the three-chord motive. The chaconne, a repeating bass pattern found in European music from 1600 onward, likely originated in pre-Columbian South America. Copland biographer Howard Pollack notes the composer’s contemporaneous interest in conducting Purcell.⁴ One might say that in the Nonet, Copland uses a mix of ancient and modern influences to position himself and his American commissioners in the broad, transnational context of Western history.

Copland’s intended audience for the Nonet was more specialized than for his Americanist works. No announcements were made heralding an all-American composer’s latest patriotic offering. But scholars quickly seized on it as serious music worthy of analysis, noting Copland’s blend of twelve-tone and diatonic procedures.⁵ Interestingly, all found the former intriguing, but assumed apologetic or dismissive views of his populist, folksong-inspired music, which they called “stunted” or “limited in expression.” In the 1960s, most art-music composers believed music should evolve to become ever more complex. Copland agreed that new music should present new ideas, but he maintained that he could express them in either complex or simple terms. Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, though perhaps less invested than midcentury composers in music’s technical advancement, did believe art was best appreciated through careful study. The Nonet, accordingly, contains something for analysts to deconstruct, along with readily perceptible emotions: a sense of old-world influence heard through modern dissonance, touched by moments of lightness and lyricism, weighty yet gentle.

The Nonet received about fifteen performances in its first two decades, many of them conducted by the composer. Copland, Boulanger, Virgil Thomson and Walter Piston attended the New York premiere at the Museum of Modern Art on April 5, 1962, and in 1964, William Steinberg led the New York Philharmonic in performances using the augmented string forces that Copland authorized in the score: no double basses, equal numbers of cellos and violas, and twice as many violins divided among the three upper parts. Performances were rare until the Copland centennial; since then, chamber groups or orchestras have programmed it about a dozen times.

At present, there are only four commercially available recordings of the Nonet. The two most recent are from 1990: Dennis Russell Davies with the St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble and [William Boughton’s with the English Symphony Orchestra](#). A recording Copland made in April 1962 with the Columbia String Ensemble, first released on an all-Copland album in 1974, was re-released in 2000; William Steinberg’s New York Philharmonic performance of the chamber orchestra version from November 22, 1964 still circulates. In Steinberg’s hands, the work is tight in texture and pacing, at just over 16 minutes, and crisply shaped. Boughton’s performance, which is more pensive and atmospheric, is two-and-a-half minutes longer. The St. Luke’s performance combines crispness in the faster central section with careful shaping of phrases throughout, especially at sectional transitions; Russell Davies elicits from the ensemble noteworthy timbral variety and dynamic contrasts that

³ Alan Rich, “Showcase Offers Music by Chanler,” *The New York Times*, 6 April 1962.

⁴ Pollock, *Aaron Copland*, 491.

⁵ See, for instance, P.A.E., “Nonet for Strings,” *Music and Letters* 43, no. 4 (1962): 378; Stephen Plaistow, “Some Notes on Copland’s Nonet,” *Tempo* 64 (Spring 1963): 6–11; Eric Salzman and Paul Des Marais, “Aaron Copland’s *Nonet*: Two Views,” *Perspectives of New Music* 1, no. 1 (1962): 172–179.

culminate in a transcendent ending. Though perhaps less tight, Copland's own performance reveals his personal vision for the work, including a second movement with a uniquely sprightly, slightly dry bounce.

In the Nonet, Copland moves beyond mid-century aesthetics that pitted modernist dissonance against nationalist neotonalism (which dichotomy Copland himself had explored in his 1950 Piano Quartet).⁶ Now, two decades into the twenty-first century, a contemporary performance of the Nonet could treat the work's postwar modernism and its populist nationalism with equal nostalgia. Moreover, a modern-day hearing in the intimate chamber scoring might allow Copland's expressive voice to encompass and surpass the reductionistic categories too often imposed on his output. Listeners today may be ready for a mature, multi-dimensional Copland.

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New *Bulletin* Editorial Team

SAM is pleased to announce the next *Bulletin* editorial team: Megan Steigerwald Ille will serve as general editor, Elizabeth Uchimura as book review editor, and Sam Parler as layout and media review editor. They will take the reins in fall 2022. Thank you, Megan, Elizabeth, and Sam!

⁶ Jennifer DeLapp[Birkett], "Copland in the Fifties: Music and Ideology in the McCarthy Era" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1997) and "Dialogue without Words: Identities and Dichotomies in Copland's Piano Quartet," in *Rethinking American Music*, eds. Thomas Riis and Tara Browner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 247–78.

Call for *Bulletin* Contributions

The *Bulletin* editorial board invites members to contribute feature articles, reviews, and news, as well as ideas for future *Bulletin* segments or series. We welcome essays and opinion pieces on current issues in American music (broadly conceived) and music scholarship; reports on concerts and conferences of interest to our membership; transcriptions of interviews with prominent persons in American musical life; reviews of recent books, online resources, media (including albums and documentaries) pertaining to American music; and updates on our members' scholarly, creative, and professional activities. You can contact members of the editorial board via the [SAM website](#) or via the email addresses listed at the bottom of the *Bulletin* issue.

Book Reviews

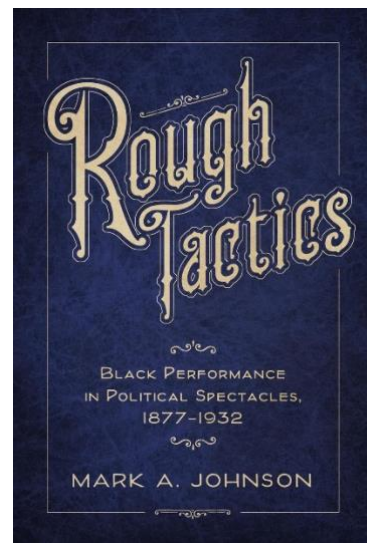
[*Rough Tactics: Black Performance in Political Spectacles, 1877–1932*](#). Mark A. Johnson. The University Press of Mississippi, 2021. 250 pp. ISBN: 9781496832832. Paperback.

Isaac Maupin, University of Kentucky

Many adjectives can describe America, some more accurately than others. After reading Mark A. Johnson's *Rough Tactics*, I have settled on a single adjective that fits the book's presentation of nineteenth-century America: wild. Perhaps this is too easy, though. After all, the late nineteenth century was the time of the "Wild West" romanticized by nearly one hundred years' worth of songs, books, and films. Johnson shows us, however, that the wilderness was not limited to the frontier of the American West's open range. The East was wild, too. This Eastern American wilderness was of a different ilk: a wilderness wrought by people, not by nature. A wilderness that was, in its essence, political. At its center was the grand public spectacle. Parades, mock funerals, and political rallies march across the pages of *Rough Tactics*—led mostly by anonymous Black musicians—and Johnson proves that, even when marginalized by disenfranchisement, Black Americans were a powerful public political force.

Subtitled *Black Performance in Political Spectacles, 1877–1932*, Johnson's monograph centers on political events and movements primarily in the South from the end of Reconstruction leading up to the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Focusing on Black Americans during the transitional period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries emphasizes the precarious role of Black people in American political spectacle. In the nineteenth century, the participation of recently enfranchised Black voters in elections was often celebrated by the winning side, vilified by the losing side. Later, in the twentieth century, Jim Crow laws effectively erased Black voting power, but, as we see in Johnson's book, Black Americans still found political power through public spectacle. The book falls into two parts—each dedicates two chapters to the respective centuries—connected by a bridge chapter that discusses the 1903 United Confederate Veterans Reunion held in New Orleans.

The streets of Clinton, North Carolina set the scene of the first chapter. Local Democrats parade an effigy of Marion Butler, an unpopular populist candidate, to bury in a freshly dug grave. Through careful readings of primary sources throughout the chapter, Johnson presents vivid retellings of many spectacular political occasions across the South. He emphasizes that Black musicians performed for all major political parties. Sometimes, through their performances for the more reprehensible white supremacists, Black musicians subverted or mocked the speaker through their choice of musical material or by their mere presence. In a nearly quantitative manner, Johnson classifies types of spectacles uncovered through his research. Generally, Black performers supported Republican candidates through music, speeches, fireworks, and other public street performances. Democrats, on the other hand, did not receive the same enthusiasm. While Black people still participated in spectacles for Democrat politicians, usually they were merely hired performers who thus gained access to spaces where other Black Americans were not welcome. The musical selections played at these rallies profoundly impacted their public reception. Notably, Black performers turned an 1892 rally for Tennessee's Governor John P. Buchanan into a funeral by playing dirges as the horse-drawn coach processed. The chapter gives additional attention to Black participation in third parties like Virginia's Readjusters, various labor movement parties, and the People's Party. These third parties relied on the



Black vote for success and often appealed to the interests of poor whites in coalition with Black voters. Throughout the later nineteenth century, prohibition was a hot political topic; in the next chapter, Johnson details two spectacular Georgia prohibition campaigns.

Titled “A Contest in Music,” the second chapter focuses on spectacular performances in temperance campaigns in Atlanta and Macon in the 1890s. Many of the tactics outlined in the first chapter appear again. Prohibition, like third parties, split the white vote, granting power to the Black voting bloc. Wets and dries alike employed the power of Black spectacle. Johnson covers three local option elections with meticulous detail: 1885 and 1887 in Atlanta and 1898 in Macon. National newspapers closely covered the 1885 election in Atlanta; prohibition was a hot issue, and this Atlanta election had the potential to effect change elsewhere. The wets and the dries both made appeals in the local Atlanta press that received national syndication. The true power of their campaigns, though, was in the spectacle. Mass-attended rallies on either side offered communities “educational arguments” as well as parades, barbecues, and of course, music (58). On election day, voters gathered by affiliation and marched to the polls as bands played music. Polling places were spectacular in themselves, as campaigners solicited votes and the public gathered to hear results. After the results came in (1885: Prohibition, 1887: Repeal, 1898: Macon stays wet), the winners celebrated in the streets. By 1898, temperance had become much more racialized. Johnson cites a widely publicized riot at a Tampa military base that began with the arrest of “an intoxicated Black soldier (74).” Prohibitionists used the image of the inebriate Black man to push their agenda. Throughout his survey of these developments, Johnson expertly describes the Black musician’s precarity. On election day in Macon, Black anti-prohibition bands confronted choirs of white women singing prohibition hymns. Throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century, Georgia and other states started to disenfranchise Black voters through poll taxes and other violent acts of white supremacy. In the subsequent chapters, Johnson captures the political voice of disenfranchised Black America in the early twentieth century.

While the so-called “bridge” chapter departs from electoral spectacle, its topic is no less political or spectacular. The 1903 United Confederate Veterans Reunion was a sight to see. An estimated mob of 150,000 veterans and people who came to celebrate the white supremacist myth of the “Lost Cause”—a reframing of the Civil War as a defense of an antebellum Southern utopia complete with happy slaves and benevolent masters—descended upon New Orleans. At the center of this chapter is tension between local segregated (but cooperative) chapters of the American Federation of Musicians and the event’s UCV organizers. The reunion’s key public spectacle was a massive, four-mile parade in New Orleans. Although the organizing committee desired twenty (all white) bands, the AFM bargained to produce fifteen bands, both Black and white. The UCV rejected this offer and opted to use non-union bands. In retaliation, the AFM appealed to other labor unions in New Orleans to boycott the reunion. This action sparked controversy locally and nationally. People of both races criticized the UCV’s unwillingness to have Black musicians lead their parade—white supremacists argued that having Black musicians would reinforce nostalgia for the “Old South” and support the Lost Cause. Those in support of the UCV generally lobbed white supremacist arguments against the biracialization of labor unions. In the end, the AFM backed down, but the music at the reunion was played entirely by scabs.

In the third chapter, Johnson provides robust examples of spectacular Black performances in the twentieth century. Temperance campaigns—much like the preceding Macon campaign—vilified Black voters. Temperance laws became more successful after many southern states passed poll taxes and literacy requirements that effectively disenfranchised much of the Black community. Johnson emphasizes that Black people expressed their political power through public spectacle, even when intellectual politics outlawed such displays. Through rough music, hired Black bands could humiliate candidates in the solidly Democratic South. Southern Black voters showed up en masse for third parties like Teddy Roosevelt’s Bull Moose Party or the Communist Party of America. Decorated Black veterans of the First World War were often celebrated through parades but only when those honored could also play racist stereotypes. The chapter concludes with some attention on Northern Black voters following the Great Migration and the shift of the Black vote to the Democratic ticket with Franklin Roosevelt.

The final chapter details the 1909 Memphis Mayoral race. For any candidate to succeed, they had to cater to the Black vote (approximately 2,000 of the 11,000 votes). To do so, campaigns employed Black bands to play in saloons on (then) Beale Avenue, while campaigners and registered voters paid their poll taxes and gave them pre-marked ballots. W.C. Handy, according to Johnson, rose to fame during this campaign. Employed by Walter Crump, Handy and his band performed to large audiences with their successful blues hit “Mr. Crump,” later published by Handy as “Memphis Blues.”

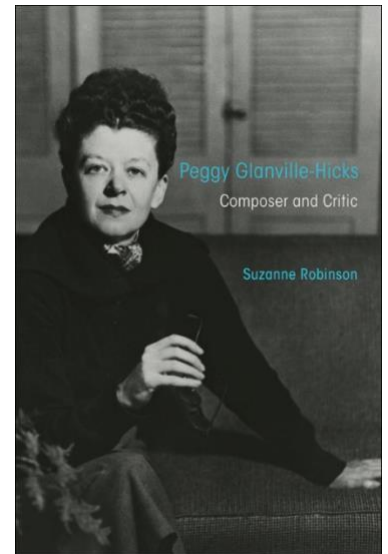
Throughout *Rough Tactics*, Johnson's careful research blossoms into vividly imagined historical scenes. While the descriptions alone are compelling, his work also contextualizes these spectacles in the overt white supremacist society of turn-of-the-century United States. Like any work, Johnson's book is not immaculate. If considered as a text of music history, it certainly falls short. Electoral history is at the fore, and music generally feels like an afterthought. There is also scant discussion of theory or methodology, leaving some of the chapters to feel like uncritical lists of events, albeit beautifully described. Overall, *Rough Tactics* succeeds in exposing the political wilderness of the American East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and champions the political voice of disenfranchised Black America.

[*Peggy Glanville-Hicks: Composer and Critic*](#). Suzanne Robinson. University of Illinois Press, 2019. 314 pp. ISBN: 9780252084393. Paperback.

Amanda Paruta

Suzanne Robinson's portrait of composer and critic Peggy Glanville-Hicks paints a vivid account of risk-class living in the mid-twentieth century. *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: Composer and Critic* thoroughly investigates the conditions under which women musicians and composers worked, including unfair wages, discriminatory hiring, and limited performance opportunities, while battling state-sanctioned oppression.

This book is organized in four parts, its subdivided chapters capturing time periods of varying lengths—some two or three years, others five, and some specifically addressing Glanville-Hicks's endeavors to stage larger works. The work is full of characters: names of well-known figures punctuate lists of Glanville-Hicks's lesser-known acquaintances and relatives. There are no introductions or conclusions, instead, readers are gripped by Robinson's prosodic narrative, following along as the composer's life unfolds: misfortune following success, struggling to survive, receiving awards, ad infinitum. Readers dart across Europe, the United States, Australia, and briefly visit Asia, peering into the appropriation of non-Western music traditions, unable to pause and allow ethical contemplation.



Robinson relays in great detail the formative moments in the early life of Glanville-Hicks (referred to in the familiar Peggy throughout the book), including her parents' introduction in England and relocation to Australia. Not often part of American World War I discourse, Robinson reminds readers that Australia sustained economic blows and loss of life in the wake of global conflict. An inevitable step in her musical career, Glanville-Hicks departed in 1932 at the age of twenty for Europe, a landscape sharply contrasting her middle-class Australian childhood. Far away from the countryside, where she was insulated against the thanklessness of everyday wage earning, the young composer begins experiencing risk-class living. The length of Part One speaks to its foundational contents regarding Glanville-Hicks's life circumstances and nascent Anglo-Australian-American style. Robinson keenly injects Glanville-Hicks's difficulty finding employment after marriage (due to regulations targeting married women) into the broader context of labor trends, including the lack of work and the rising number of women attempting to penetrate the barrier between themselves and stable work in composition and criticism.

Scouring through letters, interviews, diary entries, photographs, film, and early biographic work, Robinson renders a complicated image of a woman witnessing modern history's greatest sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes. Landscapes shifting beneath the text present opportunities to set Peggy Glanville-Hicks against the Harlem Renaissance, adoption and repeal of Jim Crow laws, the first moon landings, and transcontinental economic disasters. At times, Robinson's portrait is less grounded in documentary detail; she chooses to allude to particular sentiments held by Glanville-Hicks (particularly racist and anti-Semitic), as well as speculating as to the state of her affections and motivations for making decisions regarding travel and romance. This does not detract from the success of creating an image of an early woman composer within the American soundscape, but could have led to more fruitful discussion of the trajectory of classical music and music criticism rooted in traditional practices.

Circumscribing direct criticism of Glanville-Hicks's personality, beliefs, and interpersonal relationships (barring romantic affairs) suggests objectivity. It misses, however, an opportunity to complete an image of Glanville-Hicks's impact on friends

and family, and leaves her open to harsh criticism regarding her approach to intimacy. The introduction suggests Glanville-Hicks was incapable of forming friendships with women, and too often attempted to convert her obsessions into romances without developing a view of the obsession itself. Readers are presented with instances of unrequited love, but the text does not interrogate whether or not obsessions are synonymous with love, the circumstances facilitating obsession, and if that obsession impacted her career in a non-detrimental manner. The account given in Parts Two and Three drifts too closely to one of a damsel with a broken heart. The text eventually reveals a main character, however, who—despite being ensnared by obsessions—befriends women and men, while championing artists whose work she found extraordinary. Readers are escorted through Glanville-Hicks’s development as a composer, an author, and a citizen.

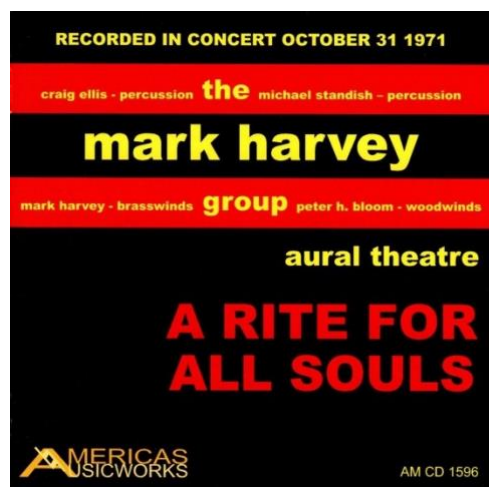
Without excess provocation, Robinson permits readers to ask whether or not they should feel sympathy toward the blighted composer, but does not directly address the treatment Glanville-Hicks received. Robinson creates space for opposing views, yet it is impossible to deny the rampant sexism, racism, and elitism of classical music throughout history. Although ambitious, obsessive, Glanville-Hicks was undoubtedly hindered by her sex. At the end of a whirlwind of travels, honors, and failures, there is certain possibility of using this book as a lens through which to understand the twentieth century. Ornamented with Robinson’s brilliant musical descriptions, *Peggy Glanville-Hicks: Composer and Critic* is accessible to various readers and does not demand knowledge of musical jargon. The work lends itself well to feminist, Marxist, and psychoanalytical readings, and would benefit those working within twentieth-century scholarship, as well as generally curious readers.

Media Review

[*A Rite for All Souls*](#). The Mark Harvey Group. Americas Musicworks, 2020. CD 1596.

Samuel Parler, Baylor University

Comprising musicians from classical, jazz, and pop worlds, the midcentury avant-garde reveled in challenging boundaries: between musical genres, between the plastic and performing arts, and between art and activism. Based in Boston in the early 1970s, the Mark Harvey Group (MHG) embodied these electrifying contradictions. Multi-instrumentalists Mark Harvey (brass) and Peter H. Bloom (winds) formed the nucleus of the group; Harvey later founded the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, a Boston mainstay, and both remain active as musicians and educators. Deeply influenced by the Art Ensemble of Chicago, MHG embraced the experimental ethos of the era, developing an intermedia approach they called “aural theatre.” The two-disc recording *A Rite for All Souls* presents a live performance from October 31, 1971—All Hallows’ Eve—staged in Boston’s Old West Church. Percussionists Craig Ellis and Michael Standish joined Harvey and Bloom to present the two-act performance. In 2018, Harvey rediscovered the original reel-to-reel tapes in his basement and partnered with independent label Americas Musicworks to release the remastered recording in 2020. *A Rite for All Souls* thus provides a fascinating, if limited, snapshot of Boston’s vibrant avant-garde scene during an era of unprecedented social upheaval.



The music here is contemplative and spare, aiming for a spiritual intensity amplified by the venue and theatrical elements. Silences and sparse textures focus attention on timbral and dynamic contrasts. Like many avant-garde improvisers, Harvey and Bloom embraced angular, dissonant melodies and novel sounds such as multiphonics, while Ellis and Standish performed on found objects and instruments drawn from African and Asian traditions. The sound quality of the recording is stunningly clear, with virtually no hiss or audience noise—the digital transfer and mastering are commendable. Formally, the piece divides into two acts, with periodic recitations of apocalyptic poetry, such as William Butler Yeats’s *The Second Coming*, providing additional structure. While the entire 96-minute performance is presented as just six CD tracks, the slipcase offers a helpful listing of “sonic landmarks” that allow listeners to locate recitations and other formal junctures within each track. Religious and occult iconography at the 1971 performance reinforced the sense of multicultural

mysticism. Performers entered the venue wearing monk’s robes, and two poster-size tarot cards flanked the stage throughout the performance; reproductions are included in the liner notes. This is all fascinating material, and the recording

will likely appeal to scholars and fans of 1960s free jazz in its more spiritual guises. Nevertheless, the recording alone feels incomplete, unable to capture the work's fundamental theatricality.

The accompanying slipcase and liner notes are deeply informative despite their modest dimensions. In addition to track and personnel listings, the case includes the text of Ellis's poem *Napalm: Rice Paper*, brief biographies of each musician with postage-size photographs, and reflections by Bloom and Harvey on the performance and its cultural context. The centerpiece is Harvey's essay, "The Mark Harvey Group in Context: Old West Church, the 'New Boston,' and Currents of Change." As Harvey explains, urban renewal programs of the 1960s displaced several Boston communities to make way for downtown's Government Center and the Charles River Park apartments. The nearby Old West Church supported those impacted via meals, medical and legal aid, and arts programming. Harvey, then serving as an intern-minister at the church, helped to inaugurate its weekly Jazz Celebrations and annual Jazz All Nite concerts. MHG became Resident Jazz Ensemble, leading to its performance of *A Rite for All Souls*. Elsewhere in the essay, Harvey alludes to wider concerns, such as Boston's desegregation efforts and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, but their connections to MHG's performances go underexplored. For example, Ellis's *Napalm: Rice Paper* recitation clearly articulated an antiwar perspective, while the interfaith borrowings of the performance also seemed rife with political import. These might have received further reflection. Likewise, discussion of the music's reception would have been welcome—who and how many comprised the audience that October night, and to what extent did they experience it as a political, spiritual, or otherwise landmark performance? Of course, spatial constraints limit full discussion of these issues in liner notes. Interested readers may thus find it helpful to consult Harvey's 2016 monograph, *The Boston Creative Jazz Scene, 1970–1983*.

Free jazz historiography has grappled with the genre's political stance—some openly equated radical sound with radical politics, while others eschewed efforts to politicize avant-garde aesthetics. The Mark Harvey Group fell clearly in the former camp. Even as it leaves you wanting more, this recording captures a shimmering performance in which radical art betokened a compassionate, communitarian ideal.

Bulletin Board & Member News

J. Michele Edwards's article entitled "Chen Yi: Trauma, Myths, and Representation" was published in December 2021 in *The Routledge Handbook of Women's Work in Music*, edited by Rhiannon Mathias. Information about this volume is available at <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Womens-Work-in-Music/Mathias/p/book/9780367192099>. Edwards also presented an invited guest lecture, "Composer Chen Yi and the Cultural Revolution," on Zoom for the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, East Asia Program at Syracuse University on October 28, 2021.

The in-person conference "Theorizing African American Music," June 16–18, 2022, with a keynote by Emory University's Dwight Andrews, will take place at Case Western Reserve University on June 16–18, 2022. Come one, come all. For more info on the conference click here: <https://case.edu/artsci/music/taam-conf-06.16-18.2022>.

Kyle Gann writes: "In 2019 I photographed the manuscript of George Bristow's Symphony No. 4, the "Arcadian" (1872), in the New York Public Library archive. I input the score into Sibelius and interested conductor Leon Botstein in performing it. As an eventual result (delayed a year by COVID), the piece was once again performed, for the first time in decades, at Bard College on November 13 and 14, 2021, and at Carnegie Hall on November 18, with Maestro Botstein conducting The Orchestra Now. The piece is being recorded for commercial release; the only previous recording, by Karl Krueger in 1967, made large cuts, so this will be the first recording of the entire work, one of the best American symphonies of the 19th century. My analysis of the piece is at <https://www.kylegann.com/Bristow4.html>."

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