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Charles Ives: A Bio-Bibliography by Geoffrey Block (review)

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Abravanel, but Karajan's comments about the necessity of remaining with one orchestra over a long period of time relate directly to Abravanel's achievements as the person responsible for the rise of the Utah Symphony from a community orchestra in 1947 to a highly respected ensemble when he retired in 1979. The Utah Symphony was as much Abravanel's own as the Berlin Philharmonic was Karajan's. Serving as a liaison between the Symphony and the University where he was a Professor of Music from 1948, Lowell Durham was in a unique position to pen this biography. In addition, his involvement in the Summer Festival between 1949 and 1965, as well as the Contemporary Music Festival founded by Abravanel, kept him in close contact with the conductor. This biography "contains reminiscences, recollections, memories, and warm feelings about the most distin-

guished musical figure in Utah history" (p. ix). The absence of any real analysis of the conductor's live and recorded programs, however, sets the book up as a piece of journalism and public relations rather than as a serious study of the musical contributions of a dedicated artist who managed to put an out-of-the-way city on the cultural map of the United States. "A builder rather than a fine-tuner," Abravanel was "a citizen first and an artist second. Which is why he stayed for thirty-two years and became a legend 'somewhere west of Denver'" (p. 205). Fundamentally, this book is an appropriate gesture to Utah's "solid citizen." It chronicles the surface of events without making any effort to plumb broader artistic or cultural questions.

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AMERICAN MUSIC

Charles Ives: A Bio-bibliography. By Geoffrey Block. Foreword by J. Peter Burkholder. (Bio-bibliographies in Music, 14.) New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. [xviii, 422 p. ISBN 0-313-2504-4. \$55.00.]

It is always a pleasure to discover a new appliance that will make your life both easier and more orderly, a tool to help you save time yet still enjoy the expended effort, a resource that not only assembles but also categorizes and annotates the bits and pieces of your scholarly pursuits. As J. Peter Burkholder aptly points out in the foreword to Geoffrey Block's new Charles Ives biobibliography, "there is now one place to look" for such information.

In fact, Burkholder's four-page opening statement affords an unexpected bonus to this comprehensive sourcebook. His foreword provides a succinct overview and evaluation of the present state of Ives research while proposing new avenues for the next generation of scholars. Among these, Burkholder advocates continued efforts to prepare new critical editions of yet unpublished compositions and older, corrupt versions of major works, as well as of Ives's letters, diaries, and other memoranda. He also calls for renewed efforts in correcting

Ives's problematic dating of compositions and mentions several newer studies, including the controversial article by Maynard Solomon (*Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 [1987]: 443-70), that have begun to address this issue.

Following the general pattern of Greenwood's series, the body of the book is divided into a biographical summary, a list of works and selected performances, a discography, the main bibliographic entries, six appendixes, and both an author and a general index. Block keeps the eight-page biography brief by presenting a "factual sketch" that includes segments about the composer's father and his influence, Ives's undergraduate years at Yale University, his years in the insurance business, his marriage and relationship to Harmony Twichell, and so forth. The author also addresses several controversies here, including why Ives's compositional output was all but curtailed after the early 1920s. Some may question the utility of such a condensed biographical summary, but Block is careful to cite relevant studies and authors that are discussed within the annotations that follow. Thus, the novice reader quickly understands that authors such as John Kirkpatrick, Frank Rossiter, Henry and Sidney Cowell, J. Peter Burkholder, and Ives himself must all be consulted if an

understanding of this man's life and works is to be gained.

The section listing both works and performances is essentially complete concerning the former (285 pieces are specified, corresponding for the most part to Kirkpatrick's *Temporary Mimeographed Catalogue* [New Haven: Yale University, 1960] and his Ives article in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* [London: Macmillan, 1980]) and necessarily selective concerning the latter. Block provides information about the premiere of each composition, if known or relevant, along with facts about other noteworthy performances and "references to commentaries from performance reviews" found in the bibliography. Of course, it is always difficult to decide which performances to include in such a list (why, for instance, are there no references for the Second and Third Symphonies other than the premieres?), but since the number of performances during Ives's lifetime was so limited and rarely documented, Block's citations are most welcome.

Unfortunately, the discography includes only those sixty-seven recordings readily available as of summer 1987. It thus duplicates the listing for Ives in the *Schwann* catalogue at that time and was destined to go out-of-date quickly. In compensation, Block refers the reader both to Richard Warren's extremely thorough discography, which contains all Ives recordings issued before 1972, and to Carol Oja's discography, which covers 1972–1979. However, one quickly realizes that a comprehensive, annotated discography of all Ives recordings is long overdue and that Block seems to be going through the motions here rather than providing a resource that is as useful as the rest of the book.

The principal component is, of course, the annotated references that characterize the 817 books, articles, dissertations, and reviews in the bibliography itself. Block subdivides this section into four categories, but over 700 entries appear under either biographical/stylistic/critical studies or commentaries on the compositions themselves. The author's rationale for including or excluding materials is generally well taken, concentrating as he does on those writings that have appeared since the 1974 centennial of Ives's birth.

Naturally, one hopes that the annota-

tions will prove even more useful than the listings they characterize, and Block is usually able to fulfill this expectation. Using descriptive phrases like "adequately detailed," "cursory summary," "somewhat hostile," and "forcefully argued," he quickly but capably familiarizes the reader with each entry. Block is tough but fair, and he deals even-handedly with flawed or controversial writings such as David Wooldridge's biography *From the Steeples and Mountains* (New York: Knopf, 1974) and its various reviews. At other times, however, Block's opinion is less evident, and the reader may wish for more evaluation instead of a succession of brief quotations extracted from the work under discussion. Six appendixes, including an alphabetical list of compositions and a chronological list of dissertations, theses, and senior essays, conclude the volume.

To sum up, despite a few tolerable problems *Charles Ives: A Bio-bibliography* is a definitive sourcebook for both scholars and students, and as such it should facilitate further investigations into this controversial composer's life and music. Geoffrey Block's compendium thus belongs on any basic reference shelf with the other standards of Ives research, among them the recent *The Charles Ives Tunebook* by Clayton W. Henderson (Bibliographies in American Music, 14; Warren, Mich.: Harmonie Park Press, 1990) and the long-hoped-for catalogue raisonné from Yale University Press due to be published next year.

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The Charles Ives Tunebook. By Clayton W. Henderson. (Bibliographies in American Music, 14.) Warren, Mich.: Harmonie Park Press, 1990. [xvi, 292 p. ISBN 0-89990-050-X. \$50.00.]

For years, students of Charles Ives have relied on the appendixes of Clayton W. Henderson's important dissertation, *Quotation as a Style Element in the Music of Charles Ives* (Ph.D., Washington University, 1969) as the principal repository for the 171 melodies Ives was then known to have borrowed in his own compositions. In its beautifully produced revised format the belated but extremely welcome arrival of Hend-