

**AMERICAN MUSIC
RESEARCH CENTER
JOURNAL**

Volume 18

2010

Thomas L. Riis, Editor-in-Chief

American Music Research Center
College of Music
University of Colorado at Boulder

THE AMERICAN MUSIC RESEARCH CENTER

Thomas L. Riis, Director
Laurie J. Sampsel, Curator
Eric J. Harbeson, Archivist
Sister Mary Dominic Ray, O.P. (1913–1994), Founder
Karl Kroeger, Archivist Emeritus
William Kearns, Senior Fellow
Daniel Sher, Dean, College of Music
William S. Farley, Research Assistant, 2009–2010
K. Dawn Grapes, Research Assistant, 2009–2011

EDITORIAL BOARD

C. F. Alan Cass	Kip Lornell
Susan Cook	Portia Maultsby
Robert R. Fink	Tom C. Owens
William Kearns	Katherine Preston
Karl Kroeger	Jessica Sternfeld
Paul Laird	Joanne Swenson-Eldridge
Victoria Lindsay Levine	Graham Wood

The American Music Research Center Journal is published annually. Subscription rate is \$25.00 per issue (\$28.00 outside the U.S. and Canada). Please address all inquiries to Lisa Bailey, American Music Research Center, 288 UCB, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0288. E-mail: lisa.bailey@colorado.edu
The American Music Research Center website address is www.amrccolorado.org

ISSN 1058-3572

© 2010 by the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The *American Music Research Center Journal* is dedicated to publishing articles of general interest about American music, particularly in subject areas relevant to its collections. We welcome submission of articles and proposals from the scholarly community, ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 words (excluding notes).

All articles should be addressed to Thomas L. Riis, College of Music, University of Colorado at Boulder, 301 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309-0301. Each separate article should be submitted in two double-spaced, single-sided hard copies. All musical examples, figures, tables, photographs, etc., should be accompanied by a list of captions. Their placement in the paper should be clearly indicated. If a manuscript is accepted for publication by the editorial committee, the author will be asked to supply a brief biographical paragraph and an electronic mail attachment with the text, sent to thomas.riis@colorado.edu. Once accepted, the preparation of final copy in electronic form will require the following: abstract of no more than 200 words; article text in MS Word with list of references (.doc). Musical examples and figures for final production should be high resolution tiff or eps images.

In general the *AMRC Journal* follows the formats and guidelines of the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). For further instructions on footnotes, bibliography, discographic references, etc., please consult this volume or the research assistants.

*Am
Arc*

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
THOMAS L. RIIS	
Jean Berger (1909–2002): A Biographical Chronology	1
LINDA L. GIEDL	
Jean Berger: A “Good Neighbor” in the United States	39
CAROL A. HESS	
Composer Meets Critic, Part Two: Selected Excerpts of the Jean Berger/ Henry Pleasants Correspondence	53
with an introduction by LINDA L. GIEDL	
In Honor of Jean Berger and His Gifts	97
TOM MACCLUSKEY	
Contributors to This Issue	107

*Am
Arc*

Preface

Like many of his fans, I first met Jean Berger through his music. The small Protestant church in whose choir I sang during my adolescence included his short anthem, “The Eyes of All Wait Upon Thee,” in its library. On first hearing, I was captivated by its graceful lines and mild dissonances and enjoyed performing it privately at my piano for years. During this same period, my high school choral director led us through a reading of Berger’s “Brazilian Psalm,” although its rhythms proved too tricky for us teenage amateurs, and it was rapidly shelved.

Fast-forward three decades to the 1990s at the beginning of my directorship of the American Music Research Center in Boulder. Part of my charge was to build the center’s archival collections of living composers, and I noted in the course of my research that Jean Berger apparently still resided in Denver. This fact was confirmed by a chance meeting with Rita, Jean’s wife, shortly after I had rediscovered his name. Though not then living with Jean, Rita assured me that they were still the best of friends and that I shouldn’t hesitate to contact him mentioning her name as I did so.

The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn about this brilliant, sly, witty, charming, determined, and highly productive man. When we finally met in person—in Denver over lunch as I recall—we hit it off immediately. In the course of time, the Jean Berger Collection was created at the AMRC, and concerts of his music were performed with the help of my faculty colleagues and Denver’s St. Martin’s Chamber Choir under the direction of Timothy Krueger. In 2000, this journal published a significant portion of the correspondence between Berger and the Philadelphia-trained, London-based music critic Henry Pleasants.

The present volume is entirely devoted to the life, music, and impact of Jean Berger. It has finally come to fruition owing to the care and generosity of several individuals: Jean’s son and heir Jonathan Berger; Jean’s mentee, one-time colleague, and long-time friend, Tom MacCluskey; and Jean’s devoted former student Linda Giedl. (Rita Berger died in 2006). Linda’s professional experience, as musician and journalist, made her the perfect individual to compile a chronology of Berger’s life and an edition of his letters. Her unstinting care and dedication has been crucial to this enterprise. I cannot express too strongly my gratitude for the work of these three, but especially for Linda’s help.

T.L.R.

*Am
Arc*

Linda L. Giedl

Jean Berger (1909–2002)—A Biographical Chronology

What is it that fills my life's space and, with it, time?

I do believe that for me it is motion.

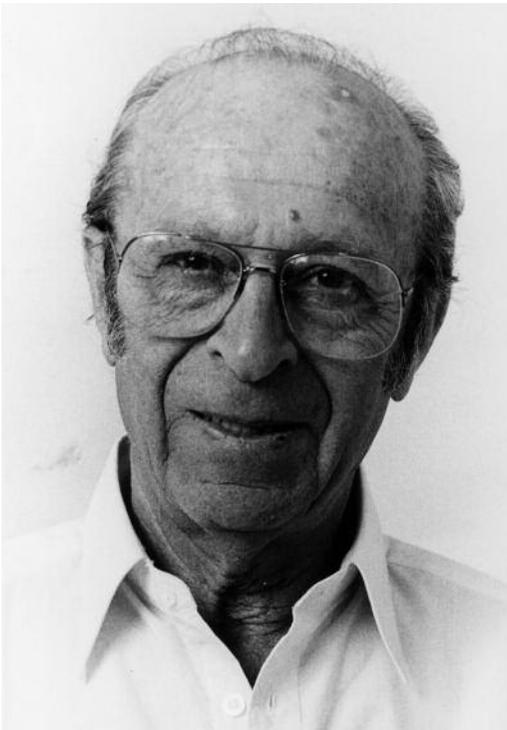
. . . time does not slow down anymore.

We have to . . . somehow fill it with enough substance of value . . .

that there may be no regret when moving only knows

one more target beyond which there is no going.

letter to a friend, May 9, 1989



JEAN BERGER, 1990.
Courtesy of the American
Music Research Center.

This chronology does not attempt to catalog the many hundreds of performances, professional engagements, articles and lectures, commissions, compositions (about 300), premieres, and awards that occupied Jean Berger from the 1930s until his death in 2002. Nor does it offer conclusions that might be reached with a comprehensive study of his manuscripts and published scores. Rather, it strives to present the long sweep of his life, important formative events, professional high points, key relationships and positions, and choices that ultimately shaped the life of this “highly complex personality.” Dates and places mentioned are meant to suggest, but can only hint at, the extent and frequency of his professional and personal travels. Most content derives from Berger’s own recollections as recorded in oral interviews, published articles, his diaries and scrapbooks, two unpublished memoirs, and hundreds of his many thousands of letters, personal and professional. Berger’s memory of events was remarkably detailed and consistent, but there are discrepancies. Generally speaking the choice has been 1) to leave the details and/or dating of some events approximate, 2) to select the most convincing, or logical, of several accounts of the same circumstance, or 3) to finally ferret out indisputably correct dates/facts, some from outside sources.

1909

SEPTEMBER 27: Born in Hamm, Westphalia, in north central Germany, the first child and only son of orthodox Jewish parents. Not citizens of Germany, his Polish mother and Austrian father (Emanuel Schlossberg) are part of a westward migration of Jews from Eastern Europe, whose eventual hoped-for destination is the United States. They name their son Artur.

1911

MARCH 12: His only sibling, a sister Claire, is born. He will share with her an indissoluble lifelong bond despite catastrophic ruptures, dislocations and permanent settlement in different parts of the world, all precipitated by the rise to power of National Socialism in 1933.

1914

A maid reports to Artur’s mother, when he is not yet five, “People are saying the war has started.” AUGUST 3: Germany declares war on France. The family’s struggles now involve the search for enough to eat. (“Rutabaga and all sorts of ‘Ersatz’ became our food.”) Artur’s most powerful childhood memory is a happy one: propelling his four-wheeled toy “Hollander” cart by pushing and pulling a wooden handle. These childhood voyages of discovery awaken such “transcendental bliss” in the boy that spontaneous free roaming (“unimpeded mobility”) becomes his manner of living in the world.

1915–18

As he begins grammar school at a small one-room school for both orthodox and German “Reform” Jewish children, his father is conscripted as a soldier in the Austrian army. With war raging around them, mother and children

spend extended periods in Ludwigshafen, in the Palatinate near the Alsatian border, on the west (left) bank of the Rhine River where Artur's maternal grandparents live. Artur begins to observe and form impressions of his grandfather (Leib Engel) and of what it means to live an utterly disciplined and committed orthodox life, moment-to-moment, day-to-day. Will look back on his family life "with some satisfaction"—their faith was genuine and strong, and "life had a purpose." Because Artur's school is tied to a synagogue, the children provide music for the Reform services held there. Without formal training, learns the rudiments of keyboard playing and score reading. When in the Palatinate, he and Claire, raised to speak Westphalian *Hochdeutsch*, begin to learn French. NOVEMBER 1918: His father returns home after the war.

1919–20

Nine months after his father's discharge, the family moves to Mannheim on the east (right) bank of the Rhine in Germany proper, directly across from Ludwigshafen. His father establishes an upholstery and furniture finishing business, gradually producing for the Schlossbergs a comfortably middle class life. This will include, among other things, weekly exposure to local theater and opera. Playing chamber music informally with relatives and friends, all amateur musicians, becomes a way of life for Artur.

1921–27

Begins to study piano with Else Landmann, who opens "the gate to music" for him. Through Frau Landmann's husband, Arno, principal organist of the *Christus-Kirche* in Mannheim, is introduced to classical organ literature and to the German baroque solo and choral cantatas. Plays the Bach concertos for two pianos with Herr Landmann's organ pupils. Reads extensively about music, buying theory books, studying scores and playing through them with his friends prior to concerts. Becomes a proficient sight-reader of orchestral as well as piano scores. Tries his hand at composing for his chamber music sessions. With all this, it does not occur to him to become a professional musician. Attends the local *Realschule mit Realgymnasium*, "a German high school with a preference for natural sciences" but which also offers classes in literature and humanities, French, and Latin. This awakens in Artur a love for and sensitivity to language and poetry, and he becomes an insatiable, lifelong, and eclectic reader.

Artur's mother adores walking. Like her, will passionately embrace walking (closely followed by cross-country skiing) as his favorite mode of transportation. Combines this with his discovery of Bach by gathering two chamber music pals and replicating much of Bach's 1705 foot journey to Lübeck. "It was 'our' generation that re-discovered Germany," he will write, "and that embraced the discovery with all the yearning and all the suffering that our 'foreign' nature could muster. We were far more German than the Germans. In my own case, the discovery of the land on foot . . . of its music, its poetry, its way of life—all this combined into a flaming passion." 1925: Liberal

rabbi Max Gruenewald (1899–1992) arrives in Mannheim and founds the “Youth Congregation,” modeled after the *Jugendbewegung* [youth movement] that is sweeping 1920s Germany—and sweeping away “all inherited values and manners of being” ascribed “to the doings of our parents’ generation.” Frequent discussions, day hikes, and extended walking trips afford Artur a setting for defining Judaism and his place within it. One day, in the middle of ritual prayers, he has the feeling that he is “speaking into a void,” that “no one is listening.” Everything he has known, the whole structure of his orthodox faith, with its rituals, prayers, special undergarments, “collapses” in that moment. Continues to observe for his parents’ sake, but upon reaching adulthood, will abandon religious practice altogether, while retaining a keen interest in Jewish history. Gruenewald will leave Germany and immigrate to the United States before Artur does. His role as Artur’s mentor and friend will continue until the rabbi’s death.

1928

Completes his early schooling. His schoolmates affectionately dub him “Meckbesser,” an inversion of “Beckmesser,” because he tends to be excessively critical.¹ Chooses to study philology at Heidelberg University, drawn by the presence there of Leonardo Olschki, “the most prestigious professor of medieval French.” Misreads a notice about where an Olschki lecture is to take place and hears instead 29-year-old musicologist Heinrich Bessler “explore and explain the mysteries . . . of the great works of Pérotin at Notre Dame.” Artur is stunned—walks “for days in a state of disbelief, of amazement and wonder.” Determines to study with Bessler, but the “firebrand” medievalist thinks he has too many deficiencies to become a doctoral candidate in musicology.

1929

At Olschki’s recommendation, and distressed by Bessler’s rejection, decides to spend the spring semester at University of Vienna, where he listens to lectures by Egon Wellesz (an avid disciple of Arnold Schoenberg) on the history of early opera and by Robert Lach on “comparative musicology” (later called ethnomusicology). Halfway through the semester, decides to return to Heidelberg to appeal to Bessler to accept him. Sends his belongings home and begins a three-and-a-half month walking trip through the Austrian Alps back to Germany—a trip on foot “into the great unknown.” Earns his food and drink as an itinerant pianist. Sixty years later, will describe this trek as the single most important event of his life, characterized by “complete independence” and a “joy” and “weightlessness” not replicated by anything to come later.² When the fall term begins at Heidelberg, convinces Bessler to guide his studies in musicology. For six months, works assiduously to erase his deficiencies.

1930

Passes Bessler’s “grueling examination.” Then, in company with fellow scholars Manfred Bukofzer, Edward Lowinsky, and Ernst Hermann Meyer,

begins his doctoral work in earnest. Spends hours “reading through new musical editions of Paris ‘organa’ and motets, [and] days . . . at a nearby Benedictine monastery” listening to and studying the inner workings of Gregorian chant. “The German university before World War II,” he will write, “looked upon its students as academics whose single purpose in life was scholarly pursuit. No obstacle was deemed insurmountable.” Focuses his studies on the Italian baroque. Conductor Eugen Jochum (1902–1987), age 28 and already director of the Mannheim orchestra, visits Heidelberg often and shares his formidable knowledge of and passion for Bruckner’s symphonies. Artur knows he is “in the presence of the true and ultimately accomplished musician.”

1931

For his dissertation, Besseler steers him to an important, as yet, unanswered question: *What precipitated the decline of the great northern Italian orchestral sonatas of the Venetian school and the subsequent appearance in the early 17th century of the miniature trio sonata?* Heidelberg awards him grants for research in Italy; among various places of interest, the archives at the Basilica di San Petronio in Bologna, a major center of 17th century instrumental music, have not yet been explored. While copying ancient manuscripts there, discovers an entire, previously unknown, Bolognese *tromba* [trumpet] repertoire from the late 1600s. While referring to it in his dissertation, he must defer a thorough investigation.

1932

LATE APRIL: Submits his dissertation, *Die italienische Sonate für mehrere Instrumente im 17ten Jahrhundert* [The Italian Sonata for Several Instruments in the 17th Century] to Besseler for publication. The position of assistant in musicology at Heidelberg will be his, Besseler assures him, when it becomes vacant. Impatient, and in need of professional experience, accepts an invitation for the coming season to be, chiefly, pianist for the solo dancers, also a coach and conducting assistant to Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt (1900–1973), principal musical director of the Hessian State Theater in nearby Darmstadt. Is deeply drawn to theater and opera—and to the human voice—and, for the first time, contemplates the possibility of a conducting career. His best friends and colleagues are dancers and actors, one of whom asks him to compose cabaret music for the annual New Year’s Eve St. Sylvester entertainment. Agrees to do it as a lark. DECEMBER 31: Schmidt-Isserstedt compliments him after the New Year’s Eve performance and suggests that, though he might make a fine conductor, will miss his career unless he becomes a composer. “The remark was shelved,” he will write, “but not forgotten.”

1933 (in Germany)

JANUARY 30: Adolph Hitler is made chancellor of Germany. MARCH 5 and 23: The Reichstag election and subsequent passage of the “Enabling Act” consolidate Nazi power in Germany. Within days of the election, four brown-

shirted storm troopers with Luegers enter the opera house and oust Artur, only 23, from a dance rehearsal. They bloody him and leave him unconscious on the street. Not seriously injured, returns to his family in Mannheim. His “flaming passion” for everything German turns to “flaming hatred.” Cannot leave Germany soon enough. Contacts Bessler about his thesis. Already an “ardent Nazi,” Bessler calls for a secret late-night meeting and informs Artur that, under the circumstances, he (Bessler) cannot publish the thesis. This is their final conversation. In 1935 Artur’s father will pay to have the necessary 50 copies printed and Artur will receive his PhD by mail.

1933 (in France)

EARLY APRIL: Arrives in Paris with 20 Deutsch marks (just under \$5).³ Roussel and Ravel are still living. Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc, Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre—*Les Six*—dominate the musical scene. Multiple orchestras give “thrillingly exciting concerts.” French cinema has reached a pinnacle. Paris is “a cosmos.” Hand-delivers a letter from a school friend to pianist Marcelle Meyer. She invites him to a soirée, where he meets people who will determine the course of his life in Paris. Presents himself to musicologist Henri Prunière, who is preparing a Lully edition. Earns his first fee by researching and making complete scores of two of Lully’s grand motets. Composes, “entirely in the German (Austrian) style of Schoenberg,” a song, *De Profundis Clamavi*, on a poem by Baudelaire, his first published score. Finds himself “crushed—dismantled” after a concert by Duke Ellington and his band at the Salle Pleyel.⁴ Curtain opens on a dark stage with a single spot on singer Ivie Anderson, who begins “Stormy Weather,” unaccompanied. The lights and sounds of the band slowly come up. “That was IT,” he will say, “the one single event in my life that determined my writing.” The music is tonal but “new.” From that night, he abandons “all further allegiance to Schoenberg, to atonality, to twelve-tone procedures . . . both in my own writing” and in what he wishes to listen to.⁵ FALL: Meets mezzo-soprano Lucie de Vienne (aka Lucie DeVienne-Dewinsky), gifted singer/actress already established in her career, who becomes his “guiding light toward the France of theater, poetry, food, love, rollicking fun and, last but not least, music.”⁶ Throws himself “into that new life not with love but with unrestrained passion.” It is in France, he will say, that “I was born as a person.” His sister Claire also moves to Paris; loathing everything German, “including that part of our own being which had been formed by Germany,” they speak only French. Their mother visits when possible, and he has “the talks with my mother which a son craves to have, even when he is no longer a child. . . .” For the first two years, he and Claire know extreme poverty, but he will remember his Paris years as “the happiest of my life. . . . Life was so exciting, so promising. . . .”

1934

Moments before a program with tenor René Talba in Bois-Colombes, due to the presence in the audience of severely injured World War I veterans, the

“emcee” refuses to announce a pianist with a German-sounding name. “So then,” he will recall, “a moment of intensive thinking, mumbling, wording and re-wording,” and Artur Schlossberg goes onstage as Jean Berger.⁷ Has become Lucie de Vienne’s preferred accompanist and her coach for German repertoire, forming with her a performing team. Their many public concerts emphasize contemporary French *mélodies* by Milhaud, Honegger, Roussel, Poulenc, Messiaen, Capdevielle, and others, as well as Berger’s own harmonizations of French folk songs and arrangements of medieval and renaissance music. They concertize across much of Europe, even in Germany, and travel abroad for performances in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Through Lucie, meets composer-critic Louis Aubert, who coaches them in his *Six Poèmes Arabes*. The garrulous Aubert offers to look at Berger’s own scores and, Berger will recall, Loulou’s “sharp eye never failed to detect their weaknesses at once. . . .” These informal sessions, scattered over five years, give the young musician the foundation he needs for a composer’s career. Also receives coaching from pianist-composer Pierre Capdevielle in the sound and “inner workings” of Debussy’s songs.

1935

Starts a short-lived Paris Choral Institute with public school teachers from Lucie’s vocal studio, which gives way to a chamber choir of factory workers, Les Compagnons de la Marjolaine, specializing in his arrangements of provincial songs in French, Auvergnant, Provençal, and other regional languages. Will say, “. . . there could not have been a more fruitful activity for me than to arrange and compose for this group and to have the opportunity of actually hearing every note I put on paper.”⁸ Composes some songs on sixteenth century poems for a singer’s program at a Paris literary society. Gradually overcomes acute poverty, and, while never granted a work permit, is allowed to accept cash fees. Establishes himself as an accompanist—one of a small group listed with the top agencies in Paris—studio pianist, arranger, sometime composer, occasional book and concert reviewer, and general free-lancer.

1936

MARCH 7: German forces enter the Rhineland. In his only moment of political activism, marches with protesters at the Place de la Concorde. With Corsican dancer-choreographer Tony Gregory, starts a workers’ theater in Bobigny, an eastern suburb of Paris, where he is “house composer.” Named Les Blouses Bleues de Bobigny for the blue coveralls workers wear, they present overtly anti-German programs on weekends. This and the chamber choir coincide with the brief life of the Popular Front in France, a coalition government of communist and socialist parties. Sees the announcement of a contest for new compositions sponsored by the Häusermannsche Choral Society in Zurich and submits a choral setting of *Le sang des autres*, an anti-militaristic text by René Arcos.⁹ At the insistence of ex officio jurist Arthur Honegger, is named co-winner and receives a share of the monetary win-

nings and publication of his score. About this time, his sister Claire, age 25, never happy in Paris, leaves Europe for Palestine.

1937

Wanting to help desperate family members, he and Lucie begin smuggling money and jewelry out of Germany. Tenor Raoul Jobin and Berger perform his newly published *Quatre chants d'amour*. Then, “. . . very much under the impact of Poulenc,” composes *Cinq mélodies brèves* for Lucie. At the final concert of Ravel's music attended by Ravel himself, spies Honegger from an upper balcony. Dashes down at intermission and presents himself as the composer of *Le sang des autres*. Their brief encounter ends with Honegger's stunning words, “*Composez, jeune homme*” [Compose, young man!], a turning point for Berger.



JEAN BERGER, 1937. Courtesy of the American Music Research Center.

1938

Hired as staff pianist for the film version of Oscar Straus's operetta *Les Trois Valses*. Because he can sight read, transpose, and manipulate score on the spot, is immediately successful and decides to make film work his career. Can now afford an apartment at 26 bis rue Lafontaine, for which his family, who cannot send money out of Germany, supplies elegant furniture and a Steinway grand. NOVEMBER 9–10: Nazis carry out a systematic persecution, since named *Kristallnacht*, The Night of Broken Glass, against Germany's Jews. Already stripped of their furniture business and other property, Berger's parents leave Germany with only their luggage to take refuge in Palestine. Spends two weeks with them in Switzerland before their departure.

1939 (in France)

MARCH 15: Hitler annexes Czechoslovakia. Berger determines to leave Europe. APRIL: Learns that *chanteuse* Reine Paulet is booked at the Casino da Urca in Rio de Janeiro and needs new song arrangements. Provides them and offers to be her accompanist for the engagement in Brazil. Because he has not met the last requirement for French citizenship (an army stint), can obtain only a restricted, one-year passport, plus visas stamped *heimatlos* [homeless] and specifying his return to France by July 10. He and Lucie give

their last concert and say their good-byes.¹⁰ MAY 18: Between last-minute errands, he steps into Paris's ABC Theater and is stunned to hear an unknown (to him) American harmonica virtuoso, Larry Adler ("Lai-ree Adlaire"), playing the solo part of a movement of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A minor—"I nearly passed out." MAY 19: Departs Paris.

1939 (in Brazil)

En route, meets a cultured young woman, Maria Luisa, who, with her parents, is fleeing Portugal in the wake of the Spanish Civil War. She and Berger will be constant companions in Rio and from her he will learn of the "magnificence" of Portuguese language and literature. Within days of arriving, runs into a singer from Les Compagnons de la Marjolaine who tells him that the Opéra-Comique is engaged for the current season at the Teatro Municipal, Rio's resplendent downtown theater. With tenor Raoul Jobin's endorsement, is hired through October to replace an indisposed coach. SUMMER: Meets Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959).¹¹ Overstays his visa and is arrested, but finds a "Polish Jew," Zitomirsky, who shows him how to maneuver around the authorities. In the nick of time, his application for permanent residence in Brazil is processed and confirmed. Composer Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (1897–1948), director of the Conservatorio Brasileiro de Musica, employs him to coach student singers in French *mélodies* and German *Lieder*. Pianist at his nightclub helps him gradually "sense this particular [Brazilian] rhythm that to them is as natural as breathing." SEPTEMBER 3: France declares war on Germany. Transatlantic passenger traffic ceases, and French authorities have to let him stay in Brazil. OCTOBER: Engaged by Andrés Segovia, then living and performing in South America, to assist in guitarist's preparations for first performance of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's guitar concerto. Plays from Tedesco's unpublished score. Becomes pianist for Helena Figner, a wealthy Brazilian with hopes of becoming a professional singer. DECEMBER: While a guest of her family at their *fazenda* in the mountains, composes a song cycle on poems by Luis Vaz de Camoens (Camões) (1525–1580), Portugal's greatest poet, a volume of whose sonnets were a gift from Maria Luisa. "I lived in a trance while working on the *Four Sonnets*," he will write, "for the first time in my life not pointing a finger at myself with the question: You, a composer?"

1940

Wants to marry Maria Luisa, but she isn't Jewish and, in the end, cannot knowingly devastate his orthodox parents. MAY: Tries to renew his passport but the French consulate in Rio, now staffed with Vichy regime civil servants, quiz him about his birthplace and whether he is Jewish. Answering truthfully, is told, "Monsieur, on ne vous connaît pas" [Sir, we do not know you]. Suddenly is "a traveling musician with no country." It is, he will say, "the worst moment of my life." The German embassy also denies him a passport. AUGUST–SEPTEMBER: After performing around Brazil, he and Figner tour in Uruguay and Argentina, which he can do only on "a single exit and re-entry" basis. Through her, meets the revered Brazilian poet and latter-day

troubadour Catullo da Paixão Cearense and, with the poet's permission, arranges a group of Catullo's "beguiling" songs for her use. She hires him to play for her coming tour to New York. Thinking not about emigration but about escaping Rio's summer heat, he leaves with his usual single exit, single re-entry paper and a tourist visa. NOVEMBER 11: Enters port of New York, at age 31, as Helena's paid accompanist.¹² Speaks no English, but an aunt, uncle, and cousins already living in New York greet him and offer temporary lodgings. Within days, makes his way to Harlem where he hears Anne Brown, Gershwin's first "Bess," sing "Summertime." It is his first experience of "that particular American musical language, made up of so many elusive elements, so foreign at first yet also so completely beguiling. . . ." Not understanding the words, is overwhelmed by "the sublime tune" and also senses "most powerfully . . . the audience's identification with the musical substance of the program, the rapt attention, the almost unendurable concentration, the blending with the person of the performer," all reminiscent of concert experiences of his youth. Some days later, at a program in Alice Tully's lavish New York apartment, meets baritone Garfield Swift and his wife Beth.¹³ They invite him home with other friends "for scrambled eggs and Schubert till 4 a.m." Finds at the Swifts' not only enduring friendship but many promising contacts and opportunities.

1941

FEBRUARY: Composes his first work in New York—a three-movement piano suite, *Lembrancas da Terra do Sol* [Memories of the Land of the Sun].¹⁴ E. B. Marks publishes the first movement, *Fandango Brasileiro*. Meets Larry Adler, the "Lai-ree Ad-laïre" of Paris, who, after hearing Berger play *Fandango Brasileiro*, commissions a concerto from him—the first ever for harmonica. John Finlay Williamson, founder and director of the Westminster Choir, has been told about the young musician just arrived from Brazil and wishes to consult him about a pending tour to Latin America. As a courtesy, Berger finds a text by Jorge de Lima and, in one day, composes *Brazilian Psalm* to take to their meeting. At Williamson's insistence, G. Schirmer accepts it for immediate publication. Schirmer asks for a companion piece, and Berger obliges with *Cantigas: Hear the Singing*. Later this year, Schirmer also publishes his song sets, *Four Sonnets* and *Quatre Chants d'Amour*, the latter with an English translation. MARCH: Decides to stay in America—professional opportunity and a more familiar style of life are to be found here. His name begins to appear regularly in the New York press and on recital programs. MAY 27: He and Swift perform Berger's newest songs, *Trois poésies*—and Berger plays his piano piece, *Paqueta (Danse brésilienne)*.¹⁵ JUNE 23: Swift and the WQXR Quartet perform his *Four Sonnets*. OCTOBER 1: Swift and Berger open the thirty-fifth season of "The Bohemians" (New York Musicians Club) with a program of mostly Berger scores, including *Lembrancas da Terra do Sol*. Accompanies "that unmatched Brazilian performer," Elsie Houston, on her fall tour.¹⁶ NOVEMBER 9: Larry Adler and the Rochester Symphony Orchestra do a local first performance of the Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra. Figner and Berger perform the Catullo song arrangements in New

York, which attracts the attention of people at CBS and NBC. Through someone met at the Swifts's, is introduced to Alfredo Antonini, conductor of the CBS Pan American Orchestra. Begins to do Brazilian samba arrangements for shortwave broadcasts into Latin America.¹⁷ Composes another song set, *Villanescas*, on poems of Eduardo Blanco-Amor, refugee from Franco's Spain, whom Berger befriended when in Buenos Aires. DECEMBER 7: Finishes the set, turns on his radio and hears that Pearl Harbor has been attacked. Now must register as an "enemy alien."

1942

MARCH 10: At Larry Adler's invitation, travels to St. Louis, Missouri, for the official world premiere of Concerto for Harmonica and Orchestra—the first of his works to be performed by a major American orchestra (St. Louis Symphony, Vladimir Golschmann conducting). The audience response and subsequent reviews are uniformly positive.¹⁸ Sometime later, the concerto is renamed *Caribbean Concerto*, and Adler will keep it in his repertoire for many years. One year after obtaining resident status, Berger is presented with the quickest route to U.S. citizenship: join the Army. DECEMBER: After several deferments, reports to the Fort Dix, New Jersey, army reception center. When it is discovered that he has arranged for CBS and NBC, is assigned to a Fort Dix band leader who wants a Latin American sound.

1943

Hears that the Office of War Information is desperate for people who speak Portuguese and convinces base military board that he can contribute more to the war effort as a civilian. APRIL: Is discharged and returns to New York to produce Portuguese news broadcasts for OWI. Schirmer publishes more Berger items: a song, *They All Dance the Samba*, and his *Villanescas*.¹⁹ Composes *The Exiles*, for alto soloist and orchestra, on a poem by Jewish poet of the left, Sol Funaroff (1911–1942). Coaches singer Jenny Tourel in a group of French songs, new to her repertoire, "just before the recital which launched her American career." AUGUST: Becomes a U.S. citizen and immediately puts in for transfer to USO Camp Shows (civilian and voluntary but under military supervision). His troupe of six performers includes a 22-year-old solo dancer at Metropolitan Opera and native New Yorker, Rita Holzer. Her "persona" for all their tours will be the Spanish or Latin American dancer. They must do a six-month apprenticeship in Texas and other western states before going overseas.

1944

APRIL: Soprano Eileen Farrell performs *Quatre chants d'amour* in a string quartet arrangement.²⁰ AUGUST 25: Following the domestic tour and another six weeks in Newfoundland, Berger and Rita Holzer are married by Rabbi Max Gruenewald in New York City. SEPTEMBER: The troupe is reorganized and a new show designed. During their Atlantic crossing on the luxury liner Aquitania, now a troop ship, Berger finds an old piano in the ship's hold and composes *Trois Esquisses* for viola and piano. In London, hears his *Brazilian*

Psalm broadcast by BBC Chorus and sees his Schirmer publications in the window of Chappell Music.

1945

WINTER: Troupe performs mostly in England's military hospitals as Allied forces battle their way across Europe. In Oxford for two weeks, composes a "substantial, one-movement" a cappella choral work, *In a Time of Pestilence*, based on text by Elizabethan poet Thomas Nashe (1567–c.1601). SPRING: Troupe crosses to France and is billeted outside of Paris. Learns the fate—wholesale theft by an escaping Nazi officer—of everything he had left in his apartment in Paris, but is able to retrieve the jewelry he and Lucie smuggled out of Germany. After VE Day (May 8), the troupe proceeds to Italy and passes near Bologna. They stop long enough for Berger to go to San Petronio. To his amazement, the church has sustained minimal damage and the archives are intact. No one has touched the *tromba* manuscripts since he made pencil jottings on them in 1931. SUMMER–FALL: They cross over to Africa to perform for British and American personnel in Morocco, Liberia, Ghana, Libya and, finally, Egypt. For a few weeks they even have their own B-17.

1946

The Bergers jump at the chance to ride in a British staff car across the Sinai to Jerusalem, where his parents and sister live. His father has found work distributing manufactured goods and has come to terms with life in Palestine. His mother wants desperately to return to Europe, but they will not. SPRING: A final USO tour takes them the rest of the way around the globe—India, China, Japan, the Philippines, and Hawaii, returning them to the United States in June. Means to resume his freelance career but faces a disappearing market for studio arrangers and recital accompanists. Also, begins to believe that the rise to prominence and influence of homosexuals in New York's music scene deprives him of opportunities. OCTOBER: London's Fleet Street Choir performs *Brazilian Psalm*, a hint of the coming surge of interest in his music.

1947

MARCH: Advertises in *Musical America* as a coach-accompanist. An admirer of Langston Hughes' poetry, speaks several times by phone with the poet in hopes of setting a group of his texts. Hughes sends him a marked copy of his new collection, *Fields of Wonder*. Berger's *Four Songs* on Hughes' poems will remain in print indefinitely and be among his most beloved and performed songs.²¹ Hired this year and next to play for midwestern tours of the Liebling Singers, all from Estelle Liebling's vocal studio. Beverly Sills, age 18, is a featured singer, as is Garfield Swift.²² By summer, the Bergers realize that making an adequate living in New York is no longer feasible. SEPTEMBER: In partnership with another professional couple, they move to Torrington, Connecticut, and open The Music and Dance-Arts Studio. NOVEMBER 19: Violinist Frances Magnes premieres *Trois Esquisses* at Carnegie Hall.

1948

Composes *Concertino for Harmonica and Chamber Orchestra* with Larry Adler in mind, but Adler will move to London next year to escape the stigma of the McCarthy hearings and never play it. Rescored for piano and chamber orchestra, the *Concertino* will be among Berger's most successful instrumental works. APRIL: Through a chance introduction to Middlebury College's music chairman, comes to the attention of the small Vermont college and, thanks to his PhD, is offered a faculty position in piano and theory. MAY 14: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, led by David Ben Gurion, proclaims Israeli statehood.²³ FALL: Takes up his new duties despite misgivings felt by both Bergers. Nevertheless, they will call Middlebury home for eleven years. He will build for the college "a very large music history and literature collection," teach six to eight courses and seminars adequate to prepare music majors for graduate studies at Harvard and other universities, and become chapel organist and conductor of the Middlebury College Choir (1953–59). She will join the physical education department as a dance and archery teacher. They meet such luminaries as poets Robert Frost and John Ciardi at campus social gatherings. He begins composing new choral works for publication and for the choir. Commissioned by the Fleet Street Choir and its conductor T. B. Lawrence to produce a major work, *Vision of Peace*. Olaf Christiansen, conductor of the St. Olaf Lutheran Choir, Northfield, Minnesota, finds *Braziian Psalm* while browsing the G. Schirmer bins. "Olie" separates the "Alleluia" from the more difficult first half, and begins to program it this year.²⁴ In 1994 Berger will say: "In the course of the years we—two men of totally different make-ups—became close friends and spent long evenings discussing topics of mutual interest on few of which we ever agreed."

1949

MARCH 31: Boston's Intercollegiate Symphony Orchestra, led by 21-year-old Samuel Adler, performs Berger's *The Exiles: A Cantata in Five Songs* at Harvard's Sanders Theater. He leaves the performance unhappy—"It felt so 19th century, this big orchestra." MAY 31: *Creole Overture*, composed in 1947, is premiered at Boston's Symphony Hall with Arthur Fiedler conducting the Pops Orchestra.

1950

Olaf Christiansen puts the "Alleluia" from the *Brazilian Psalm* on St. Olaf's 1949–50 tour program.²⁵ Public response is "immediate and enthusiastic," and Berger becomes "a choral man." Commissions and requests for new works from publishers increase. SUMMER: Heads for Bologna to re-assemble and photograph the San Petronio manuscripts. DECEMBER: Approaches Paul Henry Lang, editor of *The Musical Quarterly*, about presenting his findings in the prestigious journal.

1951

FEBRUARY 12: The St. Olaf Choir, on tour in the United States, performs two Berger works, *Brazilian Psalm* and *Vision of Peace*, drawing favorable comment by *Washington Post* critic Paul Hume: “Of greatest interest musically . . . was [the choir’s] account of two magnificent studies” by a composer “who thoroughly exploits the potentialities of choral sound, and who does it with a rhythmic challenge too often missing on the programs of choruses.” MARCH 30: Middlebury College Choir performs new Berger works (*Psalm 13* and *Psalm 150*) at Town Hall in New York. SUMMER(S): Writes original music for Middlebury light theatrical productions: *Le Papou*, 1951; *Orion the Killer*, 1952; and *Cuck-a-ca-doo*, 1953. JULY: *The Musical Quarterly* publishes his article, “Notes on Some 17th Century Compositions for Trumpets and Strings in Bologna.”²⁶ In a private joke, draws on his own dissertation as a source, not revealing that Artur Schlossberg, its author, is, in fact, Jean Berger. Composes *Sinfonia di San Petronio* for three trumpets and strings—his acknowledgment, in contemporary terms, of the baroque spirit and esthetic.

1952

His faculty colleague, conductor Alan Carter, requests a new work for the Vermont State Symphony Orchestra. As he begins to compose for these players, takes into account that they are, for the most part, not professionals. Many of his early works are “diabolical” in their technical difficulty. Now, without sacrificing technical challenge or musical sophistication, his work begins to reflect an increasing sensitivity to the capabilities of the performers he is writing for. APRIL 22–23: With Berger as soloist, Carter and the Vermont orchestra premiere his *Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*. AUGUST 3: The Vermont Chamber Orchestra plays Berger’s edition of San Petronio composer Giuseppe Torelli’s *Sinfonia for Two Trumpets and Strings*, not heard since the late seventeenth century. Across the Atlantic, in recitals from Stockholm to Jerusalem, Larry Adler plays his *Fandango Brasileiro*, arranged for harmonica and piano at Adler’s request. NOVEMBER 4: In London, the Fleet Street Choir premieres *Le sang des autres* in an English translation, *Other Men’s Blood*.

1953

MAY 24: The birth of his and Rita’s only child, a son, Jonathan Emanuel, compensates the loss this year of his father, age 70, in Jerusalem. When in New York, enjoys the friendship of music editor, musicologist, and specialist in contemporary notation, Kurt Stone, also escaped from Nazi Germany. Stone, chief editor of Associated Music Publishers, is, in Berger’s view, an “exceptionally sensitive and intelligent human being.” Their “lively discussions” revolve around “so-called advanced techniques of composition, twelve-tone in the ‘classical’ or the more contemporary manner, rapport between composer and eventual audiences and the like.”

1954

Not happy with *The Exiles*, Berger works with the score again this year but does not reach a definitive version. His mother makes her one journey to the United States to visit her sister and brothers in Syracuse (NY) and to meet her new grandson. Faithful to her orthodox practice, she will not enter Middlebury's Mead Chapel to hear her son play the organ but listens from the steps outside.

1955

SUMMER: Accepted as a fellow of the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough (NH), where he composes four works, including *Short Overture for Strings*. While there, meets composer Gordon Binkerd, who will become a colleague in Illinois in 1959. When both have left full-time teaching, they will have "searching" talks concerning academia and contemporary composition. Back at Middlebury, he sees "devastating" reviews of critic Henry Pleasants' book, *The Agony of Modern Music*, including Aaron Copland's response, "The Agony of Henry Pleasants." Reads the book and begins to sense an affinity of views—a mutual rejection of serialism and atonality.

1956

APRIL 22: Vermont State Symphony premieres *Short Symphony*, which "contains, in one uninterrupted sequence, the four sections of the symphonic cycle."²⁷ Berger sees in *The New York Times* a passage in a speech by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., which, to him, cries out for a musical setting. Obtains permission from Dr. King and composes *Hope for Tomorrow* for men's voices.

1957

JUNE 17: Boston's Chorus Pro Musica does the first performance of Berger's *Psalms of Penitence* during Church of the Advent's Choral Evensong, part of the American Guild of Organists' regional meeting. *The Boston Globe* reviewer writes, ". . . [T]he idiom of Berger's work is clean and modern, the style muscular. . . there is a pervasive expressive character of austerity and emotional directness . . . This music has integrity as well as distinction." His mother, age 74, dies in Jerusalem while having what should have been a routine medical procedure.

1959

Augsburg Publishing House invites him to supply service anthems for the Lutheran Church. Aware he is Jewish, they send him two Old Testament texts, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord" (from Isaiah 61:10) and "The eyes of all wait upon thee" (Psalm 145:15–16). His setting of the latter becomes an immediate best seller. SPRING: Middlebury years come to an abrupt end when, without explanation, Rita loses her position.²⁸ Newspaper accounts of Berger's final concerts in Vermont convey unambiguous sorrow at the prospect of losing their "composer laureate." MAY 7: The campus paper expresses the opinion that Berger "is today . . . America's foremost compos-

er of choral music.” Indeed, performances of Berger’s works are on the increase, and he is besieged with commissions and with invitations to speak, write or be the subject of articles, and to appear at campuses, churches, and conventions. Has composed 57 works in 11 years.²⁹ **SUMMER:** The family visits London with a view to establishing an extended residence. Makes an excursion to Bologna to work further with manuscripts at San Petronio. He and Denis Stevens, English musicologist and conductor of the Ambrosian Singers, begin a long and cordial acquaintance. In coming years, Stevens will perform several of Berger’s major works over the BBC. **LATE SUMMER:** Receives an unexpected and tempting offer from the American Midwest. With strife between the couple beginning to strain their marriage, they decide it best to leave England. Accepts a position as visiting lecturer in musicology at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. In the next two years, becomes “aware, by direct personal exposure, of the immense scope and magnificence of American choral singing, in the Midwest at first, throughout the vast land afterwards.”

1960

Put in charge of the DMA program in choral music and, soon after, is made full professor. Among his doctoral students is Kenneth L. Jennings, who in 1968 will become the third director of the St. Olaf Choir—and as enthusiastic a promoter of Berger’s music as was his predecessor, Olaf Christiansen. **MAY 1:** Mezzo soprano Nan Merriman premieres Berger’s *Cinq Mélodies (Five Songs)* on texts by Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, which he has written for her. **JULY–AUGUST:** Sends newly published copies of *Hope for Tomorrow* to Martin Luther King and receives Dr. King’s letter of gratitude expressing the hope that Berger’s setting will be heard widely and aid their “struggle for freedom and human dignity.” [The original letter is lost.]

1961

JANUARY: Finishes his setting of the *Magnificat*, whose text has “had a magnetic attraction for me for many years.” He will recount the difficulty he had conceiving how to approach this sacrosanct and much-used text, “until one famous morning at 3 a.m., I awoke and distinctly heard the question: WHO said, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum?* Obviously, a woman of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, a Semite, and how would a Semite react to the incredible news she just received? . . . she would burst out with vocalise and dance, and never mind counterpoint.” Submits his manuscript to Schirmer and four other publishers. Also mails a copy to Marinus Voorberg, conductor of The Netherlands Madrigal and Motet Choir and a good friend whose musical sensibilities are very like his own. Voorberg’s choir has just premiered Berger’s unpublished *Skelton Poems*, with Garfield Swift, baritone soloist, over Radio Hilversum, Netherlands Radio Union, in Amsterdam. Now, they do the *Magnificat*, using his original manuscript. **SUMMER:** Berger family leaves Illinois when Dean Warner Imig offers an associate professorship at University of Colorado in Boulder. Again, is placed in charge of the DMA in choral music; also teaches musicology and music history. **NOVEMBER**

21: After an impromptu performance of his *Short Symphony* by the Denver Symphony, receives an appreciative letter from composer Normand Lockwood (1906–2002), member of the University of Denver’s music faculty. Their friendship will be instantaneous, mutually supportive, and long lasting. Musicologist Albert Seay (d. 1984), on faculty of Colorado College in Colorado Springs, will also become a valued friend and colleague.

1962

Is nationally prominent in the field of choral music. Finds himself losing interest in full-time academic work as he receives more and more invitations to appear as a composer, lecturer, workshop leader, and guest conductor. MARCH: Delivers a talk, “Our Choral Heritage,” at the combined MENC Biennial and ACDA conventions in Chicago.³⁰ Critiques, eloquently but brutally, current compositional “novelties,” the all-too-common (and generally unsuccessful) attempts to render early choral masterworks within a nineteenth century concert format, and conventional wisdom about the college-level training of young musicians. His unsettling ideas, which cause “all sorts of disturbances,” are given a wider audience through the pages of both the *Choral Journal* and *The Texas Choirmaster*.³¹ MAY 9–17: Travels to Germany to lecture on choral activities in the United States at conservatories in Stuttgart, Freiburg, Mannheim, and Trossingen.³² Beginning this year, his personal scrapbooks will begin to fill with press coverage in German of this and future trips to his homeland. MAY 18: Guest-conducts the Netherlands Madrigal and Motet Choir in a performance of his *Two Psalms* over Dutch radio. JUNE 8: After reading Henry Pleasants’ book *Death of a Music?*, initiates a correspondence with the keen-minded and controversial critic which will continue, with few interruptions, until Pleasants’ death. Writes *Six Rondeaux* for voice and solo viola on texts by Charles d’Orleans for faculty colleagues Aksel Schiøtz and Andor Toth, who will premiere them in April 1964. FALL: Celebrated harpsichordist Robert Conant includes Berger’s *Suite* (in four movements) in his tour programs. NOVEMBER 13: Conducts Denver Symphony Orchestra and Jerald Lepinski’s Classic Chorale in the first performance of the orchestral version of *Psalms of Penitence*.

1963

SUMMER: Receives a faculty grant from the University of Colorado to finish photographing the sinfonias for trumpets and strings at San Petronio and to break ground with the, as yet, unexamined works of Giuseppe Torelli’s teacher, Giacomo Antonio Perti (1661–1756). Makes a side trip to Bonn to meet Henry Pleasants. During this decade, takes steps to reclaim his parents’ property in Mannheim and to establish his eligibility for restitution from the German government. All his efforts will fail. His association with the Lutheran world begins to take on greater significance. Submits a large three-part work (*Psalms 84: How Lovely Are Thy Tabernacles*) for a cappella double chorus to Augsburg Publishing House; dedicates the score to Dr. Leland Sateren and the Augsburg College Choir. OCTOBER: Receives a lavish letter of praise and gratitude from Sateren, who refers to Berger as one

who “represents the finest there is in contemporary choral writing. . . .”³³
 DECEMBER 11: Repertory Singers of St. Olaf College and Denver’s Classic Chorale simultaneously present separate American premieres of the *Magnificat*.

1964

Takes a leave of absence from Colorado for further work in Bologna. Identifies and catalogs nearly 400 concerted choral works, including fourteen Magnificats, by Perti. It is his intention to produce a complete Perti edition, with explanatory text. SUMMER: At the Congress of the International Musicological Society in Salzburg, has long talks with his former classmate at Heidelberg, Ernst Hermann Meyer, who, after taking refuge in London during the war years, returned to Germany. Their “revered master” Bessler is professor of musicology in Leipzig. Meyer tries to persuade Berger of the good life to be found in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Berger is tempted but decides against it. FALL: His article, “The Sacred Works of Giacomo Antonio Perti,” is published.³⁴ Promoted to full professor. By now, has submitted his *Magnificat* to thirteen publishers—and received thirteen rejections. But Berger believes in his score. NOVEMBER: Finds John Sheppard Music Press (JSMP) in order to bring out the *Magnificat* and other of his works. From the beginning, does his own “typesetting,” using faculty colleague and fellow composer Cecil Effinger’s Musicwriter (music typewriter). The press will be “a going concern” until his death, managed actively either by himself or by contracted agents. It will produce for him many thousands of dollars in sales and “personal contacts with music dealers as well as performers, lecture and conducting dates, and even extended college and university visits.”

1965

APRIL 4: More than 1,000 singers from the Southern California Junior College Music Association, Roger Wagner conducting, premiere a commissioned work, *Psalm 67: Let the People Praise Thee*, in Long Beach, California. Reads a book with the striking title, *Musik in der Zwangsjacke* [Music in the Straightjacket], by Austrian author Alois Melichar, whose aim is to demonstrate that Schoenberg’s twelve-tone method, rather than “liberating the composer from the fetters of tonality” is, in truth, “one of the worst tools of enslavement invented by man.”³⁵ Berger is in complete agreement with Melichar’s thesis and initiates a correspondence.

1966

Receives an invitation to consider a \$15,000 commission from a Catholic organization in Milwaukee for a full “Proper of the Mass.” Since he cannot set texts he does not believe, they settle on an anthem (for \$300), based on one segment of the Proper. He composes *Glorify the Lord with Me*, which will sell very well and earn him considerable money. APRIL 19: Featured, along with Mario Davidovsky, at the seventeenth annual Contemporary Music Festival at the University of Delaware, Newark. JUNE 14–17: Addresses the ninth annual conference of the Lutheran Society for Worship, Music and the

Arts at St. Olaf College on the topic, “The Composer of Choral Music in Our Time.” OCTOBER: Travels to Germany to serve as one of fifteen jurors for an international competition for female composers sponsored by the Society of German and Austrian Women Artists. The jury includes Ernst Krenek, Sir Jack Westrup, Henk Badings, and others. The “winning” score, fiercely advocated by Krenek as displaying the “felicitous skill of the experienced master” but questioned by Berger, is finally revealed as a beginner’s effort by a middle-aged woman in graduate school in America—proof, he thinks, of the impossibility of assessing the merit of avant-garde scores. On the way home, stops in Glasgow, Scotland, to meet The Linn Choir and conductor H. W. (“Harry”) Gardner, with whom he will have a 35-year association. Is finally successful in getting *Skelton Poems*, a work composed eleven years earlier and sent to eight publishers, issued by Alexander Broude. NOVEMBER 17: John Sheppard Music Press is elected to membership in ASCAP.³⁶

1967

JANUARY: The *Choral Journal* publishes another Berger talk, “Interpretation of 20th Century Choral Music.” In it, he calls attention to radically differing interpretative concepts placed on performers of sixteenth-century versus nineteenth-century music, and asks “whether a similar discrepancy faces us in the case of music written for chorus in our own time?” EARLY SPRING: Introduces himself to Dr. Gerhard Albersheim at an American Musicological Society convention because he is intrigued by Albersheim’s lecture topic, “Ludus Atonalis” [Atonal Game], a pun on Hindemith’s *Ludus Tonalis*. Conveys his agreement in a letter but is unable to persuade Albersheim of the possibility of an “art of tomorrow,” even within the framework of a re-imagined, revitalized tonality. MAY: *The Diapason* publishes “B on B” [Berger on Berger], a talk given at the University of Iowa, in which he contrasts the composer-spokesman whose choice of idiom is “the result of a sum total of an integrated intuitive experience” (i.e., his own) with the current avant-garde composer, whose choice of idiom “is the result of an arbitrary decision, the throwing of a switch, as it were, that turns on a different current.”³⁷ FALL: Has discovered the modest virtues of the Hohner Melodica, a handheld keyboard/wind instrument, and begins to write for it (*A Song of Seasons* and *Three Duets for Treble Instruments*). Receives the 1967–68 ASCAP award for the most performances of his works in the United States—about 10,000 annually—of any of its members.

1968

APRIL: Commissioned by the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) to write an opera. Accepts the commission but counter-proposes a story-based choral work for amateur singers with a few characters and some staging, all emphasizing the collective rather than the “I and YOU” of opera. After months of searching, finds and adapts Robert Browning’s narrative poem, “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.” For Berger this is an important new direction meant to “inject new life into our stale choral presentations.” JUNE–JULY: Has engagements at Northwestern University, Evanston (June 4),

University of Texas, Austin (June 15–28), Wisconsin State University, Whitewater (July 1–3), Pacific Lutheran University, near Tacoma (July 5–12), and University of Idaho, Moscow (July 21–31). AUGUST: Unwilling to accept the validity of the avant-garde and wishing to be independent of the administrative restrictions placed on full-time academics, resigns from the university—a watershed event in his life and career. In 1969, will drop his membership in the American Musicological Society and cease research on the Italian baroque. Achieves two long-standing goals: “to quit teaching before ‘mandatory’ retirement age” and to make his living as a freelance composer, conductor, lecturer, and publisher. Within days, is invited to be curricular consultant for music at Temple Buell College (a.k.a. Colorado Women’s College) in Denver, where his wife has a position. Also agrees to teach a few classes on a part-time basis. SEPTEMBER 27: Receives a package on his 59th birthday from Denis Stevens containing a recording of *Skelton Poems* sung over the BBC by Stevens’ Ambrosian Singers. Berger’s reply, filled with praise and gratitude, also betrays an uncharacteristic state of battle fatigue: “. . . you will understand that it is not easy to retain my serenity concerning my own [compositional] efforts when I am informed, as all of us are, as to the main currents of our musical times. Although I find sufficient stamina much of the time to tell myself that this, too, shall pass, there are as many moments when such inner fortitude does not prevail and when the dreadful thought suggests itself that possibly tonality IS dead, and that therefore I am dead, Lenny is dead, Britten is dead, and Stockhausen is indeed the Messiah or, worse yet, Penderecki.”

1969

JANUARY 5: Boulder’s *Daily Camera* runs a story about Berger and his success with John Sheppard Music Press. It is so successful, in fact, that Berger will shortly decide to transfer responsibility for sales to an East Coast agent.³⁸ JANUARY 19: A Denver concert features his *Magnificat* as originally conceived, with dance. Rita Berger is choreographer. JUNE 1: Pacific Lutheran University, after premiering his work *The Word of God* for narrator, choir, and soloists, awards him the Doctor of Music *honoris causa* “for his achievements in the field of service music for the Lutheran Church.” Receives congratulations from Gerhard Albersheim, who appreciates the significance of this recognition “for persons like us who [reject atonality and therefore] swim against the stream.” JULY 25: Heinrich Bessler dies in Leipzig.

1970

Performances of Berger works by American choirs extend literally from coast to coast, and spread into Canada, Europe, and New Zealand. This momentum has been building for some years and will continue well into the 1970s. JANUARY 10: Conducts the premiere of *The Pied Piper: A Play with Music*, performed by an area high school choir, at the OMEA convention in Cleveland. A Schirmer representative hears the performance and accepts the score on the spot for publication. MAY 12–13: Montclair State College in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, showcases work of Jean Berger, Vladimir

Ussachevsky, and Anis Fuleihan at its Sixth Annual Composers Symposium. JUNE: Has found a text, “Similar Cases” by Charlotte Perkins S. Gilman, for a second “work for the staged chorus,” to be called *Birds of a Feather: An Entertainment in One Act*, commissioned by Morris Beachy and University of Texas Music Department. Ernst Hermann Meyer urges Berger to correspond with Dr. Ingeborg Stein, a member of Besse-ler’s last group of musicology students, to lay the groundwork for Berger to lecture inside the GDR. Politics and bureaucracy will prevent any plan from coming to fruition until after Germany re-unifies in 1990. LATE JULY: After finishing *Birds of a Feather*, accepts another commission that precisely fits an existing score. Gets out *The Exiles* and, to achieve “what, to me, is an intrinsically American medium of sound,” rewrites it for chorus, baritone, two pianos, and percussion.³⁹



JEAN BERGER, 1970. Courtesy of the American Music Research Center.

1971

APRIL 22: Morris Beachy conducts the premiere of *Birds of a Feather* in Austin. “I recall the moment after the first performance,” Berger will write, “. . . when, after endless applause . . . we finally managed to quit the stage, and Morris—cool Welshman—threw his arms around me, saying: ‘I finally know what you are after.’ ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Passion, Morris, passion.’” Beachy’s enthusiastic, thoughtfully written endorsement of his concept, published in *The Choral Journal* in September, will be one of Berger’s most effective tools for promoting his half-dozen “works for the staged chorus.” JSMP publishes *Birds of a Feather*. MAY: Returns to MacDowell Colony for the first time since 1958 to work on his third stage work, *Yiphtah and His Daughter*, based on the biblical story of Jephthah. Lawson-Gould publishes his editions of a *Regina Coeli* and *Two Motets* by Perti. By year’s end, the Bergers have reached the point where marital separation cannot be avoided. DECEMBER 9: He leaves their Boulder home and drives to San Francisco.

1972

MARCH: Spends the month at MacDowell Colony, where he meets Peter Viereck (1916–2006), Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author of *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler* (1941). They discover that they—a German-born Jew and a first generation German-American whose father had served time in federal prison for being a Nazi propagandist—share a passionate

interest in that “world ‘between the wars’ that saw the emergence of National Socialism.” MID-APRIL: He and Rita meet in New York and travel to London and Basel, Switzerland, but the trip will make clear that they cannot resume their marriage. AUGUST: Accepts an invitation from the University of Arizona in Tucson for a one-year visiting professorship with responsibility solely for choral activities, all the more appealing because there will be “no further talking, admonishing, nor paper correcting.”

1973

JANUARY: Lucie de Vienne dies at age 70 in Montreal, her home since 1949. With the exception of one letter (12 September 1971), all correspondence between them is lost. MAY–JULY: Resides in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Jon now lives. JUNE 28–JULY 8: Chanticleer Community Theater in Council Bluffs, Iowa, does a run of “An Evening with Jean Berger,” performing three of his stage works, *The Pied Piper*, *Yiphtah and His Daughter*, and *Birds of a Feather*. It is, he will say, the most exciting event of his entire career. Rather than conducting, he observes audience responses—“It was extraordinary to watch the Iowa audiences . . . react as heartily as they did to my three ‘one-acters.’” At opening night, a critic notes, “. . . the theater was three-fourths full. And the audience was completely engrossed and quietly fascinated.”⁴⁰ This convinces Berger “that I [have] pointed to a new and promising path for the continued vital existence of our huge numbers of choral organizations.” FALL: Returns to Tucson to travel, compose, and explore the culture of America’s Southwest. Nippon Gaki Co., Ltd., in Tokyo, writes Berger on behalf of virtuoso harmonica player Mitsuaki Shimizu, who wishes a copy of the harmonica version of *Fandango Brasileiro*. Berger refers them to Larry Adler.

1974

JANUARY–FEBRUARY: Composes *The Cherry Tree Carol*, based on a twelfth century medieval carol of unknown authorship, the fourth of his works for the staged chorus. MAY: Travels to Mexico, where he witnesses a cheering, clamoring audience after a performance in Mexico City by Ballet Folklorica de Cuba. This, he says to a friend, *not* what happens in “the ivied halls” of academe, is what makes “the art live.” JULY: Moves back to Boulder but soon takes an apartment of his own in Denver. Completes a legal separation from Rita, but they will remain in continual contact and never divorce.⁴¹ Re-establishes himself in the Denver area’s amateur chamber-music scene before flying in September to Frankfurt for lectures and some days of walking in the Main Valley and the Spessart. Discovers with joy that “the German countryside has retained a bit of what is so deeply engraved in my memory.” Begins the process of inner reconciliation with Germany.

1975

FEBRUARY: Nippon Gaki Co. writes again on behalf of Mitsuaki Shimizu to say that Adler’s copy of *Fandango Brasileiro* has been lost. Shimizu wishes Berger to make a new version. Refuses several times but company represen-

tatives persist until he finally capitulates. Completes *Stone Soup* and *Barely Missed*, his fifth and sixth works for the staged chorus. SUMMER: Inspired by a book of English Romantic poems found in a thrift store, is moved to write a song cycle, *Five Shelley Poems*, after “succumbing” to the poet’s lines, “What are all these kissings worth/If thou kiss not me?” His, now, nine song sets are doing “incredibly well” among academic singers, whose campus-based programs, in his view, are the last bastion of the traditional solo recital.⁴²

1976

MID-FEBRUARY: First Denver performance of *The Cherry Tree Carol*. A new recording by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, *A Jubilant Song*, includes one of Berger’s *Two Motets*, “I lift up my eyes” (Psalm 121). JULY: After Israel’s successful rescue of hostages at the Entebbe airport in Uganda (July 3–4), he is moved to write an 18-minute choral cycle, *Hope for Peace*. DECEMBER: Assures son Jon that he and Rita are “on closer and warmer terms than ever, or than in years, at any rate. We congratulate each other for seemingly having invented the formula that works.”

1977

FEBRUARY 22: The governor of Texas gives him a state flag flown over the Capitol and declares him an “Honorary Texas Citizen” for his contributions to the cultural life of the state. U.S. Air Force String Orchestra in Washington, D.C., begins to program his works for concerts in the United States and overseas. JUNE: Travels to London to find a distributor for his JSMP catalog, then to Vienna to interest Musikhaus Doblinger in promoting his work in Europe. JULY: Proceeds to Jerusalem to see his sister Claire and to participate in Israel’s new *zimria* [choral festival] and related seminars, where he hopes to interest Israeli musicians in his compositions, especially *The Exiles* and *Hope for Peace*. His experience with the festival is “profoundly exciting in every conceivable way.”

1978

FEBRUARY: Travels to California in February for a half-semester residency in composition at California Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks. To promote his music, begins doing publishers’ reading clinics for choral conductors and church musicians. APRIL 14: At an Augsburg clinic, attached to the MENC National In-Service Conference in Chicago, attendees read through Berger’s *Cherry Tree Carol*. Believes he is finally “beginning to stir up some interest in my works for the ‘staged chorus,’ though it will be some time yet before the uphill trail will level off.” The Orchestra da camera di Roma, Nicolas Flagello conducting, issues a recording of American works, including Berger’s *Short Overture for Strings*. Determines to take a sabbatical from composing next year—“terrible danger of repeating myself without knowing it.” Has produced 150 works since leaving Middlebury.

1979

FEBRUARY 3: Moves to his own condominium in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood. Despite episodes of discontent with Denver, and even with the United States, this will be his home base for the remainder of his life. FEBRUARY 6: The Classic Chorale presents the Colorado premiere of *Stone Soup*, causing a reviewer to write, ". . . if all choral works were as visual and engaging as *Stone Soup*, choral music wouldn't be the Cinderella of classical music. Maybe this is a turning point."⁴³ JULY: Berger sends Pleasants "a recent interview which—as you can surmise—is gathering me few friends in Denver, a city recently immersed in opera enthusiasm, though what I have seen has all been awful. . . . [W]hile I kept holding forth . . . on matters pertaining to choral music and my personal targets in that area, [the reporter] understood truly only my very few and most casual remarks about the—to me—historic finiteness of the genre: opera, and depicted me as a sort of Wotan-slaying Don Quixote. Frankly, I don't give a damn about the whole bit of opera and would no more think of an active crusade against it as I would go to war against the Parody Mass." The article in question closes with Berger's conviction that elaborate efforts to prop up opera companies and symphony orchestras ignore "something that wants to grow while this blindfolded endorsement of 19th century culture stands in the way."⁴⁴ Has turned to book reviewing to keep himself from composing. SEPTEMBER 9: *The Sunday Denver Post* publishes his critique of Pleasants' latest book, *The Music Criticism of Hugo Wolf*. Begins work on a correspondence-based memoir with the working title *To and From: For Solo Voices and Typewriter*. DECEMBER: Flies to Minneapolis for performances of *The Cherry Tree Carol*. Despite his resolve to stay away from score paper, composes two works this year. Welcomes the New Year by playing "chamber music from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m."

1980

FEBRUARY: Berger and Normand Lockwood are made National Patrons of Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity in a ceremony in Denver. Begins composing again in earnest. Produces several dozen intermediate-level piano pieces, written to meet what he—and his publisher—see as a need for fresh repertoire for older piano students. Two sets will be in print before end of the year: *Diversions for Keyboard* and *More Diversions for Keyboard*. Also writes *Country Sketches* and *Seven Inventions* plus a *Sonatina*, all for piano.⁴⁵ MARCH: At the School of Sacred Music, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Louisville, Kentucky, conducts sight-reading sessions, not unlike his publishers' reading clinics, with 250 graduate students. More and more, he sees informal, participatory singing, with no public concert in mind, as a valuable end in itself. APRIL 22: Writes to French author Henri Troyat after reading Troyat's *Un si long chemin* [If A Long Road], a book dwelling on the continuing memory of the author's lost Russian childhood. Berger tells his own story of uprootedness and loss. Troyat responds, saying, "The account of your violent break with your homeland, of your wanderings, of your successive adaptations to new life and to new homes

and new cultures is most moving, poignant and also instructive. . . . I shall keep the pages you wrote me as a forceful living testimony of the tempests of our time.” Conducts a running dialogue with ASCAP about royalties and how to track broadcast and live performances of his music. OCTOBER: Lectures again in Germany, then visits Sweden because their Protestant choral culture wishes to cultivate “things American.”

1981

Starts the year with an explosion of composing, mostly for chorus, completing fourteen new works by year’s end. APRIL: Conducts the premiere of a major choral work, *Canticle of the Sun*, commissioned by the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple for its 160th anniversary. While there, spends an evening with Edward Lowinsky, a fellow Besseler protégé and now a prominent musicologist at the University of Chicago. The old friends “cross swords” about Berger’s decisions to compose “exclusively for the amateur performer,” and to accept commissions from Christian churches, both of which Lowinsky has trouble accepting. Berger is not defensive: “I have never thought of myself as a composer of ‘music for the church,’ and . . . it never occurred to me that I was writing ‘Jewish’ music or, for that matter, ‘religious’ music or anything but music that, with luck, might fill the esthetic needs of my contemporary society.”

1982

FEBRUARY 2: Muses in a letter about two famous living composers, one of whom (Copland) “no longer writes. I understood him,” he says. “. . . I feel I’ll write less from now on,” which, by 1986, will be the case. This year, however, he composes six works, one, a new cycle, *Three Songs*, on texts by Scottish poet James Thomson (1700–1748), written during a fall visiting professorship at Middlebury.

1983

MAY 14: Mayor proclaims “Jean Berger Day in Denver,” and pianist Janet Herbert Christensen and a quartet of soloists give a concert of seven of his song cycles. His *Cinq mélodies brèves*, written for Lucie de Vienne forty-six years ago, receives its American premiere. The *Denver Post* reports Berger’s view that the traditional song recital as chamber music “has ceased to exist.” Why? “Too many songs in too many languages. . . . [A]nother major reason is that the song recital flourished when every civilized person . . . read poetry. And that’s no longer the case.” But a revival is “very, very possible,” he says, principally on college campuses, “where information is every bit as much a factor as pure esthetic enjoyment.”⁴⁶ AUGUST–SEPTEMBER: Travels in Brazil, sponsored by Partners of the Americas in cooperation with Fundação Mineira de Conjuntos Corais [Choral Foundation of the State of Minas Gerais]. Finds an authentic musical culture thriving there. At a conservatory in the small city of Montes Claros, is treated to their “incredible” performance of his *Brazilian Psalm*. Gives a series of lectures and seminars, in Portuguese, on amateur choral activities in the United States for Minas

Gerais audiences. Returns nostalgically to Avenida Atlantica in Rio, where he lived in 1939–40, to find his old colonial-style house across from the beach replaced by a high-rise apartment building.

1984

JANUARY 11: Finishes another set of songs, *Amoretti*, on texts by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors. APRIL: Flies to Lisbon to give lectures arranged by the U.S. Embassy, then crosses over into Spain for a few days of “free roaming.” MAY 30–31: Colorado Chorale mounts a three-part program of his music—*The Exiles*, four song cycles, and *Stone Soup*. JUNE: Returns to Brazil for lectures and for the premiere of his *Amanha e Domingo*, composed on a text by Jorge de Lima and performed in Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais.⁴⁷ JUNE 29: Denver Gay Men’s Chorus performs *Hope for Tomorrow*, his 1956 setting of Martin Luther King’s words. DECEMBER 14–16: The Denver Symphony Orchestra, Yoel Levi conducting, programs his *Sinfonia di San Petronio*.

1985

FEBRUARY: After fifteen years, Berger resumes direct management of John Sheppard Music Press. Is now “his own publisher, editor, printer, and distributor. . . . I am the Attaignant of the 20th century. . . . I run down to Becky at Mile High Office Supply, who will, within 24 hours, produce 50 copies by photo-duplication. And I have no warehouse problem! . . . I really do compare myself with Pierre Attaignant.”⁴⁸ The press, he says, has been “the most important event of my business life.” APRIL: Adds another set of songs, *Dos Cantos*, begun in 1945 in Etretat, France, to his growing catalog. MAY: Makes a nostalgic visit to the Hessian State Theater in Darmstadt, now a war-damaged shell. Pauses on the sidewalk to remember his expulsion by the SA in 1933, then walks away. JUNE 14: Receives Colorado’s 1985 Governor’s Awards for Excellence in the Arts. Uses the platform of publicity given him to assert his role as gadfly: “. . . 95 percent of the composers in this country are fully tenured professors. A tenured professor doesn’t have to give a damn about his music. He’s going to get his check. I’d like the composer to be on his own, to take the risk that the so-called avant-garde professor never takes. . . . I look at the faces of people listening to my music and obviously enjoying it and I imagine their next thought to be, ‘It couldn’t be very good. After all, I’m getting it.’ That’s a terrible state of affairs.”⁴⁹ DECEMBER 21: Finishes a three-part choral work, *Let Us Now Build a Holy Place*, assembled from scores composed in 1952, 1953, and 1965 for a commission by a Colorado church. His “pencil” has now produced 278 works, 44 since 1979.

1986

WINTER: Collaborates with conductor Sherry Hill Kelly of Belmont College in Nashville to produce a recording titled *Jean Berger: Sacred & Secular Choral Music*. Not seeing a groundswell of support for his works for the staged chorus and the “rejuvenation” of the choral concert he had sought by producing them, Berger increasingly directs his energies to publishing and per-

forming his songs, which are selling better than anything else. (Total JSMP sales are, he says, “approximately 350 percent over what they were last year.”) Updates and issues six of his French, Portuguese, and Israeli folk song arrangements from the 1930s and 1940s. Gets out an old unpublished cycle from 1946, *From Portugal*, and issues three of the original six songs. OCTOBER: Plays for faculty singers in a one-hour program of his songs at Grand Canyon College in Phoenix. DECEMBER 2 and 4: He and Denver singer Rebecca Lively perform programs of his songs at two campuses in western Colorado.⁵⁰

1987

The question of whether or not to embrace word processing comes up in a letter to a computer-using acquaintance. “Your type of machine,” he writes, “has not appealed to me, and I shall remain the lousy typist I’ve always been, at the old portable manual [his beloved Hermes].” Over next ten years, this will take on the character of a prejudice: “. . . when the looks of the letters,” he will say to Pleasants, “no longer reveal their author’s presence, I also feel that their contents have become commonplace, with very few exceptions.” Will thank Henry for sticking with *his* old portable, too. MARCH: Journeys to Brussels to establish in a “francophone country” a foothold for his JSMP works with French texts. His motive has a good deal to do with “foreign royalties [which] appear to be coming our way with regularity and, surprisingly, with lavishness. . . . My perhaps 200 performances abroad bring me . . . three times the amount of income derived from the domestic events.” EARLY APRIL: Celebrates the fifty-fifth anniversary of completing his PhD with the current professor of musicology at Heidelberg. APRIL 18: University of Denver’s Lamont School of Music presents a program of his solo vocal works with the composer at the piano. JUNE 14: Conducts three of his anthems at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. SEPTEMBER: An article about Berger appears in the Swedish Choral Directors Association publication, *Körledaren*. Spends three weeks in Sweden, mostly in Stockholm speaking (in English) to groups of public school youngsters, about age 12. OCTOBER 4: Stockholm’s Nicolai Kammarkor performs a program of his works.

1988

FEBRUARY: Prolongs an ongoing dispute with ASCAP regarding royalties for performances and broadcasts of his *Sinfonia di San Petronio*, writing about it to Morton Gould, ASCAP president. MARCH: Travels to Mexico to promote the sale and performance of his works in Spanish and Portuguese. JULY 26–30: Spends four days as artist in residence at the summer music festival “Bach, Beethoven & Breckenridge” in the Colorado mountains. Concerts on July 28 and 30 include the world premiere of *Two Psalms (140/146) for Choir, Solo Voices, & Two Pianos*, composed in 1958. OCTOBER: Visits conservatories in Barcelona, Spain, to introduce his vocal works, then “vagabonds” on foot in Catalonia. Ends the year with “a mad series of trips” in the western United States to conduct his choral works.

1989

Kenneth Jennings, conducting the St. Olaf Choir on tour, programs Berger's 1980 work, *Canticle of the Sun*, written in English on texts by St. Francis of Assisi. MARCH: Spends a month in Italy, largely in the company of young musicians less than half his age. Makes a side trip to Assisi, where he conceives a new song cycle, *Cantico de lo frate sole*, brought to life in his mind by St. Francis's medieval language—not Latin, not yet Italian. APRIL 1: Hears Italian-American soprano Tosi Poleri, a recent graduate of the University of Colorado's College of Music, open and close a recital in Florence with his *Amoretti* and *Quatre Chants d'Amour*. She will continue to perform his songs and promote his music in Italy and elsewhere outside the United States. To honor Berger's eightieth birthday, The Linn Choir and "Harry" Gardner formally invite him to be their honorary president for the 1989–90 season—the first non-Scottish musician to be so honored. Renewed annually, it will be a lifetime appointment. The choir also commissions a new work from him, *Let Glasgow Flourish*, for a festival concert on 1 May 1990.⁵¹ SUMMER: WGBH-FM, Boston's flagship public radio station, works with him to plan a broadcast of his music for his birthday. SEPTEMBER 27: Robert J. Lurtsema, host of WGBH's "Morning Pro Musica," devotes two hours to Berger works. Other observances and live performances, great and small, take place in Canada and the United States before and after his actual birth date. Hears from Larry Adler, who writes, "I played the cassette of the [Caribbean C]oncerto recently. I still think it the most exciting work ever written for the instrument." And, Berger tells Pleasants, "I am drowning in commissions. . . ."

1990

FEBRUARY 9: St. Olaf Choir, in Jennings' final tour, performs Berger's *Magnificat* at Carnegie Hall in New York. APRIL 21: Conducts the premiere of *Song of Praise*, commissioned for the Belmont Chorale's twentieth anniversary. Reintroduced to Billye Brown Youmans, a Belmont College alumna who, as a student singer in 1972, had asked him for repertoire suggestions. A coaching session with her causes him to feel that they would make a good recital team. They discuss his wish for an "ongoing project," even overseas touring, and he makes wide-ranging efforts this year and next to secure dates for them. Rewrites and publishes his 1936 musical setting of sonnets by Louise Labé, originally for a quartet of a cappella women's voices, now for soprano and string trio. Rescores his choral score *Six Madrigals* for solo voice and piano, titling the resulting cycle *A Set of Airs*. For his eighty-first birthday, the city of Denver again declares "Jean Berger Day in Denver," saying, "Very few individuals have dedicated their lives to the arts with a breadth and depth of contribution that rivals that of Denver's adopted son, the world renowned scholar, linguist, choral conductor, musicologist and composer. . . ." OCTOBER 3: Germany is officially reunified, and Berger and Dr. Ingeborg Stein, now professor of musicology at Jena University and director of the Heinrich-Schütz-Akademie in Bad Köstritz, make concrete plans for him to travel, finally, to the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). NOVEMBER: Banks Music Publications in

Sandhutton, York, North Yorkshire, England, issues a flier, “Choral Music by Jean Berger,” listing forty-six works.

1991

APRIL: Makes his first excursion to the GDR to take part in seminars, radio interviews, and discussions with local choral conductors. MAY: Accompanies Billye Brown Youmans in their first recital, which includes premiere performance of *Cantico de lo Frate Sole*, at University of South Alabama in Mobile. SEPTEMBER 27: Finishes a set of songs, *Blame Not My Lute*, for coming programs with Billye. EARLY OCTOBER: Flies to California for season opener of the San Diego Symphony, featuring Yoav Talmi conducting performances of *Sinfonia di San Petronio*. OCTOBER 12: Begins a second memoir, in journal style, aptly titled *Memories, Musings, Meanderings*, to which he will add entries most days for the next nine months. NOVEMBER 13: Almost blacks out while cross-country skiing. Feels relieved when he decides to give it up altogether. Invited by son Jon, now thirty-eight and newly married, to spend Thanksgiving at their California home.

1992

Issues a JSMP edition of his 1939 song cycle *Quatre Chants d'Amour* with a newer, more poetic English translation. APRIL: Spends several weeks in Israel with his sister. MAY 4: Proceeds to Italy and Germany for almost two months of workshops, lectures, rehearsals, and concerts, including an appearance at the Heinrich-Schütz-Akademie, all organized by Dr. Stein. JUNE: Sees, for the first time since 1933, the property in Ludwigshafen where his maternal grandparents lived. Prepares the totally unrehearsed Jubilee Singers of Jena for three performances of his *Magnificat*. It is a grueling experience, but he will gladly return annually to perform with these post-war era Germans and to find warmth and acceptance among them. OCTOBER: Tours again with Billye Brown Youmans, premiering *Blame Not My Lute* at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee, and at Belmont College.

1993

JANUARY 15: Karl Haas, in an edition of his radio series *Adventures In Good Music* titled “New Wine in Old Bottles,” illustrates his theme with Berger’s *Sinfonia di San Petronio*. JUNE 8–16: Returns to Germany where, again under auspices of the Heinrich-Schütz-Akademie, conducts *A Song of Seasons* in four concerts with the Jubilee Singers and lectures at Leipzig University. SUMMER: Composes a final set of solo songs in medieval French, *Chansons de femme (A Woman’s Songs)*, for Billye, and inspired by her.⁵² He will refer to her in the future as “the chief interpreter of my songs.”

1994

MAY: Despite health problems, is excited about his trip to Germany. As part of their prestigious week-long Leipzig University Music Festival, the University Chorus—“one of the truly excellent European choruses”—performs *Yiphtah and His Daughter*, with Berger conducting. On the way home,

stops in Paris, where through a quirk of circumstance—the purchase of Boston publisher Music for Brass by French publisher Alphonse Leduc—Berger finds that his scores are selling well there. But his stay is “joyless,” so he decides, from now on, to “cherish my memories of the old ‘Paname.’” MID-OCTOBER: His life is “taken off its hinges” by the urgent need for bypass surgery just after his eighty-fifth birthday. While recuperating, sends letters to various conductors and colleges, encouraging their interest in his songs and major choral works and stating his availability for appearances. DECEMBER: A Christmas edition of Karl Haas’s radio program includes Berger’s *Glory Be to God*, recorded in 1957 by the St. Olaf Choir. This generates correspondence with Haas.⁵³

1995

Pleasants’ letters have begun to describe increasingly debilitating health problems, and the two share stories of the vicissitudes of old age. Most distressing after-effect of surgery for Berger is a problem with his eyes. The printed staves shimmer on the page, and he can no longer read chamber music scores. SEPTEMBER 30: Is able, despite his eyes, to accompany Billye in his only performance of *Chansons de femme* at Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk. DECEMBER: Travels to Jena to conduct the Jubilee Singers in three performances of *The Cherry Tree Carol*. Highlight of the trip is “holding in my hands” a fourteenth-century parchment, the *Jenaer Liederhandschrift* [Jena Song Collection], with minnesinger texts in Middle High German. His singers offer him “a very generous commission” for an extended score using these texts.

1996

JANUARY 13: Observes in a letter that while he is “exotic” to the Germans, “[h]ere in the U.S., my time of ‘relevance’ seems to belong to the past. . . .” SUMMER: Secures September dates for workshops and performances in Philadelphia, Boston, and on Cape Cod.

1997

JANUARY 27: Accepts with pleasure and amusement being made a Kentucky Colonel by the Commonwealth of Kentucky following a concert of his music at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. FEBRUARY: Now eighty-seven, posts a “for sale” notice for his bicycle. MAY: Makes a guest appearance at the eighteenth annual International Children’s Choir Festival in Halle, Germany (Handel’s birthplace). *Bits of Wisdom* (1968) is performed at a festival concert. Writes enthusiastic letters later to several children’s choirs in United States, including the Boys Choir of Harlem, encouraging their future participation. SUMMER: Composes *Fünf Chorsätze auf Texte der Jenaer Liederhandschrift*. It is just his second work based entirely on German texts. Mails the score, “after much soul searching,” to the Jubilee Singers. “. . . German was my first language,” he says to Pleasants, “and continues to include the hate which the Nazi years—and my personal experiences due to them—produced.”

1998

Expresses his wish to donate his papers, manuscripts, correspondence, and other collections to the American Music Research Center (AMRC) in Boulder. APRIL–MAY: Spends six weeks at Middlebury as the first guest musician invited under the terms of the Jean Berger Discretionary Music Initiative, a new fund of the college established in his honor. MAY: Makes a trip to Israel to see his sister. They are both well enough to enjoy excursions and walks. JUNE 18: Conducts the Jubilee Singers in Jena in the premiere of his new score, *Fünf Chorsätze*. Afterward, says he “can tolerate the whole of Germany again, can even speak the language without any of the old sensations of profound hate.” SEPTEMBER 26–27: The University of Colorado College of Music and AMRC celebrate his eighty-ninth birthday with two concerts—a program of choral works sung by Denver’s St. Martin’s Chamber Choir, Timothy J. Kreuger conducting, and a recital of solo vocal works performed by College of Music faculty. The choral concert is repeated in Denver for a large audience. SEPTEMBER 29: The president of Middlebury College writes him to convey their wish to confer on him “the honorary degree of doctor of arts . . . to recognize your distinguished career as an accomplished musician and to place before the graduating class an example of human excellence.” DECEMBER 18–20: The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh presents three concerts, all of which he attends, featuring four Magnificats—Bach, Taverner, Rutter, and Berger.

1999

FEBRUARY: Neil A. Kjos gives him “the surprise of [his] life” by asking for a fresh choral composition and backing up the request with a gift: a “Mardi Gras ‘liquid reinforcement.’”⁵⁴ They want a sacred text set to music with a Brazilian flavor. After reminding Kjos how long it has been since writing *Brazilian Psalm*—fifty-eight years—promises “a piece with some possibly Latin American rhythmic interest. . . .” Chooses a public domain text by Iberian Renaissance poet Gil Vicente (1465–1537), examines his manuscripts from the early 1940s and derives from the second of his *Two Vocalises* (“Cantiga”) a “new” score for SATB and piano, *Ádorai, Montanhas* [Adore Him, Ye Mountains]. In nine months, will receive six published copies. APRIL 25: Conducts his stage work, *Yiphtah and His Daughter*, featuring combined university and high school singers, during a program of his choral works given by Indiana University-Purdue University in Ft. Wayne (IPFW). MAY 23: Jean and Rita attend Jon’s graduation from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. AUGUST 13: Middlebury College awards him a doctor of arts *honoris causa* at the end of a two-week summer residency in the French Summer Language School. SEPTEMBER 27: Celebrates his ninetieth birthday in Germany and, for the last time, conducts the Jubilee Singers in five concerts of his music. Returns to Ft. Wayne for IPFW’s fall concert—a production of *The Pied Piper*.

2000

JANUARY 4: Henry Pleasants dies in London. FEBRUARY 5: Conducts the premiere of *Enter Into His Gates*, commissioned by The First Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York.⁵⁵ Six other Berger works are on the program. MAY: Billye Brown Youmans sings his *Villanescas* at the Chrysler Museum Theatre in Norfolk, Virginia. Continues to seek more engagements and performances of his works.

2001

JANUARY 28: Attends a “Meet the Composer” event and concert titled “The Art Songs of Jean Berger,” sponsored by the Norfolk Art Song Society. FEBRUARY 24–28: Holds workshops and conducts choirs at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. SPRING: He and Claire discuss a possible rendezvous in Mannheim in October. SUMMER: Lunches with a group of Jewish teens from northern Germany who are in United States to meet and talk with Holocaust survivors. Is sufficiently impressed with these articulate young people to suggest meeting with them again in Germany. Still hoping to meet his sister, buys an airline ticket, but the attack on the World Trade Center delivers the coup de grâce to their travel plans. SEPTEMBER 27: Attends a rehearsal of the Mercury Ensemble, a Denver chamber orchestra, to hear final preparations of his *Sinfonia di San Petronio* for performances on September 29 and October 6, both of which he attends. NOVEMBER 29–30: Despite failing health, proceeds, undeterred, to an out-of-state engagement at Rhode Island College in Providence—a much-desired break in “the damnable stagnation of my life.” The school’s three vocal ensembles each perform one of his works, and on December 1, he visits First Baptist Meetinghouse, the oldest Baptist church in the United States (1638), and listens in astonishment as its choir sings an anthem he had forgotten he wrote.

2002

A tentative plan has evolved with the teacher of the Jewish teens for him to make a presentation in Germany to her students in late April. Following this, wants to “settle” for at least two months at a resort in the Black Forest, not far from Strasbourg. MARCH 9: Attends a performance of his *Skelton Poems* by St. Martin’s Chamber Choir at Metropolitan State College in Denver. APRIL 21: Makes his last public appearance at a Sunday service at Grace Lutheran Church in Boulder, where he hears four of his anthems—*Lift Up Your Heads* (1959/1984), *O Magnify the Lord* (from *Songs of Worship*, 1959), *All Flesh Is Grass* (1964), and *Let the People Praise Thee, O God* (1964). Enters Denver’s Rose Medical Center just days later with what appears to be a mild heart attack, but unforeseen complications soon make the situation far more serious. Several weeks later, when it is clear that he cannot recover, Berger is moved to Shalom Park, a nursing facility in southeast Aurora. MAY 28: Dies with his family present. Is given a Jewish burial at a private graveside service at Green Mountain Cemetery in Boulder. AUGUST 3: Family, friends, and colleagues attend a public memorial, featuring his choral and instrumental music and first-person tributes, at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.⁵⁶

Notes

¹ “Beckmesser” is the famously critical jury member of the song contest in Richard Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*.

² This sequence of events—accidentally hearing Besseler, studying briefly in Vienna, walking back to Germany—is found in his unpublished autobiographical memoir, *Memories, Musings, Meanderings (MMM)*, 1991–93, 5 December 1991 and 7 December 1991.

³ In several sources, including *MMM*, Berger designates the first week of May as his date of arrival in Paris. But in an earlier unpublished memoir, *To and From: For Solo Voices and Typewriter (T&F)*, 1979, 22, he specifies “the first week of April 1933.” Historical events argue for the April date. Alan E. Steinweis, in his book, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 105: “Nazi anti-Jewish policy evolved through several fairly distinct and increasingly radical phases. The first, from February to March 1933, was marked by political violence and terror, perpetrated primarily by the SA. . . . Nazi officials often characterized the terror as a spontaneous uprising by the people against their so-called Jewish oppressors. . . . The purge of many prominent Jewish figures in the performing arts during the tumultuous months of February and March 1933 reflected this general pattern.”

⁴ In most accounts, Berger specified a date of c. 1935–1937 for this life-altering concert, but selected sources (see end of note) corroborate each other in describing only *one* booking for Ellington at the Salle Pleyel during the 1930s: July 27, 29, and August 1, 1933, during the Duke’s first tour of Europe. During the second European tour, Ellington’s band played Paris at the Palais de Chaillot Auditorium on April 3 and 4, 1939. (His vocalist, Ivie Anderson, sang both sets of concerts.) The 1933 dates are problematic for Berger’s attendance but may, in the end, be the more likely since he consistently said he heard Ellington at the Salle Pleyel. However, he wrote in *MMM* (17 August 1993) of being at the Salzburg Festival for six weeks in 1933, ending mid-August, playing for the Harald Kreutzberg dancers. (Kreutzberg’s presence at the Festival in 1933 *can* be verified.) Also, Berger said that he and his “gang” of musicians were sent to the Ellington concert by their concert agency so the hall would “look full.” Mid-summer 1933 seems early for him even to be registered at a concert agency. The 1939 dates are problematic also. For one thing, Berger was by then making, to use his word, “frantic” efforts to leave Europe. The 1939 concerts were *not* at the Salle Pleyel. And, by 1939, Ellington was a known quantity; the producers should not have had to “drum up” an audience. Ken Vail, *Duke’s Diary: The Life of Duke Ellington, Vol. 1 (1927–1950)* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002); Stuart Nicholson, *Reminiscing in Tempo: A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999); Mark Tucker, *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵ *T&F*, 7.

⁶ *MMM*, 19 December 1991.

⁷ *T&F*, 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹ Berger found this text at the “Maison de la Culture, a center of lectures, discussions, publications of everything from political pamphlets to the most subtle poetry . . .,” referring to the center as “our spiritual home” and its founding as “[o]ne of the important events of our political situation,” *MMM*, 7 November 1991. During the mid-1930s, according to scholar and art historian Toby Norris, some members of the French anti-Fascist Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists were “linked to the Paris branch of the Maison de la Culture, a cultural center run by the French Communist Party. . . .” Toby Norris, “The *Querelle de Réalisme* and the Politicization of French Artists during the Great Depression,” *PART, Journal of the CUNY PhD Program in Art History* 12, <<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/arthistory/part/part12/articles/norris.html>>.

¹⁰ Lucie de Vienne’s and Berger’s lives remained entwined. In November 1939, Lucie left France after depositing the smuggled jewelry with a municipal pawn shop in Paris. She bought a one-way passage to the U.S. with some of the money, settling initially in Salt Lake City, Utah, home of two of her American voice students, and opening a successful vocal studio. During the summer of 1941, Berger made the long trip to Salt Lake by bus to visit her. She moved to New York in 1943 and worked in the French section of the nas-

cent United Nations. Before the Bergers left for Europe in September 1944, he retrieved the pawn ticket for the jewelry from Lucie, in case they should reach Paris. Near the end of his life, he said of her, “She was really quite a gal . . . umhmm.”

¹¹ Villa-Lobos invited Berger to participate in his monumental educational project of recording indigenous melodies from the Brazilian interior, then transcribing and arranging them for use by his chorus of 300–400 schoolteachers, who, in turn, disseminated them throughout the country. Berger made a few arrangements with “O Vila’s” guidance, but removed himself from the project after several months because “only an ear born to the Brazilian language” could understand what was on the very primitive recordings. *MMM*, 24 November 1991; Charley Samson, interview, (29 September 1992): 23–24.

¹² Berger’s exact arrival date in the U.S. is confirmed in multiple entries in his personal diaries, memoirs, and letters. His being granted an immigration visa in March 1941 is the likely reason he so often said he came to the United States in 1941.

¹³ Russian pianist Alexander Borowsky, in Buenos Aires in 1940 when Berger and Figner were there, gave him Tully’s address and a letter of introduction. Because Berger thought Tully an “atrocious” singer—she performed his harmonization of *Faucheur Sinistre* on 20 March 1941—he determined to have nothing further to do with her. In 1992, he said, “She’s a wonderful person. I know that now, but I was too young and too dumb to realize that I was talking to somebody who could be of unbelievable help to me. . . . When you’re an opinionated musician, you create all sorts of obstacles for yourself.”

¹⁴ This title is missing from the various lists of Berger works, suggesting that no score for it remains.

¹⁵ *Paqueta* was the original title of movement one of *Lembrancas da Terra do Sol*, suggesting that *Fandango Brasileiro* was, in fact, *Paqueta*.

¹⁶ Various reviews from 1941 and 1942 mention Berger’s “superb pianism,” describing him, for example, as “an exceptionally talented musician” whose “artistry at the piano contributed lavishly to the beauty of the vocal and violin numbers,” an “excellent and sensitive” accompanist in “perfect accord” with his singer, etc. After a program with Houston, the critic remarked, “One could almost forget the sounds that emanated from Miss Houston’s throat while listening to the accompaniments.”

¹⁷ Berger often gave the impression that he arranged for CBS and NBC after the war. The dating used here comes from the 1992 Samson interviews, and from *MMM*, 21 December 1991. That he may have done some free-lance arranging for the networks in 1946–47 cannot be ruled out, but by then, he said, “‘live’ music was banished from the airwaves.” *T&F*, 2.

¹⁸ Among the published comments: “. . . the Berger concerto . . . is based upon Latin American rhythms and themes . . . [but] owes certainly more to Paris than to South America in the wit and restraint and tact of its orchestration. A beautifully made piece of music.” *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 11 March 1942.

¹⁹ In a letter Berger wrote, “The high voice version in *El Despechado* [fourth song of the set] was added, ages ago, at the request of Bidu Sayão, the wonderful soprano of the Met. Bidu gave the first American performance of the *Villanescas*. And it was during our most animated rehearsals that, one day, she let fly with the final vocalise, which was so exactly what suited the ending of the song that I incorporated it as an optional finale.” Jean Berger to Billye Brown Youmans, 1 October 1999.

²⁰ This arrangement was made by Berger at the request of the Chamber Music Guild of Washington (DC), to whom it is dedicated. A review from a D.C. newspaper said, in part, “Scored for voice and string quartet by the composer, the songs impress one by the superiority of part writing, every instrument being given an important place to fill, with the voice treated as one of the links of the ensemble.”

²¹ For a contemporary assessment of this cycle and of Berger’s songs generally, see Gregory Berg’s review, “Songs of Jean Berger: 1909–2002,” *Journal of Singing* 64 (November–December 2007): 259–260.

²² Berger told a reporter that this tour was in 1946. “Many sing praises of composer’s works,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 16 October 1991. However, *beverlysillsonline.com* indicates 1947 for the Liebling Singers’ midwest tour, and Berger noted that “Garfield and I had been on a midwestern recital tour earlier that year,” which, in context, was 1948. *MMM*, 18 November 1991. The Liebling Singers formed in 1947 and disbanded in 1949.

²³ Berger's reaction was unequivocally negative. From the beginning, he believed Israeli statehood—and any notion of a modern state based on religion—to be “a major and potentially tragic act of contemporary folly;” letter, Jean Berger to historian Barbara W. Tuchman, 17 August 1984. He argued his position, including his empathy with Palestinians displaced from what is now Israel, to politicians, historians, authors (including Amos Oz), colleagues, and friends to the end of his life. On this subject he was adamant, believing he was on the right side both of the debate and of history.

²⁴ Whether Christiansen's was, in fact, the first U.S. performance is unclear. On 25 January 1942, the *Detroit Free Press* published a notice of the first performance of *Brazilian Psalm* and *Cantigas* by John F. Williamson and the Westminster Choir, to be given on March 3. However, in *MMM*, 24 November 1991, Berger wrote, “As it turned out, the *Brazilian Psalm* was more than even the Westminster Choir of 1941 could handle. After a number of rehearsals, it was shelved.”

²⁵ Berger wrote, “*Brazilian Psalm* has always been a problem score to me. Olaf Christiansen took it upon himself, ages ago, to cut the score in two and to start the tradition of singing only the ‘Alleluia,’ which, in my own opinion, is a complete misconception of what the work really is. The first part praised the Lord with ‘all manner of instruments,’ etc. In the second part the humble Brazilian farmer, who does not have all these performing tools, offers his modest praises by way of a procession, a litany, etc., hence the Brazilian folk dance rhythm.” Letter, Jean Berger to Gary Mc Kercher, 31 August 1996.

²⁶ *Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951): 354–367.

²⁷ A later performance by the Amarillo (TX) Symphony Orchestra elicited this comment: “Both musicians and non-musicians alike were fascinated by Mr. Berger's dehydrated symphony; . . . his ‘Short Symphony’ contained all of the needed elements for a full-blown symphony, and most of us appreciated the fact that he didn't ‘add water and stir.’ . . . The composition sounded as if it were progressing steadily on its own two feet, not needing to lean on other compositions for inspiration and guidance either in thematic or orchestrational content.” *The Amarillo Citizen*, 25 March 1963.

²⁸ It was Berger's firm belief that his wife's termination was due, not to deficiencies in her performance, but to sexual discrimination on the part of lesbians in the physical education department who did not want a married woman in their midst. He put this in a letter to Middlebury's Dean of Faculty on 14 July 1998.

²⁹ See “Jean Berger Works,” compiled with Berger's assistance by Charley Samson of Colorado Public Radio, 15 November 1995. A few published and unpublished compositions, mentioned or listed by Berger in other documents, are missing from Samson's 286-item list, but it is nevertheless an immensely valuable and useful compilation. A thorough examination of all the manuscripts would be required to determine the exact number of Berger's extant works.

³⁰ MENC, formerly Music Educators National Conference; since 1998, The National Association for Music Education. ACDA: American Choral Directors Association.

³¹ From about 1960 on, Berger became a strenuous critic of music education at all levels in America, believing it needed fresh goals and objectives and a total revamping: “We need enlightened people who will sit down and ask themselves, ‘Why should we have music in the schools?’ (Because obviously we should.) It is a magnificent opportunity for teamwork that surpasses our sports. It is a magnificent means towards mental precision that equals what is done in the sciences. . . . It is stunning what [could] be done in this country—which has nothing to do with what we *are* doing.” Philip Shuman, “A Conversation with Jean Berger,” (4 December 1986): 36-40. Cf. “Berger to be featured at fine arts festival,” *The Observer*, La Grande, Oregon, 14 April 1967 (copy in a JB scrapbook).

³² This was the first of many similar lecture tours to Europe and the UK over the next thirty years: 1962–1966, 1970, 1974, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984–1987, 1992 (former GDR), 1993 (GDR), 1995 (GDR).

³³ Berger wrote, “. . . my associations with the American Lutheran Church represent one of the most important aspects of my career. . . . I consider it one of America's most inspiring merits that I, the Jew, persecuted by the Nazis, should find no obstacle whatsoever in [that which] my homeland considered to be such a horrible crime. . . .” *T&F*, 47. Further to this, Berger clarified his “own stand, in matters of music: despite my fervent endorsement of my Jewish ancestry, I am clearly a man of the West, and the impact of

Notre Dame cathedral or of Chartres or of the Acropolis or—perhaps more than any other—the committedly Lutheran opus of Johann Sebastian Bach, all of these are as potent in my make-up as my consistent reading of the ‘t’hillim’ (‘psalms’) in King David’s own language.” *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁴ *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 17:3 (Autumn 1964): 370–377.

³⁵ Berger’s paraphrase of Melichar’s thesis. *T&F*, 68.

³⁶ American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

³⁷ The four Berger-authored articles/talks mentioned: “Our Choral Heritage,” *Choral Journal* and *The Texas Choirmaster* (May 1962); “The Composer of Choral Music in Our Time,” *Response* (Lutheran Society for Worship, Music, and the Arts) 8:3 (1967) and *The Diapason* (February 1968); “Interpretation of 20th Century Choral Music,” *The Choral Journal* (January–February 1967); “B on B,” *The Diapason* (May 1967) were not intended but might be considered as a set. While each echoes the others in significant and expectable ways, each has a distinct emphasis. Berger did not spare the targets of his criticism or sugarcoat the issues. His aim was to challenge his fellow choral musicians to think about their doings with as much rigor and scrutiny as he did. The articles are therefore important critiques and noteworthy contributions to twentieth century American musical thought.

³⁸ Joseph Boonin, Inc., in Hackensack, NJ, became sole agent for JSMP publications in 1970. In 1977, European American Music Distributors acquired Boonin’s print music catalog and distribution operation.

³⁹ In 1984 Berger, hoping to obtain a performance of *The Exiles* by Rabbi Max Gruenewald’s New Jersey congregation, sent the revised score to the rabbi but referred in his cover letter to the original scoring for alto solo and orchestra. Immersed in symphonic culture, they could not grasp why he would prefer the revision to his original. Berger wrote back, explaining in detail his view that the “symphony orchestra is the product of an earlier German society of the 19th century” and that “I do not belong there, nor is my music in any sense symphonic,” topping it off with the assertion that “the symphony orchestra will not always exist. . . .” Berger stood his ground but lost the performance.

⁴⁰ Tom Longden, “Berger Works Fascinating To Audience At Chanticleer,” *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, 2 July 1973.

⁴¹ For the most part, this chronology does not address the personal dimension of Berger’s story. Still, it is germane to any treatment of his life to indicate, however sketchily, the ramifications of Berger’s attraction to the feminine—which might be summarized by brief excerpts from one of his letters to his wife, written from San Francisco in mid-1973: “When I took off for Tucson, it was with the clear understanding that I would try to run my life as best I knew how. I did meet someone who became a friend, of sorts. . . . Although this particular aspect of my being is possibly not altogether or totally familiar to you, I cannot function without a woman around me. I wither away. In all of my adult existence this has been so, and the day that it will not be so, I will gladly call a definite halt to all of it, including life itself. . . . But try to understand, darling, that our future, yours and mine, is as dear to me as you say it is to you. . . .” Referring to his Tucson friend, he continued, “It’s the sort of thing ‘the doctor ordered,’ with no commitment, no plan, no nothing, but a most casual and yet somehow entirely pleasing thing. But I wrote you . . . that such things are not what I care to have my life revolve around. Again, I thought I was clear on it: I love you, and only you. Whatever difficulties there have been or even, predictably, may yet be, I still cannot repeat elsewhere the sensation of ‘sense’ in my relation with you, and of futility or senselessness in any other.” Their letters make clear the importance to both Rita and Jean Berger of their long and difficult marriage, which, while rooted in profound love and the “magic coincidence” of their tastes, was, in the end, fatally eroded, primarily by the issue already alluded to, but also by an array of other human failings and differences. It was a bond which neither could ever escape, definitively end, or find fulfillment in.

⁴² Berger meant nine song sets *then in print*. He had others plus some individual songs (and folksong settings) which were unpublished as of 1975.

⁴³ Glenn Giffin, “Unique Work Works for Classic Chorale,” *Denver Post*, 7 February 1979.

⁴⁴ Barbara Mackay, “Berger: Opera Now ‘Not Viable,’” *Denver Post*, 1 July 1979.

⁴⁵ An earlier student piece, *Jingle Serenade*, published by Summy Birschard (c. 1960) and

reprinted in its entirety in their promotional publication, *The Piano Teacher* (May–June 1961), is pasted into one of Berger's scrapbooks.

⁴⁶ Glenn Giffin, "A Talent Deserving Local Recognition," *Denver Post*, 8 May 1983.

⁴⁷ Berger kept a record, "Publishers" (1953–1999), listing compositions as he submitted them to various publishers. He sent *Amanha e Domingo* first to Kjos (February 1984), then to Shawnee Press (July 1984). Whether it was actually published is not clear from these entries, and the title does not appear on either Samson's "Jean Berger Works" or the "Berger AMRC Works List."

⁴⁸ Glenn Giffin, "A Valued Award: Honored Composer Does It All," *Denver Post*, 9 June 1985. Pierre Attaignant (ca. 1494–1551), among the first to use moveable music type, cut the time and labor for printing music in half and was the first mass production music publisher in Europe.

⁴⁹ Blair Chotzinoff, "Jean Berger," *MUSE* (June 1985). Complete publication information unknown.

⁵⁰ Prior to one of these programs, in response to interviewer Philip Shuman's remark about not having seen published articles on Berger's songs, he replied, "The writing of works for the solo voice has been something very private in my life. . . . Easily half of the song cycles that I wrote in earlier years were written for actual singers who asked me. . . . And many of them were actually composed for a specific song recital. So my songs came out of a world of [professional] music making in which people were far more interested in what the audience would say than what professor so-and-so at the next campus would say. . . . I have confronted the young university composer with the question, 'What if the audience has trouble understanding?' The typical response is, 'I don't care about the audience.' Now I care about nothing but the audience, and that has governed my writing. . . . My writing style reflects what my academic friends call 'the most aggravatingly conventional, if not reactionary, idiom.' I'm fully aware of that. But then, I am also fully aware of the fact that I'm performed massively and they are not." Shuman, 1–3.

⁵¹ *Let Glasgow Flourish* was derived from a 1957 choral work titled *My Days Are Like A Shadow*. He first reworked the score in 1977, making two anthems: *Thank ye the Lord* and *My Days Are Like An Evening Shadow*. For the Linn commission, he revisited the original 1957 score and adapted it again. When JSMP published it in 1990, he gave it the more general title, *Except the Lord the City Keep*.

⁵² This last set is the Omega for which Berger's 1935 song, *Chanson de femme*, text by Guiot de Dijon (13th century), published by Éditions du Magasin Musical Pierre Schneider, is the Alpha (see "Berger AMRC Works List"). They are the "bookends" for the entire span of his songs. *Chansons de femme* (listed alternatively as *Chansonnier de femme*) was composed, not in 1992, but in 1993 (see *MMM*, 16 August 1993).

⁵³ Berger to Haas: "Will we recapture this basis of American music, the 'enlightened amateur,' to use Hindemith's term? I am not sure but I retain some hope. For in this field of limitless trendiness and short-lived fashions, of vast hubris and little substance, the 'amateur' has served to retain the system of checks and balances which is as necessary to America as is the wheat of Kansas." Letter, 20 December 1994. Haas to Berger: ". . . [W]e are fighting the same battle. Trendiness is the word. However short-lived, fashions have been around since time immemorial, so don't give up. [Hindemith's term] *enlightened amateur* . . . has never been matched, but I do think I come close when I say 'divine average.' It's the battle of the centuries." Letter, 6 January 1995.

⁵⁴ Likely to have been a bottle of good bourbon, Berger's daily drink of choice. Mardi Gras was February 16 that year.

⁵⁵ This work is also derived from the 1957 choral work, *My Days Are Like A Shadow* (see note 51).

⁵⁶ A copy of this chronology with sources of extended quotations not already identified is on file with the AMRC.

*Am
Arc*

Carol A. Hess

JEAN BERGER: A “GOOD NEIGHBOR” IN THE UNITED STATES

In mid-1940, pianist, vocal coach, musicologist, and budding composer Jean Berger was living in Rio de Janeiro, having fled Europe in 1939. As he later recalled in his unpublished autobiography *Memories, Musings, Meanderings*, it was around this time that he began contemplating a visit to the United States: a Brazilian singer of his acquaintance, Helena Figner, was planning a recital tour through a New York agent and invited Berger to go along as her pianist.¹ Such a decision was not made lightly. Undoubtedly echoing the fears of many another displaced European, Berger was convinced that the United States was “unfit for human habitation, that her food was inedible, her women frigid.” Yet Rio was “such an infernal place during the hottest months of the year that the USA seemed . . . the lesser evil” (*MMM* 44–45). As it turned out, Berger not only made the trip but remained in the United States over sixty years, eventually coming to admire many aspects of U.S. life. He especially distinguished himself as a composer of choral music, serving on various music faculties (Middlebury College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Colorado at Boulder). In 1968, however, he left academia, convinced that “indifference toward [the] potential audience” was a by-product of academic institutions and that public demand should determine a composer’s success (*MMM* 46). Until his death in 2002 he lived up to these ideals.

One dimension of Berger’s fascinating and often picaresque life, explored in this essay, is his brief association with Latin America—and with the “Latin” music craze in the United States during the 1940s. Since 1933, when President Franklin Roosevelt made his so-called “Good Neighbor speech,” the U.S. government had been cultivating relationships with Latin America, attempting to persuade its leaders that despite prior interventions in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean in the twenties, the United States was now prepared to renounce the “big stick.”² The Good Neighbor policy assumed even greater urgency after World War II broke out, when European markets dried up and fascism threatened the hemisphere. One dimension of Pan Americanism, as this campaign was also known, was cultural understanding.³ On the premise that music, film, art, and literature could strengthen political ties, the U.S. State Department supported Latin-themed movie musicals, concerts, seminars, contests, and good-will tours

to Latin America by Aaron Copland, Walt Disney, Waldo Frank, Lincoln Kirstein and the American Ballet Caravan, and Douglas Fairbanks; other projects, such as Leopold Stokowski's 1940 tour by his All-American Youth Orchestra, relied on private funds.⁴ If this roster of names seems an assortment of rather strange bedfellows, it only confirms that the cultural dimension of Pan Americanism was distinguished by the often uneasy coexistence of popular and elite expressions, which in turn were conditioned by a potentially volatile mix of commercial, governmental, and political agendas. If missteps were inevitable—demonstrations in Rio or Buenos Aires over Hollywood's stereotypes of Latin Americans, U.S. critics' disdain for what one called the "rum-and-coca-cola school" of Latin American art music composition—so, too, were certain benefits.⁵ At least this was true for those poised to fulfill Pan Americanism's cultural agenda: celebrating and making accessible what were defined—rightly or wrongly—as common interests. Berger's early career in the United States is thus a prism through which some of Pan Americanism's musical effects can be glimpsed.

First, we briefly consider Berger's career prior to his arrival in the Americas. Born in Hamm (Germany) in 1909 to a Jewish family, he initially planned to study medieval French at the University of Heidelberg. But one day in 1928, a change in room assignments caused him to mistakenly enter a lecture on the music of the Notre Dame school. He was immediately captivated. The class was given by Heinrich Bessler, "a firebrand of a still very young lecturer," as Berger later enthused, adding, "my fate was sealed" (*MMM* 52). In 1932, Berger received the PhD in musicology; among his classmates at Heidelberg were Manfred Bukofzer, Edward Lowinsky, and Ernst Hermann Meyer (*MMM* 4a). Although he hoped eventually to work as Bessler's assistant, from early fall of 1932, Berger collaborated with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, the Generalmusikdirektor of the Hessisches Landestheater in Darmstadt as a "temporary way of keeping busy." One of his projects was writing cabaret songs for what was evidently a champagne-drenched New Year's celebration. It was on this occasion that Schmidt-Isserstedt told the young Berger that whatever his other talents, he was "born to be a composer." Although Berger temporarily "shelved" this observation, he ultimately took to it heart (*MMM* 23–24).

His employment that fateful season was short-lived. In the spring of 1933, some ten days after the elections that brought Hitler to power, Berger was playing the piano one day for a dance rehearsal. All at once, he recounted, "four brown-shirted SA men walked in, brandished their Lueger pistols at my face and, using appropriate language of which 'Jew swine' was the least offensive threw me out of the Hessisches Landestheater. I picked myself up, apparently with no serious injuries . . ." (*MMM* 60). Berger then set off for Paris, never to reside in Germany again.

There, he initially struggled. Unable to obtain the *permis de travail*, Berger secured temporary musicological work on Lully's *grands motets*, a job obtained for him by Henri Prunières, French musicologist and founder of the journal *La Revue musicale*. When not immersed in manuscripts and printed parts at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Berger taught piano in private

homes, often having to borrow metro fare from his landlady. He also played the piano for classes in *culture physique* in which "overweight ladies hopped around in the hope of shedding some pounds." More advantageous was the invitation from a friend, a "very fine tenor," to serve as his accompanist in a concert in Bois-Colombes with the promise of payment (*MMM* 16). He also worked with Lucie de Vienne, with whom he gave numerous recitals and who introduced him to composer Louis Aubert. During his sojourn in France, Berger, a lover of the outdoors, also traveled, sometimes to ski in the dead of winter. On one such trip to the Pyrenees, in December 1937, he and some companions were opening their third bottle of wine in a "steamy hospitable kitchen" when news of Ravel's death was announced over the radio. As Berger later recalled, he and his friends "emptied the bottle in silence" (*MMM* 23). On Bastille Day 1938, he witnessed an eerie parade of horse-drawn cannons and other armaments from the Franco-Prussian war, all amid confident proclamations that the Maginot Line would never be breached (*MMM* 34). These memorable experiences were but a backdrop to the blossoming of Berger's artistic persona, however, which took hold in Paris. There, he developed as a sensitive and capable vocal coach-pianist, arranging and composing for his singers. He also directed and made arrangements for his choir, Les Compagnons de la Marjolaine, and a workers' theater, Les Blouses Bleues de Bobigny. All the while, Aubert and, more importantly, Arthur Honegger, encouraged him to find his voice as a composer.

Despite assurances of French invincibility, Berger's "historian's information" was warning him that "European wars have a way of starting in the summer." He determined to spend the summer of 1939 elsewhere, leaving France for South America in May of that year. Through various connections he secured work with a Reine Paulet, a Parisian chanteuse bound for Rio (*MMM* 35–38). Playing at Rio's Casino da Urca, which would later host Walt Disney, Orson Welles, and Carmen Miranda, was a far cry from the Bibliothèque Nationale and Paris's recital halls. Berger jumped at the opportunity, however. Still, the trip meant undergoing the bureaucratic hassles of obtaining the proper paperwork, an experience he confronted more than once in Latin America. No longer a practicing Jew himself, Berger nonetheless commiserated over the "endless problems and mishaps . . . of the perennial exiles, those whose motto had become 'Join the Jews and See the World'" (*MMM* 35-a).

In Brazil, U.S. architects of Pan Americanism confronted a daunting challenge. The Estado Novo (New State) of Getúlio Vargas was centrist, corporatist, and nationalistic. In other words, it had much in common with European fascist states; Vargas, moreover, was courted by Nazi Germany.⁶ But the United States courted Brazil as well, offering both economic incentives and cultural diplomacy. For example, the Brazilian pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair, designed by Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, was praised as a beacon of tasteful modernism on a par with Le Corbusier, and more than one exhibit of Brazilian art took place at New York's newly relocated Museum of Modern Art.⁷ One such exhibit, in October 1940, featured

paintings by Candido Portinari and was paired with a three-concert series of works by Brazil's best-known composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos, along with his compatriots Mozart Camargo Guarnieri, Osvaldo "Vadico" Gogliano, Oscar Lorenzo Fernández, and Francisco Mignone, which was reviewed in the major newspapers. In addition, the Office of the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs, under a young Nelson Rockefeller, undertook an architectural tour of Brazil.⁸ On the Hollywood front, Carmen Miranda, the "Brazilian bombshell," had aroused interest in Brazil through her extravagant head-dresses and flamboyant dance routines, even if many Brazilians were troubled by her antics.

From his digs on the Avendida Atlantica, Berger fell promptly in love with "the magnificence of the Portuguese language and its glorious literature" (*MMM* 36). Besides working with Reine Paulet on her nightclub routines, he accompanied singers and coached at the Teatro Municipal, which for once had hired a French (rather than Italian) opera troupe. He also found work at the Brazilian Conservatory of Music, established in 1936 and whose faculty roster included Fernández and Hans-Joachim Koellreuter, Brazil's first serialist; Berger's course, "The Interpretation of French and German Art Song," was announced in the newspaper *A Patria* in April 1940.⁹ He also met Brazil's best-known composer, Villa-Lobos, whom Berger recalled as "one of the most engaging human beings one could imagine." He was especially impressed by "O Villa's" insistence, "plainly and simply" that "[w]e are not Europe, we are Brazil" (*MMM* 40). For years, Villa-Lobos had been putting these ideas into practice, both in his own compositions and, since 1931, in his capacity as head of musical and artistic education (*superintendência de educação musical e artística*). True to his fondness for grandiloquence, Villa-Lobos served this important branch of Vargas's cultural program by conducting massed choirs, often of several thousand voices, in folkloric arrangements of patriotic Brazilian music.¹⁰

In Brazil, Berger also performed and promoted his own music. Critics praised the "fine quality" and elegance of works such as the *Deux mélodies* and the *Sonatina for Piano*, and pianist Magda Tagliaferro praised his "impeccable" playing.¹¹ With Figner, whom he likely met at the Conservatory (*MMM* 40), Berger toured various parts of Latin America. In fall 1940, for example, they visited Buenos Aires, where Berger introduced his music in some of that city's more important venues, all to favorable reviews in the principal newspapers. As noted, he and Figner also found their way to New York.

In March 1941, having been in the United States several months, Berger explored New York's musical possibilities.¹² He played a concert with soprano Alice Tully and another with baritone Garfield Swift at New York's musical club, The Bohemians, then under the leadership of president Ernest Hutcheson.¹³ The program featured several of Berger's works, including his *Sonatina for Violin and Piano*, performed by violinist Felix Galimir. That work had been part of the "composer's baggage" Berger brought to the United States (*MMM* 45). He also made it his business to visit G. Schirmer (*MMM* 102), the publishing house with which he would enjoy cordial relations for some twenty years.

Various described in the musical press as either French, Belgian, or Brazilian, Berger soon realized he had a strong card to play with his Latin American experience, given that Pan Americanist sentiment was at its height. Like the *Sonatina*, the *Four Sonnets* for voice and piano (or string quartet) had been composed in Brazil; here, Berger set texts by Luis de Camões, Portugal's most venerable poet. In late 1942, the set was published by Schirmer—and with proper fanfare. As noted, at the start of the European war Brazil's loyalties had been by no means certain. But ultimately Vargas was swayed by the prospect of U.S. aid, and in August 1942, Brazil declared war on Germany and Italy, sending a combat division to Italy two years later. Thus, despite the fact that Berger had undoubtedly composed the *Four Sonnets* without U.S.-Brazilian relations in mind, the Schirmer catalog marketed the work with the following patriotic declaration: "We are happy to present the newest composition by one of the most distinguished exponents of contemporary music in the country of our neighbor and ally, Brazil." The songs themselves are "tasteful" and ingratiating pieces in the style of Joaquín Nin-Culmell or Ferrán Obradors, ideal for the singer programming "something different" alongside recital mainstays by Schubert and Fauré.¹⁴

The company Request Records saw another set of Berger's songs the same way: when Garfield Swift recorded the *Three Songs on Portuguese Folk Poems*, ads targeted the "superb album" to "the lover of good music that is 'different.'"¹⁵ Prominent singers, including Nan Merriman, Eileen Farrell, and the Spanish soprano Conchita Badia, became interested in Berger's music as well. Most important, two of Villa-Lobos's better-known collaborators, Bidu Sayao and Elsie Houston, promoted Berger. He dedicated two songs from the 1943 set *Villanescas* to Sayao. In November 1942, when Houston sang "A Jardiniera," music critic Milton Berliner praised the work as "a typical Brazilian song in accented rhythm," and Houston had to repeat it several times.¹⁶

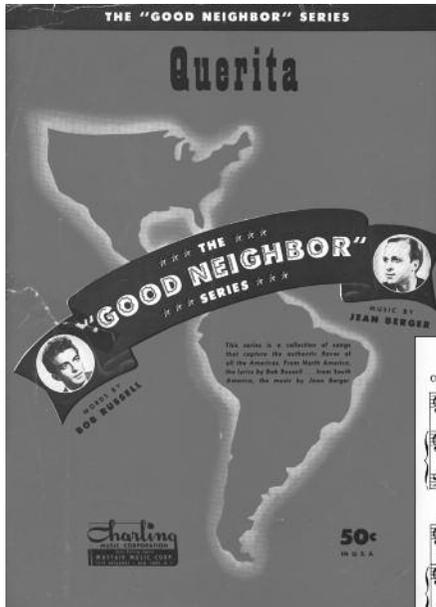
To be sure, critics such as Berliner probably knew little about "typical" Brazilian music. Berger's knowledge came largely from his experience of the country rather than scholarship. Yet these Latin American credentials were more than enough for the U.S. public, and practically overnight he found himself considered an expert in Brazilian music of all varieties (*MMM* 75). Despite its fervent courting of Brazil, Portuguese never figured all that prominently in U.S. depictions of Latin America. One of the earliest "Good Neighbor" movies, for example, *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), was unusual in that its Brazilian characters speak Portuguese rather than Spanish. Brazilian music, however, overrode such confusions in the United States, as can be seen in the enthusiasm for the samba, thanks not only to Carmen Miranda but to Ary Barroso, whose song "Brazil" was used in Walt Disney's *The Three Caballeros*. Demand for popular Brazilian music also enabled the next phase of Berger's career. From 1942 to 1943, he worked as a freelance arranger of Brazilian music for CBS and NBC radio (*MMM* 75). Had he seen himself as an "avant-garde" or "elite" composer, he would probably have avoided such employment. Instead, he seems to have

relished it, especially in light of what he saw as certain practical advantages of the samba:

The Musicians' Union—of which I had become a member—furnished the score paper which always contained exactly four measures per page. We were paid by the page. A Brazilian samba has a very fast tempo which means, in the arranger's mind, very many notes which—to that same mind—means a very, very large number of pages for even a short score of 2 ½ or 3 minutes' duration. Hundreds of pages at Union rate. I was swimming in money and could only express my sympathy to my underprivileged colleagues who made arrangements of Argentinian tangos which go at an excessively slow pace. Very few pages (*MMM* 75).

“Así es la vida,” he adds archly—that's life. To be sure, murky legal questions surrounding arrangements and composers' rights were also among the fruits of Pan Americanist musical exchange. According to John Storm Roberts, music publisher Edward B. Marks would habitually send salesmen to Latin America to buy up sheet music to sell in the States, making no effort whatsoever to compensate the composers.¹⁷ The 1927 tango “Adios muchachos,” by Julio Sanders and known in the United States as “I Get Ideas,” lost its tragic element through the English lyrics, however engaging Louis Armstrong's rendition. In 1944, the Andrews Sisters recorded “Rum and Coca-cola,” a hit that credited three Americans (Morey Amsterdam, Jeri Sullivan, and Paul Baron) as its creators even though the song was by two Trinidadians, as argued in two separate—and successful—lawsuits.¹⁸

Berger steered clear of any such difficulties during his stint at CBS and NBC. He also continued composing a variety of Latin-tinged works, an enterprise in which he had plenty of company in the United States: Gershwin, Copland, Paul Bowles, and Morton Gould had all “gone Latin,” sometimes with considerable success. One effect of this surge of musical Pan Americanism was the blurring of boundaries among “classical,” popular, and commercial musics. Berger, who cared deeply about reaching his listeners—indeed, he sought to please rather than challenge them—was skeptical of the avant-garde. His concern for music's communicative power emerges in his account of one of his earliest experiences in the United States, a recital “deep in Harlem” by Anne Brown, Gershwin's first Bess. Although the text of “Summertime” was incomprehensible to the new arrival, the song proved a “revelation” due to the “immediacy and reciprocity between the song, the singer and pianist, on the one hand, and the receiving ears and souls of the audience on the other.” In that moment, Berger realized that “a concert is only a concert when this totality exists, when no program notes make a silly and unsuccessful effort to ‘explain’ what will be heard. . . .” (*MMM* 33–34). As for pleasing his audience, when working on a commission, Berger would complete about half of the score and then ask his “customer,” ““This is what I'm writing—do you think it may do the trick?”” After leaving academic life, he bluntly addressed the same question Aaron Copland once posed to readers of *The New York Times*: “Is



Jean Berger steps into the popular music world with a song written with lyricist Bob Russell. Courtesy of American Music Research Center.

the university too much with us?”¹⁹ Berger’s answer could hardly have endeared him to professors of composition. “Good music,” he opined, “is terribly diluted by the fact that 95 percent of the composers in this country are fully tenured professors. A tenured professor doesn’t have to give a damn about his music. He’s going to get his check. I’d like the composer to be on his own, to take the risk that the so-called avant-garde professor never takes.”²⁰

Such questions were debated at the height of Pan Americanism as well. In evoking Latin America, should composers—North or South—draw on the indigenous past? On political struggle? If they composed “catchy” Latin dances, would they not risk trivializing both Latin America and the values of the avant-garde? Copland’s *El salón México*, for example, raises these questions. Since its 1938 U.S. premiere, the work brought the composer much needed financial stability but also caused some to wonder if the modernist Copland had “sold out” in favor of pops-concert accessibility.²¹ Berger

managed to finesse all of these issues in accordance with his principles. In command of Spanish and Portuguese, unafraid of accessibility, and comfortable with popular and art-music genres, he was the right man at the right time to reach out to a broad public avid for Latin-tinged music and hemispheric solidarity. In 1943, Schirmer published his song “They All Dance the Samba.” By billing it as “[a] gay and delightful song” in which “the laundress, the fisherman, the little baker’s wife, and the tired businessman . . . ‘join together [and] dance the samba from the evening till dawn,’” Schirmer effectively portrayed Brazil as one big, unified—and happily dancing—family, complementing the friendly feelings between the United States and her new ally.²² Likewise, Berger’s choral work *Hear the Singing*, on a text by the Brazilian poet Jorge de Lima, was hailed as evidence of “growing understanding between [sic] the Americas” when it was performed in Chicago in April 1943 under Edgar Nelson leading the Marshall Field & Company Choral Society. Echoing the language of the U.S. State Department, the same commentator observed that “music has always been a great common denominator of human interest,” and that “in the person of composer Jean Berger, we have a youthful and likely candidate for the office of Musical Ambassador of International Good-Will.”²³ An intriguing item related to another song, “Samba,” is found in an unidentified press clipping from 3 October 1943, which lists the “CBS orchestre sous la direction d’André Kostelanetz, Bidu Sayao, soprano, Oscar Levant, pianiste, samba brésilien chanté par Bidu Sayao, musique de Jean Berger,” all on the station’s “Coca-Cola Hour.” A handwritten margin note reads “Pour la victoire.”²⁴ Another Brazilian number from the same period was the *Fandango Brasileiro* [sic], published by Marks. Although its marketers appear not to have relied on Pan Americanist rhetoric, *The Music World Almanak* nonetheless hailed it as possibly “one of the most thrilling compositions to be written by a contemporary.”²⁵

Berger also composed several Spanish-language art songs, including the *Tres canciones*, settings of anonymous poems from the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. The *Villanescas*, mentioned above, use poems by Eduardo Blanco-Amor, the Spanish poet Berger met in Buenos Aires, where so many Spanish expatriates made their home in the aftermath of the Civil War (1936–39). Berger set several poems from the collection *En soledad amena* (In Pleasant Solitude), resulting in a work with “vital rhythm, fascinating colors, and intense emotions characteristic of the finest Latin American music,” as Schirmer’s ads proclaimed.²⁶ The *Musical Courier* called the songs “colorful,” “atmospheric,” “highly spiced,” replete with “exotic cadences” and “all the pride, arrogance, sentimental sighing and fierce disdain of the Iberian male.”²⁷ Berger’s finesse with Latin American music was also known far from the fast-paced musical scene in New York. In Topeka, for example, that city’s daily *The Gremlin* noted that he “specialized in arranging and composing South American music”; another paper declared Berger “famous for his compositions and arrangements of South American music.”²⁸ Further evidence of Berger’s willingness to compete in the market are two songs he wrote for Charling Music Corporation’s “Good Neighbor Series,” which his son Jonathan would later describe as representative of

his father's "tin pan alley period."²⁹ One, "Querita," has the requisite characteristics of a "Latin" song: a syncopated bass line with a chordal accompaniment that alternates metric units of two and three under a graceful melody. Another, "To-day of All Days," is marked *Tempo di Bolero*.

Two "Good Neighbor-style" works critical to Berger's reputation are the *Caribbean Concerto*, for harmonica and orchestra, and the *Brazilian Psalm*, for mixed voices, both from 1941. The former came about when Berger went to the home of Larry Adler, virtuoso harmonica player of eventual Hollywood fame.³⁰ Still not too comfortable with English, Berger played some piano pieces "on Brazilian folk dance rhythms for Adler who, "seemingly asleep . . . on the carpet," eventually came to, uttering the "ever-remembered remark: 'I want you to write a concerto for me'" (*MMM* 38–39). Adler premiered the concerto at the annual pension fund concert of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in March 1942 under Vladimir Golschmann. Advance publicity emphasized the concerto's Latin American attributes, with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* observing that it was "based on Latin rhythms of the conga, samba and rumba."³¹ According to the same paper, Berger and Adler had decided at the outset that "South American rhythms should be [the] basis" for the concerto, adding that "the main theme of the first movement could actually be a Brazilian 'Lundu' (folk dance of Northern Brazil), whereas the rhythms and especially the second theme of the last movement are inspired by Argentinian 'Bailes' (folk dances)." As if anticipating the inconsistency between these sources and the work's eventual title (initially it was simply listed as "Concerto"), Berger adds, "I did not try to limit myself too closely to these elements, my main purpose being to write a score that should be easy to understand and pleasant to listen to."

The *Caribbean Concerto* is scored for a conventional orchestra with harp, celesta, and enhanced percussion, including bongos (high and low pitch), maracas, and temple blocks (high, medium, and low pitch), claves, marimba, and tambourine, along with timpani. A 34-bar introduction showcases percussion and *col legno* strings, all enhanced by offbeat jabs in the bassoons. Color shifts abound: the melody in the muted trumpets at reh. 20 is taken up by the soloist upon entering, and the ostinato in the strings is offset by a woodwind melody in cross-rhythms; additional rhythmic play occurs at reh. 135, where a *meno mosso* announces a shift from 2/4 to 2/4-3/4. The middle section of the second movement (from reh. 27), marked "tempo di rumba lento," unfolds in a modified habanera rhythm. The third movement, "Allegro ma non troppo" alternates 6/8-3/4 meters, a metric structure found in a host of Latin American genres, including the Argentine *malambo* and the Cuban *guajira*.

Critics responded accordingly. The *St. Louis Star-Times* applauded the concerto as "fluent and lively," with "peppery rhythms and insinuating Latin melodies," while *Musical America* found the "South American rhythms and themes" to be "highly interesting."³² (To be sure, the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* stated that despite being "based upon Latin-American rhythms and themes . . . the work certainly owes more to Paris than to South America, in the wit and restraint and tact of its orchestration," an

appraisal that was sometimes applied to Villa-Lobos.)³³ West Coast critics also reacted favorably: when Adler performed the concerto with the San Francisco Symphony under Pierre Monteux in April 1942, Marie Hicks Davidson wrote that it “appeared to be the composer’s endeavor to combine Latin-American rhythms and a George Gershwin feeling for strange harmonies,” and Marjorie M. Fisher exulted that “to have had a modern concerto written for the [harmonica] by a gifted composer with a flair for Spanish [*sic*] and jazz rhythms and then play it in such utterly astounding fashion as Adler did is too extraordinary to be believed by anyone who did not hear it.”³⁴ A reporter for a Detroit paper commented that “it is actually more of a rumba rhapsody than a concerto, for all three movements have a tropical beat . . .”³⁵ After a 1946 performance by the Rochester Symphony, one critic praised the “exceedingly tricky and intriguing South American rhythms . . . the third movement is particularly daring with the trombones and horns doing rumbas.”³⁶ The concerto also enjoyed an international career. When Adler performed it in 1949 with the London Philharmonic, the headline in *Variety* read “Adler Dents London’s Longhair Orch Ranks.”³⁷ Although such a “dent” referred to Adler’s status as the first harmonic player to appear with London Philharmonic, we can easily imagine Berger chuckling over his own part in challenging the “longhairs.”

As for the genesis of *Brazilian Psalm*, some of Adler’s friends introduced Berger to John Finlay Williamson, then director of the Westminster Choir College chorus. Williamson was preparing a South American tour and wished to meet a composer knowledgeable about Latin America. Sensing an opportunity and not wanting to meet Williamson “empty-handed,” Berger promptly set off for the New York Public Library to find a suitable text. There he encountered “Salmo,” by Jorge de Lima, and in record time completed the score, with its lively rhythms and modal melodies. Upon hearing it, Williamson “picked up the telephone at once and requested G. Schirmer to publish the score and have it ready within six weeks” (*MMM* 46). Because of worries over the war, the chorus did not go on the tour and, presumably because of its difficulties, *Brazilian Psalm* lay unperformed until 1949, when Williams’s counterpart at St. Olaf College, Dr. Olaf Christiansen, found it in the Schirmer bins.³⁸ According to Berger, Christiansen “dealt with [*Brazilian Psalm*] in his customary fashion, i.e. separated the second half, largely based on the word ‘Alleluia,’ from the body of the score and added it to the Choir’s programs.” Christiansen’s interest in the piece proved another turning point: if formerly seen in the United States as a composer of attractive Latin-tinged music, suddenly Berger was deluged with offers of publications and commissions and became “a ‘choral man’ overnight” (*MMM* 46).

Some important critics praised *Brazilian Psalm*, both for its directness and “Latin” traits. When the Middlebury College Choir performed it in Carnegie Hall in 1951, Francis D. Perkins of the *New York Herald Tribune* simply called it “effective.”³⁹ On tour, the St. Olaf Lutheran Choir took *Brazilian Psalm* to Washington in 1951, where Paul Hume deemed it “magnificent” for its “capacity to exploit the potentialities of choral sound . . . with a rhythmic

challenge too often missing on the programs of choruses."⁴⁰ *Music Review* admired the "vigorous, pulsating setting" and noted that "the strength of Berger's choral writing derives from the free use he makes of indigenous Brazilian rhythmic inflections, combined with an assured handling of opposed melodic stresses," adding that "these characteristics invest the work with a vitality and urge of almost primitive directness."⁴¹ From Britain, W.R.A. (W.R. Anderson) of the *Musical Times* found the dissonance "not extreme," and appreciated the "pleasant naivety [*sic*] in the effectively sonorous writing." Indeed, Anderson's criteria correspond perfectly to Berger's own values. For Anderson, "the beginning, with common chords, a little *à la V.W.* [Ralph Vaughan Williams] sounded "easy to write"; thus *Brazilian Psalm* was "not overburdened with science" and required only "a fairly unsophisticated mind" to appreciate it. Yet Berger also impressed Anderson as "somehow sophisticated yet not tiresomely so, like many young lads of the last twenty years."⁴² Perhaps Berger himself best explains the work's success. Looking back on his impressions of Brazil, he especially remembered the golden Sundays relaxing spent on Paquetá island in Rio Bay:

When I read the "Salmo" that morning in the library of a rain-drenched New York City where everyone's slightest gesture seemed to have a well-defined purpose and caused everyone to be in a hurry to achieve that purpose, the memory of . . . Sundays on Paquetá . . . flashed through my mind, the island where sun, Kyrie eleison, "vatapá" [a Brazilian dish of bread, shrimp, and coconut milk], dance, song, "Nossa Senhora"—"Senhor" in de Lima's poem—blended into a day's life of serenity, where pleasure was an enthusiastically accepted part of man's life, where paradise was not even a step away (*MMM* 68).

Berger's foray into musical Pan Americanism was not over. In 1942, he was drafted and was off to Fort Dix as a private, the only rank available to non-citizens (*MMM* 74). He was soon arranging music for one of the Fort Dix bands, with Ary Barroso's "Brazil" as his first project. Again, Berger drew on his Portuguese. He eventually succeeded in persuading "a board of impressive looking brass" that he could be "vastly more productive in the war effort by becoming a civilian and working for the Office of War Information where . . . people with a fluent knowledge of Portuguese were desperately needed" (*MMM* 78). He was given an honorable discharge to work as a radio "producer"—only native speakers were used as announcers—and, as he told it, to spend "six exciting months informing our friends the Portuguese of the wonders of America, of our victory gardens, of our invincible military forces, of our unsurpassable hamburgers and our virtually edible bread" (*MMM* 79). Evidently the only imminent danger in such employment arose when a native-speaker announcer found himself incapable of pronouncing words such as Dniepropetrovsk. Luckily, an emergency plan was in place. "In the event of any abnormality," Berger recalls, "[the order was] 'play a Souza [*sic*] march.'" As a result, "the needle was always poised and ready . . ." (*MMM* 79).

In August 1943, Berger became a U.S. citizen and in November, having requested a transfer, joined the USO Camp Shows. There he met his wife-to-be, Rita Holzer, a dancer who had soloed with the Metropolitan Opera ballet but left the company for “war work” (*MMM* 79). Despite stresses and vicissitudes in the marriage, they remained friends and mutual confidantes until his death. Over the years, the number of Berger’s Latin-themed works dwindled, although critical response to them continued to reinforce Berger’s aesthetic values. When his *Creole Overture* was premiered by the Boston Pops Orchestra on 31 May 1949, the *Christian Science Monitor* called it “a happy collection of what appeared to be popular native songs, set over a variety of syncopated Latin-American rhythms . . . colorful without being flashy or ostentatious”; the *Boston Herald* found the *Overture* “lively, well wrought . . . without any mannerisms.”⁴³ There was also *Caribbean Cruise*, a two-piano work filled with the inevitable “Latin” rhythms, composed in 1949. By 1958, when it was published, what some now call the “Cold War aesthetic” had come to dominate musical Pan Americanism via serialism (Roque Cordero’s *Symphony No. 2*), neo-expressionism (Alberto Ginastera’s opera *Bomarzo*), or aleatory (José Ardévol’s cantata *La Victoria de Playa Girón*). The musical values of Pan Americanism—of insinuating dance rhythms and lively melodies—had changed and Berger no longer shared them.

* * *

Of course, he moved on to other things. He also came to appreciate the United States, as an anecdote from *Memories, Musings, Meanderings* reveals. At Middlebury College, after eight years in the United States, he attended a vesper service at Mead Chapel, having been advised that this would be “politically wise.” From his pew in the austere New England church, Berger observed the choir’s entrance to the hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation.” He writes:

My eyes followed their procession, the co-eds . . . all the choir members in black robes, singing the hymn lustily, marching in time to the four-square rhythm. . . . All of this was done in such a natural, uninhibited and seemingly unregimented fashion that, though “The church’s one foundation” is certainly not one of the most inspiring or inspired items of sacred music, I was moved almost to tears. America has its traditions . . . a country so seemingly all surface, with little or no depth, dedicated to what in my almost eight years seemed to be the pursuit of a very shallow happiness [but that] turned out to have its ceremonials which stemmed from a profound . . . transcendental faith and of faith-derived congregational life” (*MMM* 33).

As we have seen, Berger took full advantage of musical Pan Americanism as he established himself in the United States, straddling the realms of high art, government, and the market through talent, versatility, and, sometimes, sheer luck. Although he eventually gave up his Latin American persona,

clearly the musical values of the Good Neighbor period corresponded to his own. Happily, eight years after arriving in New York from Brazil he found an echo of these values in the country in which he eventually came to feel at home.

Notes

¹ *Memories, Musings, Meanderings* (hereafter *MMM*), a typescript filled with hand-written emendations, is found at the American Music Research Center, as are the scrapbook (1935–57), press clippings, and scores discussed in this article. I wish to thank Thomas L. Riis, director of the center, for making these materials available to me. I also thank Linda Giedl for her careful reading of an earlier draft of this article and for sharing with me information from Berger's letters and her memories of him, especially concerning his Paris years.

² Hoover had used the term "good neighbor" after a Latin American trip but it became widely associated with Roosevelt. Robert H. Holden and Eric Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 141.

³ The "Good Neighbor" period is generally considered to range from 1933 through the end of the war. Pan Americanism (or inter-Americanism) has a longer and less defined history. U.S. historians often take as a starting point the first Inter-American Conference of 1889 in Washington. Of the vast literature on Pan Americanism, a classic source is Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933–1945* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1979); an insightful source on Pan Americanism and cultural exchange is Sebastiaan Faber, "Learning from the Latins: Waldo Frank's Progressive Pan-Americanism," *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 1 (2003): 257–95.

⁴ For a Latin American perspective on U.S. representations of Latin America, see Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Imágenes de un imperio: Estados Unidos y las formas de representación de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamerica, 2006). For some of the tours mentioned here, see Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), 228–33; Eric Smoodin, *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 138–56; Faber, "Learning from the Latins: Waldo Frank's Progressive Pan-Americanism," 270–72; Carol A. Hess, "Leopold Stokowski, 'Latin' Music, and Pan Americanism," *Inter-American Music Review* 18, nos. 1–2 (2008): 395–401.

⁵ See Allen L. Woll, *The Latin Image in American Film*, rev. ed. (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1980), 63–67. The term "rum-and-coca-cola school," borrowed from the popular song by the same name, was coined by critic Robert Evett. See his review "Bomarzo, Si, Rigoletto, No," *The New Republic* (May 1967), 28–29 and also note 18 below.

⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155–59.

⁷ Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001), 201–27.

⁸ Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old, 1652–1942* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1943). See also Lauro Cavalacanti, translated by Jon Tolman, *When Brazil Was Modern: Guide to Architecture, 1928–1960* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 14–21.

⁹ *A Patria*, "Conservatorio Brasileiro de Musica" (13 April 1940); scrapbook, 1935–1957.

¹⁰ Williams, *Culture Wars*, 79; see also Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil's Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1994), 21–27.

¹¹ Andrade Muricy, *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio), 6 September 1939; *Diário de Notícias* (Rio), 24 May 1940; Magda Tagilafarro, *A Gazeta S. Paulo*, 13 May 1940, scrapbook, 1935–1957.

¹² Berger arrived on 11 November 1940 and "officially immigrated" to the United States in March 1941 (*MMM* 74).

¹³ Scrapbook, 1935–1957.

¹⁴ The 1942 Schirmer edition is “Version II,” “Version I” having been completed in 1939. In 1970, the copyright was assigned to Berger’s own company, which he cleverly christened the John Sheppard Music Press.

¹⁵ Scrapbook, 1935–1957.

¹⁶ *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, 25 November 1942; *Springfield Daily Republican*, 25 November 1942; scrapbook 1935–57.

¹⁷ John Storm Roberts, *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47. One composer so abused was Manuel de Falla, who resided in Argentina in the forties. Carol A. Hess, *Sacred Passion: The Life and Music of Manuel de Falla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 271–72.

¹⁸ In 1947, a U.S. District Court ruled that the three had plagiarized the music; in 1950, another calypso singer won a suit on the lyrics. Holden and Zolov, *Latin America and the United States*, 170.

¹⁹ Aaron Copland, “Is the University Too Much With Us?,” rpt. in Richard Kostelanetz, ed. *Aaron Copland: A Reader, Selected Writings 1923–1972* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 137–40.

²⁰ Blair Chotzinoff, “Governor’s Awards 1985: Jean Berger,” *MUSE* (June–July 1985): 17.

²¹ Marc Blitzstein, for example, called *El salón México* “travel-slumming music.” See “Composers as Lecturers and in Concerts,” *Modern Music* 13, no. 1 (1935): 49.

²² G. Schirmer *Bulletin* no. 9 (November 1943); scrapbook 1935–57.

²³ The Chicago performance was on 14 April 1943 (unidentified clipping, scrapbook 1935–57).

²⁴ Scrapbook, 1935–1957.

²⁵ *Music World Almanak*, 11, no. 1; also listed in the Recital Issue of *Keyboard*, 1942; Scrapbook, 1935–57. Linda Giedl points out that Berger did not list the work in his catalogue nor keep the manuscript. See also the set of five piano pieces, “Chórinho” [*sic*], “Samba,” “Trova,” “Embolada,” and “Cantiga,” published by Schirmer.

²⁶ Scrapbook, 1935–57.

²⁷ “Atmospheric Songs of Jean Berger,” *Musical Courier* 125 (September 1943): 30.

²⁸ *The Gremlin* of Topeka, Kansas, 2 February 1944; unidentified press clipping is found in Scrapbook, 1935–57.

²⁹ Letter, Jonathan Berger to Thomas L. Riis, 7 August 2007.

³⁰ Adler played the harmonica in *Birds and Bees* and *Three Daring Daughters*, movies from 1944.

³¹ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 10 March 1942, scrapbook, 1935–57.

³² *St. Louis Star-Times*, 11 March 1942, scrapbook, 1935–57; *Musical America* 62, no. 75 (10 April 1942): 35.

³³ *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 11 March 1942, scrapbook, 1935–57. Villa-Lobos’s Nonet, for example, was described by Virgil Thomson as a “good and true musical likeness of Paris, France in 1923,” that is, where and when the work was composed. Virgil Thomson, “Music: More Brazil,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 October 1940, 11.

³⁴ *The News*, n.d.; unidentified press clipping, scrapbook 1935–57.

³⁵ Unidentified press clipping, probably c. 1945.

³⁶ “Larry Adler to Play Symphony Composed by Jean Berger,” unidentified press clipping, scrapbook, 1935–57. The work was performed in New York City the same year. See R. L. “Larry Adler Plays at Stadium Concert,” *New York Times*, 30 June 1946, 36.

³⁷ *Variety*, 19 June 1949, scrapbook, 1935–57.

³⁸ *Detroit Free Press*, 25 January 1942, scrapbook, 1935–57.

³⁹ Scrapbook, 1935–57.

⁴⁰ *Washington Post*, 13 February 1951, scrapbook, 1935–57.

⁴¹ Unidentified clipping from May 1953, scrapbook, 1935–57.

⁴² W.R.A. *Musical Times* 1186, vol. 82 (December 1941): 431.

⁴³ *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 June 1949; *Boston Herald*, 1 June 1949, scrapbook, 1935–57.

Composer Meets Critic, Part Two: Selected Excerpts of the Jean Berger/Henry Pleasants Correspondence 1971–1981

In 2000, this journal (Vol. 10, 1–41) published a “sampler” of letters exchanged by two extraordinary men—Jean Berger and noted author/critic Henry Pleasants. When Berger initiated their correspondence in mid-1962, he was on the musicology faculty of the University of Colorado and was also generally regarded as “one of the most prolific and talented choral composers active” in the United States.¹

Their letters, several hundred of them, went back and forth for almost four decades. The last were dated October and November of 1999. Then, Berger received the news that his friend of thirty-seven years had died in London on 4 January 2000. In its obituary, *The Guardian* newspaper described Henry Pleasants as “the last great music critic of the past 60 years.”

Now, with Berger’s centenary year just passed (b. 27 September 1909) and Pleasants’ soon to come (b. 12 May 1910), what better time than the present to offer a second installment of those letters, covering the period September 1971 through May 1981. From the 107 letters written during this segment of their long conversation, we have selected thirty-four, a sufficient number, we think, to indicate what these high achievers were doing instead of contemplating retirement, as well as what topics and issues concerned them.

Jean Berger had responded with admiration and agreement to Pleasants’ contention, made first in *The Agony of Modern Music* (1955) and again in *Death of a Music?* (1961), that the direction of serious, concert-oriented classical composers of contemporary Western European art music was misguided in light of the alleged “emancipation of the dissonance” at the end of the nineteenth century. Even more provocative was his further contention that the arbitrary abandonment of tonality by certain early twentieth century composers, beginning with Arnold Schoenberg, and their substitution of an experimental musical language, or “idiom,” all done in the name of “modernity,” was outside the natural processes of musical evolu-

tion. They had invented an artificial melodic and harmonic language, and introduced it with little or no regard for audience approval or popular taste. The effect on performing organizations, Pleasants argued, especially on symphony orchestras and opera companies, was the endless repetition of older works and a dearth of freshly composed works acceptable to contemporary audiences. In other words, “no renewal.”

Berger resonated deeply with all of this. His knowledge of history, personal experiences, and clear-eyed observation had led him to the same conclusions. In 1969 Pleasants added another book, *Serious Music and All That Jazz*, further developing and refining his critique of the state of twentieth century music. On 4 July 1971, Berger said to Pleasants, “Nobody except a man possessed of total integrity could have written what you have written, this is clear.”

The difficulty for Berger (if there was one) concerned Henry’s assertion that African American music, especially jazz, represented the leading edge of a new musical era. Having unequivocally rejected atonality while living in Paris in the 1930s, Berger found himself, in 1940s and 1950s America, faced with the necessity of working out his own musical language, or “idiom,” while very much in the contemporary compositional fray. Pleasants, on the other hand, could look at the crisis within Western music with something of the detachment and dispassion of the professional observer/critic. In reaching his conclusions, Pleasants, the expatriate American who lived in Europe for almost sixty years, also had the distinct advantage of seeing firsthand the impact of jazz on European audiences. They were crazy for it—and unfettered by the weight of America’s history of slavery, civil war, and residual racism. He was among the first to identify this popular international embrace of African American music as the herald of a new musical age. Jazz, with its development apart from European-based classical music, was for Pleasants the most idiomatic and authentic branch of American music—“not a source but a force.”² But, he claimed, with its similarities to its classical European cousin, jazz (and its derivatives) could help preserve the continuity of the Western tradition.

Berger, while conceding that anyone failing to acknowledge “the Afro-American impact” was a “dolt,” nevertheless made repeated efforts to have Pleasants see another authentic expression of American music making: the nationwide, essentially democratic phenomenon of amateur choral singing, with its historical origins in community, church, and school. Berger saw this as an indigenous movement, distinctly apart from the European tradition of aristocratic patronage with its cultivation, especially in the nineteenth century, of the “superman” (i.e., genius) composer and virtuoso professional performer. This concern—and his frustration with the leading music critics’ judgment that only “serious” music and professional performances were worthy of critical attention—is at the heart of Berger’s letter of 6 September 1971, the last of the set published in 2000, and Pleasants’ response of 22 September 1971, the first of this new set.

History’s final verdict isn’t in on either man. What can’t be disputed, though, is that these two colorful characters, so different from each other

in background, personal style, and temperament, found within their correspondence mutual affirmation without personal criticism, intellectual stimulation, mischievous humor, and, over time, genuine friendship.

L.L.G.

* * *

95 Roebuck House
 Palace Street
 London SW1E 5BE
 September 22, 1971

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for your thoughtful letter. And I think I can comment most effectively by drawing—or re-drawing—your attention to things I have written on the subject. I would direct you especially to the chapter “The Afro-American Epoch” in *Serious Music—And All That Jazz!* beginning at page 103. Also to my talk in Chicago, which addressed itself to the matter of continuity. It was reprinted in the *Journal* of the MENC. And I am sending you, under separate cover, an advance copy of the talk I shall be giving at the International Music Critics Symposium at the Eastman School in December. It will be published by Eastman in due course, but for the time being please keep it to yourself. You will find it echoing the latter part of your letter. The issue of the *Journal*, incidentally, which carried my Chicago talk was September 1970.

I can understand why you think we disagree about idiom. My preoccupation with Afro-American could easily lead to that conclusion. Two things that I said in Chicago are pertinent. First, if I may quote myself:

“What I want to stress, however, is not the differences separating the two idioms, but the similarities binding them. . . . It is in the similarities that I sense an assurance of the continuity of western music. . . .”

And secondly:

“Things haven’t changed as much as we think they have. Or, to put it the other way around, they have changed too much and too fast. The avant-garde has moved too far ahead of the vanguard. . . .”³

It is at this latter point, I think, that you come in. The European idiom is not as dead as the pattern of professional concert life might lead us to believe. I am speaking, of course, in terms of contemporary composition. It is still possible to compose music in [the European idiom] which will delight people. But the pursuit of originality—and genius?—has created a situation where, as you say so correctly, the high priests of the musical establishment will have none of it. Read my chapter on “The Composer’s Dilemma” in *The Agony of Modern Music*. I wrote that chapter nearly twenty years ago, and nothing has changed.

Which brings us back to Rosenberg. What he is saying is that it no longer matters whether or not anything is good in the sense that people like it and think it is good. What matters is to be taken up. And one of the best ways to be taken up is to be a kook. The first task of an artist, these days, is to attract attention, to be written and talked about. And so you get the situation which

Rosenberg describes so well where the artist is a con man and the critic a *Schlockmeister*.

Herrliche Zeiten!

About [Winthrop] Sargeant, I know him very well and am, in fact, distantly related to him. Yes, he is sound and sane and perceptive. But he is not primarily interested in music and hasn't been for many years. His great enthusiasm is for Eastern languages and religions. I wouldn't urge you to write to him. And, yes, he can be pretty tongue-in-the-cheek. A lovely, quiet, dry sense of humor and, of course, a delightful and elegant way of expressing himself.

I'm just back from a week in Funchal (Madeira), which turned out to be pretty close to heaven.

All the best,

[Henry]

* * *

[Boulder]

September 27, 1971

Dear Henry:

Thanks for the typescript of your [Chicago] talk, just received. I will have this Xeroxed—with your permission—and distributed to my faculty colleagues [at Temple Buell College in Denver], to serve as the basis of an impending discussion. It is clear to you, I surmise, how much your description of the critic's role helps to define the purposes of the music department in a liberal arts college, which, so far as I can assess, has inherited the role of purveyor of awareness, in contradistinction with the conservatory. Let me add at once that all these intra-academic concerns no longer concern me personally very much: I may have mentioned that I am very seriously contemplating retirement from teaching, and this very soon, with the help of publishers, ASCAP and *Sancta Cecilia*. Still, the thing does concern me still—and I feel that sensitive perception and, hence, sane judgment (“critique”) is what we must try to achieve in our students, rather than their own performance of the *Pathétique Sonata* for the millionth time, and their consequent and, alas, inevitable limitation, so far as musical awareness goes, to that one score—alright, say, three such scores in a four year span, but let us diminish the statement by the recognition that the student's awareness is that of his or her performance, which may be based, and usually is, on no other musical insight than to bend their fingers at the proper angle. I once asked a colleague, during a MusEd meeting, “how will all this lead us to op. 132?”⁴ There was a blank stare in reply. For, while the glories of the Fitzgeralds, the Gershwin[s] and the Porters (thanks for including HIM) go unnoticed, we cannot even remotely console ourselves with the thought that, at least, “classical” music has been properly enshrined. So, discuss we shall, to no avail, I know, but what the heck . . .

Enclosed a review of my own effort, *Birds of A Feather*. I don't know whether the mention of the John Music Sheppard Press's handling this

score will ring the proper bell—your linguistic endeavors appear to favor the German over the French. I am, of course, John Sheppard in English, and my enterprise is flourishing beyond all dreams, so much so that I had to secure a sales agent whom I found ideally incarnate in Joe Boonin. Why my own press? Well, there are things I like to write which my publishers don't like to do handsprings about. I am always for other anthems, a request which accords ill with my rather secular soul. Sure-fire stuff, is what I mean. So I started my publishing venture, my setting of the *Magnificat* being the immediate cause. Now, 5 years later, 11 of the 13 publishers who had turned down the "Mag" have been clamoring for it, I am asked repeatedly to sell the press, etc. As you say: commercially, I made it, and I am hoping that this doesn't axiomatically define my product as necessarily inferior—inferior, who knows, maybe, but not NECESSARILY, is my point. Yes, I have gone through precisely the scenes you hint at. Once, here in Boulder, after a performance of a score, one of my serialist *confrères* walked by, beethovenian twist to the mouth (that indicates he is tragically disposed, which indicates, *eo ipso*, the guarantee of the superior quality of his compositions), muttering under his breath, "commercial"—not just barely audible but projected with the power of a Sir Laurence [Olivier]. My reply was shorter, only four letters. No, I do indeed rejoice in the fact that it should have been possible to launch my little venture—for which, incidentally, I set up the originals right here where I am now typing to you, the music typewriter sort of hogging most of the surface of this make-believe desk⁵—and to see it grow and prosper, a thing that could have happened only because so many choral directors—and their singers—quite manifestly love the stuff. Once again: no swelled head as the result, fear not—only this, that right now, this year, this month, this week, there are lots of people to whom the product gives rejoicing. What more does life have to offer? I remember the moment when I left hate behind me, having just left Darmstadt, where I had my first job as assistant to Schmidt-Isserstedt, excuse me: Dr. Schmidt-Isserstedt, to become an opera conductor, and where [Gustav] Hartung, the *intendant*, had given us—all young firebrands—permission to do our own production, in the Kleine Haus [small theater], of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* [Monteverdi's great final opera, composed 1642], which, then—1933, remember—was fearfully novel. Well, nothing came of it, the brown shirts marched in, gun[s] in hand, and all the *Judenschweine* took off. So, here I crossed the frontier, at Sarrebruck, I believe, lowered the window and spat with all my might. *Zu ende mit Deutschland* [So much for Germany]—finished with the hate. And so the struggle began, the starving, the sleeping under bridges, the roaming, the eventual arrival in NYC—where else?—and the slow, slow, yet NEVER discouraging reshaping of a life or, more precisely, the reshaping of the purpose of life, and that, in my case, was love. I discovered that my product—that of a foreigner who didn't even KNOW that there were choruses in the country—was picked up *en masse*—let me say that 10 years had to pass after the first publication, the *Brazilian Psalm* mentioned in the review. But then, man, things happened, happened, and happened more. Now I am fly-

ing sky high, hundreds of thousands sing my stuff and obviously, patently, clearly love it. Commercial?

The only thing I ever minded was when I saw the green faces of some fellow composers on the faculty here in Boulder. The expression was: well, you've got it all made, why should you worry? Mind you, Henry, I am not by nature a Teutonic "zufferer," and those years, say, about 15, spent in piecing together the fragments of an earlier identity into something viable in new guise, now in retrospect (my birthday today, incidentally, 62!) seem to have been loads of fun. Okay, we subsisted on a pound of boiled potatoes—but Frrrench potatoes, teeny ones, delicious ones—and a half-liter of wine, but somehow that never seemed to be anything but a big fat lark. If finances made it inevitable that four of us should share one hotel room, we saw to the proper distribution of the sexes, and THAT was a lark. But why an M.A.-blessed, fully tenured faculty member whose music nobody wants to perform should have looked at me with jaundiced eyes, I could never understand. Anyway, I am out of it now, and life is still most engaging, beautiful, and I am off to Alabama in a few days, and from what they sounded like over the phone, THAT'll be one hilarious lark, and we'll make music all day long, and it'll be fun and eyes will be glistening and what the heck.

I shall report to you, Sir, on whether my prediction was correct. I may even change my accent a bit. Sometimes I wonder why, with my boy [son Jonathan Emanuel, born 1953] being my sternest teacher, I have made such efforts to speak with as little of a foreign accent as my mechanism permits. So many colleagues I could mention had made the bulk of their career, I am sure, simply by making a point of saying "String-KVAR-tet" and letting the bow fall where it may. But the South always does it to me. I love it. (I know, I know, all about the political morass, I am "tawlking" about the speech.) And, further, you may have heard that one of the proudest accomplishments of any immigrant to the U.S. is to even HEAR that there IS a difference in regional speech. For perhaps 20 years, all Americans sounded alike to me. Now, I can spot a guy from Lubbock, as against one from Fort Worth. Not bad, I feel.

Now to reserve space on Delta.

Thank you *aus ganzem Herzen* [with all my heart] for continuing to include me in your addressees. While I promised never to have a swelled head, let me amplify by adding that I don't suffer from a modesty complex either. But I think of you as someone rather special. So, thanks.

Cordially
[Jean Berger]

* * *

P. O. Box 429
Boulder, Colorado 80302
October 29, 1971

Dear Henry:

I read your letter of October 10 [in which HP enumerated coming articles and reviews for the current concert and opera season in London] with great interest, as well as the enclosures. The one about which you warned me not to bruit it about before December 8 was not among them, incidentally.

The thing that impressed me most was your, perhaps, rhetoric[al] question as to whether it might be all up with the European musical tradition. I have no answer to give, not even rhetoric, but I think that, placed alongside all sorts of other matters, the question has merit, especially as it was prompted in your letter by your experience of various supposedly "great" musicians who, in your view, didn't quite make it. I told you, I am sure, about the years of study under [Heinrich] Bessler, who died a couple of years ago. I am not sure that I mentioned just how much Bessler "formed" all of "us," in the real sense of the word, although when I began working under him, he was only 27 or 28 or something like that. And I think that the work, or group of works, not to mention the seminars and other meetings out of which they grew, that shaped us most are those which wound up, I believe, in his *Das musikalische Hoeren der Neuzeit* [Musical Listening in the Modern Era]. Mind you, assuming that I am right on Bessler's publication list, this would only be the last work in the area of investigation [of] the listening attitude of man, but it is surely not the greatest. Still, worth reading, as everything he wrote. I bring this up at this point because I have to ask myself questions such as yours, so very often. Is not perhaps the metabolic change of Western man, affected as it must have been by the irruption into Western culture of so many "new" people, such that the very act of listening is no longer his cup of tea? The question comes up in view of yours, or else in view of your conjuring up, for the n-th time, the obvious demise of the hero concept with us. The hero is dead, or, rather, the hero is apt to be funny. My kids at the college, talk to them as I will, cannot respond positively to the "great" voice. They can't, that's all, not that they don't try. It rubs them the wrong way. But is not this rejection of the voice (they call it "operatic," of course) tantamount to the rejection of the "hero," or else the "great" singer, conductor, violinist, etc.? I am thinking of the gangling appearance of a Bing Crosby, for example, to contrast what I have in mind. If there is a point in my question, does not the answer affect the whole kit and caboodle? The concert format itself, the fact of going somewhere (think of traffic!) to do nothing else but sit, eyes closed possibly, and "drink in" music? In my own workshop the answer to such a question obviously brings with it enormous replies and challenges. I think that the most extraordinary illustration I've ever had was at the Philadelphia 1964 convention of MENC when Milton Babbitt entertained some 500 public music school teachers. I had had much admiration for Babbitt for his earlier article in *High Fidelity*, "Who cares if you listen?" [published February 1958]. This was snotty cynicism, yes, but

it was also intelligent, consequential and, hang it all, full of integrity. Music, contemporary music, so he said, belongs ideally in some such place as the Princeton Institute for Advanced Research. Great, I thought, let it be there, and IF and WHEN they come out of there with something worth listening to, I'll be a good sport and try. But no, in Phila, here he turns around, talks to the 500 bewildered people and tells them that, if they just listen long enough, they'll like it, or some such stuff that even elementary school kids rebel against. As they should. And there we sat, and I thought, how ridiculous is this? I, for one, am not getting anything, but I, for one, have worked myself toward the conviction that there ain't nothin' to be got, so I am not worried. But the sad 500? Were they worried? Hell, they were, awfully, you could touch it. Worried crazy, and probably going back to Broken Tibia, Montana, and trying out of bit of Webern. (Well, I don't think so, really.) But mainly, the insidious question came up: how about op. 132? very different? (listen to the snob . . .), how about the Moerike Wolf cycle [*Mörrike Lieder* by Hugo Wolf] sung in German, as it was in Phila? any different? So, maybe the whole idea of "pure listening" is for the birds? Candidly, I think it is. What thinkst thou?

As ever,
[Jean Berger]

* * *

Almost three years passed with no letters. Berger and his wife of 27 years separated in December 1971, and Berger traveled extensively for many months, finally moving to Tucson in the fall of 1972 to take a visiting professorship at the University of Arizona. On 22 May 1974, he reopened the correspondence with Pleasants, who responded at once.

* * *

95 Roebuck House,
London SW1E 5BE
May 31, 1974

Dear Jean:

How nice to hear from you! Of course I had wondered whatever might have become of you. I might have learned from Mme. Berger when I lectured at Denver and Boulder last April. I was told by Dave Baskerville that she was looking forward to seeing me. But she never turned up. I am speaking of April '73.⁶

My news is simple. The same routine for the *International Herald Tribune* and *Stereo Review*. My new book, *The Great American Popular Singers*, is just out (see enclosed), and I am now, by way of relaxation, translating the music criticisms of Hugo Wolf, a fascinating undertaking. Will be most interested in your views on the book. I expect a favorable response from all except those opera and *bel canto* specialists who think of my subjects as "not singers but entertainers." What do they do? Swing from chandeliers, turn handsprings, juggle, tap dance?? If there is one essential thing I learned in

doing that book, it is that there is more than one way to sing, and more than one way to produce the voice in song. I am myself a confirmed opera buff, but it doesn't keep me from admiring fine vocal artistry in other idioms.

Your residence in Tucson aroused my curiosity. Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada are the only states in the union that I have never visited. Stop. I am forgetting Hawaii. But not Alaska, where I spent the winter of 1942–43.

Glad to be back in touch with you. All the best to you and yours. . . .

H

* * *

4720 N. Campbell Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85718
June 20, 1974

Dear Henry:

My thanks for the *grandeur d'ame* [greatness of soul] that permits you to overlook a hiatus of considerable width, and to continue where we had left off, ante-hiatus. I shall get a copy of your book as soon as the current chores are done, and I am sure that my vocabulary will coincide with that of Mr. Koshatka [see Pleasants' reply of July 26]. As he, I have found your writings epic at times, with that unassailable insight into history that, it appears, musicologists often do not see in them. I look forward to seeing the between-epics book.

The enclosed program [of an evening of Berger's one-act theater pieces, *The Pied Piper*, *Yiphtah and His Daughter*, and *Birds of a Feather*, produced in 1972 by Chanticleer Community Theater in Council Bluffs, Iowa] will give you an idea of what concerns me most. My breaking in to the theater world—always non-professional, hence always buzzing with enthusiasm—has been the most rewarding aspect of recent doings. The titling of the venture was a *faute de mieux* [for lack of something better] result: when asked what "type" or "genre" my scores are, I simply had nothing to offer by way of concise terminology, since we don't go around nowadays calling things *drama in musica*, or some such. Vagueness of billboard notwithstanding, the venture was massively successful, and let nobody tell me, so what, what does it matter if the performances took place in Council Bluffs? To me this is precisely what did matter, especially after meeting Norman Filbert—in his breadwinning capacity a most successful advertising executive in Council Bluffs—who is nobody's idiot.

What enlightenment can be thrown on this (current) concern of mine? I have left the Academy for good, thus realizing a goal long since dreamed of, i.e., to quit teaching before "mandatory" retirement age. I succeeded. Not by eons, still by years. And coinciding with it—coinciding, in other words, with no longer caring one iota what any academic musician thinks of my efforts, and I never did care very much—I feel that the long-stored-up reserves of music heard in my years as a musician guide that old pencil more and more. I am reasoning with myself thus: if my revered master Loulou (Louis Aubert, R.I.P.) wrote, basing his outpourings on what had been immediate to him, by

which I mean largely Fauré, probably Franck, etc., how can I, then, not include the whole kit and caboodle? For it was that whole k&c that had been “immediate,” des Près, shall we say, mainly (in my own case) Monteverdi but (Besseler being an unflinching medievalist) Notre Dame music, then again, mucho Machaut. How about all that? by what token must I say: no? or else, how far may I (a purely theoretical question, please understand) go “back” before drawing the line and saying: that, no. Are we not a rather unique generation in this respect? am I being clear? I am not having reference to any neo-classicism or any other “-ism,” I am not trying to “recapture” anything, as the “-ist” inevitably does. It is simply there, IN me, to as strong a degree as, say, Stravinsky, in many cases, stronger. Must I throw a switch and say: Stravinsky, yes, Monteverdi, no? (This, going by the probably wrong assumption that it [is] still kosher to follow in St. Igor’s footsteps.) Enough musing. I can almost HEAR your answer.

Thanks for giving me this chance to speak freely, with someone who, even when disagreeing, is not worried about such a thing. There are few like you. In fact, I don’t know of anyone. Have a good summer—

Cordially yours,
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House,
London SW1E 5BE
July 26, 1974

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for your letter, Council Bluffs program and ruminations. Wish I could have been with you in Council Bluffs. I was pretty close to it in Graz, Austria, where I have just done my annual series of lectures for the Summer Vocal Institute of Richard Owens’ American Institute of Musical Studies (based in Dallas and affiliated for degree credit purposes with North Texas State University). They had eighty-two (82) vocalists this summer, most of them from west of the Appalachians and east of the Rockies, and most of them graduate students, M.A.s, Ph.D.s and (shockingly) teachers. I had a great success, with talks covering the Age of the Castrati, the Age of Grand Opera, the Art of the American Popular Singer and the History of the Solo Recital, and, as in previous years, found the success, in a way, dispiriting. What I mean is that singers with all that education behind them might be expected, it seems to me, to know something about the history of their own instrument and occupation. In fact, with very few exceptions, they know nothing. I talk mostly right out of my book, which should be embarrassing but isn’t, simply because not one in twenty of them has either read it or heard of it. I don’t have to tell you, of all people, that there is something godawfully wrong with the way American musical educators educate. I’m beginning to think that they don’t educate at all. They simply preside over a system for the earning (?) and awarding of degrees. The worst thing (well, maybe not the *worst* thing) about it is that it encourages in the students the

notion that the way to learn something is to get somebody to teach it to you, preferably with degree credits in sight. One advanced girl student, aware that her German left something to be desired, told me she was thinking of taking a course in German. I told her that if she really wanted to learn German, she should go out and buy herself a German grammar and dictionary and learn it. And I recalled to her the wise words of my French *solfege* teacher at the Curtis Institute who used to say: "Children, I can't teach you anything. I can only help you to learn."

Speaking of such things, I have had a nice letter from Edgar Koshatka, ex-music major at Temple University and now editor of *Concert Magazine*, and there are ten (10) mistakes in spelling and grammar in just two pages! Examples: "occured," "seqences," "rehersal," "it's" (for "its"), "importantly" (adverb where he should have used an adjective), "neither . . . or," "hassleing," and "heresay"! That's not quite 10, but it becomes 10 through the repetition of the same goof. What is one to make of it? I suspect that it's not that Johnny can't read or spell or write decent English, but that Johnny's teacher can't!

Things are quiet here, while the economy and the social order quietly go to hell. Egalitarianism is the word, and as far as I am concerned, it is a euphemism for mediocracy [*sic*], or worse. I notice a lot of this in the performance of the young rock and folk musicians. Excellence is scorned. Professionalism is a dirty term. The only hope that I see (or entertain) is for a reaction. The kids have wanted to look and behave like slobs in order to draw attention to themselves, to distinguish themselves from the rest of society. I like to think it possible that they may now seek distinction in behaving and appearing like ladies and gentlemen. Or is that just a pipe dream?

I hear very little rock and pop these days, not in public at least. And for a very simple reason. It's too damned loud. Something's damned wrong when a rock group of four or five young men carries 20 tons of equipment and a personal retinue of 20 or 25 to move the damned stuff and keep it in order (which they mostly don't).

So, for the time being, I content myself with the translation of Hugo Wolf. He could be pretty loud, too, but fortunately I don't have to listen to him. Just read.

All the best,

H

* * *

1177 Race—#308
Denver, Colorado 80206
June 5, 1975

Dear Henry—

Your remark about “production becoming substance” is, of course, what has been troubling me for years in my own area of non-professional music making where, needless to say, such an attitude of materialism is even sillier than in the area you were having reference to—the musical theater—inasmuch as the truly flawless performance is, by very definition, the great exception. When you add to this chief concern on the conductors’ part with “finely polished” performance, the, to me, yet more distressing feature of an “odds-and-ends” type of programming that gives me, the listener, absolutely no rationale explaining to me why in hell I am attending the damn concert, you will see WHY I am troubled.

Still, I remain an optimist. The non-professional American music making has its roots in the parochial school/community relation whereby it was the school that HAD to furnish the anthem for the Sunday church service. Thus, the quality of the performance was less important than the fact that it took place at all, and the odds-and-ends programming that relies on the dubious taste of some clown arm-waver did not exist, since it was the situation of the service that dictated the substance (you didn’t sing *Crucifixus* on Christmas, to quote but one situation).

As I must have written numberless times, I am convinced that American music exists only to the extent that non-professional music exists, though I will confess that your writings have given me enough to enter on severe argumentation with myself. Still, let me say that, for my personal purposes, I am correct. And so then, there is the reason for my maverick procedures whereby, instead of the eternally clamored-for “anthem-length” pieces (which are printed with little financial investment and can, if successful, fetch enormous sales), I have launched into works for the “staged chorus”—going by the assumption that A) the continuity of a “plot” prevents the odds-and-ends tedium, just as even the worst B-movie keeps one usually in the theater, and B) the visual element is a necessity in our TV-bred generation, and C) the “message” (excuse the corny term) contained, whether articulated in straight manner or in jazzy manner (I have done both), can be to our secular society what *Crucifixus* might have been to earlier times.

I have no idea whether I am right or wrong. It’s an uphill fight, and by now performances are finally coming along that are NOT the result of my efforts. I can say this much: every time I am present, or else conduct a performance myself, I find precisely what the concert never produces: moist eyes or, conversely, hilarity, animation, devotion, absolutely enormous “fun” and, above all, a response on the part of the audience that the ordinary choral concert does not produce. And, prey [sic] tell, what is a Kansas citizen to express after hearing “Scendi dal paradiso,” sung in (unintelligible) Italian? For the first time in all these years, I am taking the liberty of sending you a score [*Yiphthah and His Daughter*], this one on the old

Jephthah topic, called Yiphtah by me, which is a bit closer to the original Hebrew, and dealt with in the manner of a “Morality Play,” though the publisher saw fit not to add this subtitle to the score. Actually, this is the one of the five works now written which is the, to me, least accomplished one—however, it’s the only score I have available. If and when you have absolutely nothing better to do, you might cast a glance. Gellhorn, the London choral director [probably, conductor and composer Peter Gellhorn, 1912–2004, also an émigré from Hitler’s Germany who, among his many conductorial assignments in England, led the BBC Chorus for eleven years], has expressed a definite interest in doing it some time later this year.

So much for the *nonce*. Am off to Missouri and Atlanta in a few days, all very exciting dates—conducting and lecturing, the latter now being very much the exception, you may call me Mister, Mr. Pleasants, the Ph.D. is long since down the drain. . . .

Be well—

Cordially, as ever
[Jean Berger]

* * *

[Denver]
June 30, 1975

Dear Henry—

Thanks for the letter and goodies, both fascinating as always.

Have two things of world-shaking importance to report. First, am composer-in-residence at Rocky Ridge Music Center, about 75 miles from here in the mountains, 9,600 feet up, just below timberline, heavenly country. There are 95 youngsters this summer, pianists, violinists, flutists and such, and mainly—why?—cellists, 23 of them. Heard a few performances, all chamber music, 75% of it spanning the sum total of music history, i.e., Beethoven to Brahms, with a bit of Hindemith thrown in for good measure, and most of it performed stunningly well. Truly. Yet, the disquieting little voice inside: is this real? what is it all about, all this Beethoven, all this Brahms? where are they going with it? and lots of practicing under the trees during the days. And the answer insinuating itself: look, man, not a black face among them. Policy? Money? (definitely not that, Denver is loaded with prosperous blacks). So? I dunno. It feels plastic, is all I can say. I throw pleasantisms their way: what do you do all that practicing for? or: how alive is an art that relies on endlessly repeating the same substance, without renewing it constantly? no result; question non-understood. Not non-answered—they ARE smart—not understood. Okay, I’ll listen more; I’ll report later.

. . . [On the incomprehensibility of singers performing in unfamiliar languages,] I am not being chauvinistic, I think. But I have yet to hear the singer singing in a language which I possess fully and to which he (she) was not born, singing it so that I did not feel embarrassed. One possible exception, [Dietrich] Fischer-D[ieskau] in the Britten *War Requiem*, singing fine English. But what is this mania of our recording companies to issue recordings with

permanently faulty language? [Vera] Zorina saying one more word in French⁷—or is she perhaps not living anymore?—would make me crawl up the wall.

This is where “my” area intrigues me even more. By very definition the vocalization is opposed to that of the opera singer: “my” singers must sing so as not to be heard individually: the opera singer must sing so that my attention is drawn exclusively to his/her voice. Hero versus Regular Joe, something like that. And America is a country of “hero”??? never in your life. Of heroes, yes, why not, no more nor no less than any other land, but the gesticulating, emoting and dramatizing hero?—never.

How are you?

Cordially, as ever—
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House,
London SW1E 5BE
August 30, 1975

Dear Jean:

Your letter of June 30 awaited me on my return from my annual tour to Richard Owens’ Summer Vocal Institute in Graz, and Montreux Jazz Festival and the Boatwrights’ summer school (mostly vocal) above Vevey [Helen and Howard Boatwright and the *L’école Hindemith* in Blonay, Switzerland]. And so your observations about singers and languages caught me at just the right moment. I tell singers, especially Americans, that if they would just learn to speak well, then let their singing be a lyrical extension of their speech, they would be well on their way to learning to sing. But I’m probably wasting my breath. Ninety-nine percent of singers are concerned only with sound (the sound of their own voices, that is). They dutifully learn to pronounce correctly enough, but they don’t go beyond that to the music implicit in language or, to put it another way, they don’t go to where the music is. John McCormack did. [Erich] Tauber did. Frank Sinatra does. Harry Lauder did. Tito Schipa did. Callas often did. But what they accomplished is lost on singers who only hear the sound. [Fritz] Kreisler did it without words. So did Louis Armstrong, who could do it with words, too. I always tell my singers at Graz and Vevey that I wish I could have a tape recording of Rossini’s famous answer when asked what it takes to be a singer: “*Voce, voce, voce!*” I am sure that the sound, contour and cadence of his speech while saying that would leave no doubt of a sardonic utterance.

About all those kids dutifully practicing Beethoven and Brahms—yes, yes! I react similarly when I hear them struggling with Schubert and Schumann and operatic arias. Why no blacks? I don’t know. They can make it as singers, but rarely as instrumentalists, although what they have accomplished in jazz shows what superb instrumentalists they can be. Alien idiom, I guess, although why should that be true of instrumental music and not of vocal (European music, I mean)?

Speaking of jazz, I held forth last week at a jazz festival in Zurich and was treated to some free jazz by Swiss and German groups. Jesus! Take away the double bass and the drums, and you've got Stockhausen—or worse. But you would have enjoyed a gospel service in the Fraumünster on Sunday morning, the church packed. Yes, the Fraumünster (!), and no great American gospel stars either. A great success. Making Swingli out of Zwingli! I couldn't believe my eyes and ears!

In the meantime, I have received, gratefully, your *Yiphtah and His Daughter*. It still awaits my undivided attention. What with my travels and a big article on music for a forthcoming bicentennial issue of *Saturday Review* and my usual journalistic chores, I've been more than normally preoccupied. We go to Austria day after tomorrow for a vacation on the Wörthersee and in Vienna. Back just after the middle of the month and back, too, I hope, to a more normal routine.

I would like to hear more of your adventures as composer-in-residence.

All the best,

H

* * *

95 Roebuck House,

London SW1E 5BE

December 26, 1975

Dear Jean:

The hiatus in our correspondence on my side is explained much as you explained it on yours. I was travelling, and in the same places, too, only at a later and less amiable season. Ginny and I spent the Thanksgiving weekend with my sister in Fitzwilliam, N.H., and with my brother in Antrim, also N.H. Winter was already at hand, and I echo your sentiments on that subject. But I would have thought that Denver must be just as bad.

About the critic-in-residence business, it's an attractive idea, but for the time being I would be interested only in a summer session. We are not yet ready to move our household and our professions back across the Atlantic. While I was in the States—and since I wrote to you—I had a long lunch at the Harvard Club in Boston with Lawrence Berk and his son, who own and run the Berklee College of Music (present enrollment about 2,300!). We didn't get around to anything like commitments—I'm not ready to commit myself—but they were very sympathetic to my view that there is nothing like putting your opinions in writing to make you think about *why* you hold them and *how* you arrived at them. It's not so much a matter of training to be a music critic as of developing the habit of *thinking* and getting some exercise in *articulation*. There's also the matter of practice in English composition, especially when such practice has gone out of fashion in so many of our schools.

About Orff—you should read Hugo Wolf. A German nationalist if ever there was one. Anti-Semitic, anti-Italian, anti-French (except for Berlioz), anti-Russian, anti-Scandinavian, anti-American and even anti-Austrian! At

the time of writing, he had been outside of Austria only for two pilgrimages to Bayreuth.

But, as you say of Orff, he was the product of the culture into which he was born and reflected its prejudices and ethics. My translation [of Wolf's published music criticism, 1884–1887], by the way, was declined by Simon & Schuster—as I expected it would be, that once splendid house now being owned lock, stock and barrel, by Gulf and Western. It now rests with Norton. We'll see.

About [Robert] Merrill, he was treated indulgently by the local scribes. About [Lawrence] Welk, you are right. What he does, he does well. About recitals, they bore the bejeesus out of me. And while I am airing opinions and prejudices, you will see from the enclosed clips from the IHT [*International Herald Tribune*] that I begin to doubt that opera can survive the present generation of producers, especially those schooled by [Walter] Felsenstein [who had just died on October 8, 1975]. As Chuck Berry put it so well in one of the best of his songs: "Too Much Monkey Business!"

Please send me a set of your Shelley songs when they are available. I was a bass-baritone. The years have left me a *basso*. I would be happy to learn that the prevailing range is from the E below to the D above. The happiest area of my range these days is E to B-flat.

Finally, let me urge you to run, not walk, to your nearest bookstore and get Curtis Cate's *George Sand*, a splendid companion piece to Eleanor Perenyi's *Liszt*, which I think I mentioned to you.

And so, with best wishes for the new year, and in hopes that you will enjoy the enclosed article as much as I enjoyed writing it.⁸

As ever,
H

* * *

1177 Race—#308
Denver, Colorado 80206
January 8, 1976

Dear Henry:

One minor correction: the Denver climate has nothing whatsoever in common with your cherished NH spots, Fitzwilliam, Antrim, and let me add Rindge, Peterborough and other delights. Ours, pal, is a climate of high altitude sun, and I was being referred to for the nth time the other day as a "typical Coloradan" because the thermometer showed 15 or some other irrelevancy and I moved about *sans* overcoat, such items of outer protection being unknown to the faithful follower of the Colorado Chamber of Commerce. Try it sometime. It's, as we say, exhilarating. Today, 13 above, to be sure, but the sun beating down like mad and so, right, no overcoat. Minor matter, as said.

I loved your article. Your writings in your "epic" works are always just as convincing but you rarely go up on a soapbox, and so the article showed a new facet. Statues, indeed, I agree with you, and in this land, too.

The passage which intrigued me more than any other was your reference to “folk music being susceptible to being processed into traditional art forms,” etc. (Forgive my careless adding the first “being.”) Knowing you to be the fine historian—your protestations about your degreelessness notwithstanding—I am sure that you do not have in mind the self-conscious endeavors at integration, such as, f. ex., the [Rolf] Liebermann Concerto [probably his Concerto for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra, 1954] or similar things, but a subtler fusion of a new language or, at any rate, a new idiom with an existing reservoir of “forms.” I am intrigued with such a thing occurring in one of H.P.’s articles because to me, to [a] non-black immigrant to the U.S., it quite inevitably raises the question: how about me? As in so many earlier instances, I must ask you to believe me when I refer to my totally un-swelled head. Even so, the fact remains that, be it in a framework of miniature proportions, I am being performed and so I am being listened to. Thus, to use your own criteria of large numbers of people being an indispensable item in the artistic life of a democracy, of un-phony immediacy in performance as well as response being similarly indispensable, of the totality of the involvement being even more indispensable—I can only say: in a modest framework, not even remotely comparable to a music that vanquishes the *Fado* in its own habitat, such other, i.e., non-Afro-American, utterances are likely to also form an integral component of America’s music. I once told you, I think, about that lovely black girl in Kentucky who, when I asked what singing my music did to her—rather: to them, there were about 30 students around—that “their” music did not, or vice versa, she turned to me and, eyebrows raised in heavy thinking, said: “Same thing.” Are we surely at very opposite extremes of the spectrum, you and I? or might your pursuits of the unshakably genuine “thing” have led you to an exclusive endorsement of “all that Jazz”?

I wrote to a small publishing outfit where I have had good and lively associations in recent years, asking whether a publication of some of our correspondence might be of interest. Needless to say, I shall keep you posted.

Thanks for requesting a copy of the *Five Shelley Poems*; I expect the printed copies any day now and shall waste no time in sending a sample to my favorite erstwhile bass-baritone, now *basso*.

All the best, friend—

As ever—

[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House,
London SW1E 5BE
January 20, 1976

Dear Jean:

Thanks for yours of the 8th and your, as always, engaging ruminations. And congratulations on your choice of a place to live. I sit here at midday with wind and rain beating at the window. London is no place to be in the wintertime, and that goes for most of Europe, too.

I think you may have misread me on “a folk music susceptible to being processed into traditional art forms”—or I failed to make myself clear. I wasn’t saying that it either could or could not be done. I was talking about *an attitude*. The classical composers were patronizing. That’s *all* they saw or heard in ragtime and jazz. [Ernest] Ansermet and, after him, [Constant] Lambert were the only ones who sensed in them, as I put it—and I was proud of that formulation—not a source, but a force.

Yes, it’s still possible to work effectively in other idioms. *Carmina Burana* (see enclosed, where you’ll find me on a soapbox again) is a serviceable example. I’m sure that many of your pieces are. The problem is that the establishment pays no attention unless you have a fashionable gimmick. Read carefully the enclosed review of Rosenberg’s book.⁹ Better still, read Rosenberg, who gives the game away every time he sits down at his typewriter. Then read Tom Wolfe’s *The Painted Word*. Then substitute Stockhausen and Xenakis and Penderecki and Ligeti and Cage and few others for the painters he’s writing about, and you have an accurate exposure of the *serious* music business today. It’s a racket, with the critics and composers as co-conspirators.

That’s why film composers are so lucky. Film critics pay no attention to the music, and music critics don’t go to films—or ignore the music when they do.

I’ve been mostly concerned with radio the past couple of weeks. The BBC asked me to prepare a half-hour talk on “American Music in the Nineteenth Century.” When I showed them my SR piece, saying that was the subject I would prefer, they said fine, you’ll do both! And then preparation of my Ethel Waters talk took some time, selecting eight from some fifty tracks for illustration of her work at various stages of her remarkable career. It went well. They’ve asked me to do another, and it will probably be Mildred Bailey.

Anyway, it keeps me out of mischief.

All the best,
H

* * *

1177 Race—#308
 Denver, Colorado 80206
 February 4, 1976

Dear Henry—

You did set the record straight in your last letter. I can entirely accept your calling my attention to “attitude” in order to distinguish between a productive endorsement of so-called “folk” music and a patronizing one. My training under Besseler was such, in fact, that—were I to single out the one most striking qualification for a basis on which to judge any music at all—it would be the word *Umgang*—something not far removed from your “attitude.” Are you familiar with his small book *Das musikalische Hoeren der Neuzeit*, by the way? if you are not, I can promise you a rewarding evening, and do keep in mind that for my revered master, the medievalist, anything after 1450 was *Neuzeit*. I’d be curious to have your reaction to what I consider one of the most searching disquisitions on music altogether.

Now, one big fat *abraco* [hug], as we say down in Brazil. Your remark about *Carmina Burana* as being “effectively” (written) in “other idioms,” is in itself so patent—you know of my hearty relation with Orff’s music, I am sure—that the letter would have been a joy to read for no more than that sentence, but, for the first time in all our correspondence, you graciously referred to “many of your [Berger’s] pieces” as belonging in a similar category. For this, my thanks, friend. To embroider a bit on paragraph one, what you call “attitude” has often struck me as being the result of a dominating trait of our tradition whereby the composer—the 19th century composer certainly—had no choice but a compulsion to be of genius status. Failing that—either in his own recognition or in that of critics or such—he must at once be worthless. It is thus that I explain the early deaths, the suicidal tendencies, the trends toward insanity. It is thus, in fact, that I explain the *Affaire Schoenberg* to myself. Finding himself to be of less than genius status after the early post-tristanesque works, S. faced the alternative of giving up—either simply composing no longer, or else committing suicide or some such—or else, and as the only viable alternative, to barricade himself behind such un-attackable defenses as to guarantee his music to be “unheard of.” It was. Only in relatively recent years has it become indisputably clear to me that it was also un-listenable and THEREFORE unheard of. Schoenberg’s letters are fantastic in this regard, and I don’t understand why no one else has yet pointed to this concern in him. Mind you, at this point in time, as we say so graciously, the whole thing is, of course, a matter of flogging a dead horse. Frankly, who in hell cares any longer? But, I remember my own years of trauma . . .

To come back to the above, then, my concern—as you must know—is only whether my product can give joy or, to use your terminology, is written “effectively,” and I care not one bit about status, immortality or being given a large chapter in the *Oxford Dictionary*. I am sure that such a framework—“giving joy” to “people”—would make my remarks sound like the *Bekenntnisse eine Unschuldigen* [confessions of an innocent] in the eyes of

my academy-based *confères*. Can't you just see Babbitt snicker? Okay, so he does. I am elated at being included as one of the remoter possibilities in a framework by one HP that has, as its leading figure, a Carl Orff. Thanks.

As you expressed a vague interest, [I have] enclosed my *Five Shelley Poems*. What pleased me when I saw the first copy yesterday was to think that here I came back from my favorite junk store with an unknown anthology of 19th century English poetry, and while the tuner was working, I sat in the study reading, found the poems—most of them not known to me, don't forget: I didn't go to high school in an English-speaking country—got excited about them, wrote the cycle for no other immediate reason than that a friend, [a] very good *basso* here in town, had told me time and time again that he would like to have a cycle from me, then set up the original and so here it is, all my handiwork, cover, music and text printed, the whole “k&c.”

Snowing today, skiing in the offing. I also snowshoe nowadays, good for meditating. Quiet high altitude woods, blue jays eating your lunch (half of it), not a single sound, and the air is sharp, clear, exhilarating. Also you come home totally pooped but what the hell . . .

All the best—
[Jean Berger]

* * *

1177 Race—#203
Denver, Colorado 80206
September 22, 1976

My dear friend Henry:

Months since our last exchanges . . . let me assume that your roamings are now at an end, a temporary end, that is, and that you are back in the big city. And if so, greetings to you.

My own summer has also been quite busy, though I did make time, for the first time since my Colorado days, to take a closer look at our mountains in the summer. And they are worth it. We—my wife and I, that is—spent some glorious days at very high altitudes—above 12,000 feet—among the aspens, looking at the snow-covered peaks, watching otters continuing their intricate architectures, and just breathing. Breathing up there is something one is intensely aware of, and awareness, as we all know, is the key to life, in general.

Professionally, I had my most touching moment, one that was also far more important to me than my innocent listener realized. We did a workshop reading, of only mediocre attainments and with only the sketchiest staging, of my latest work “for the staged chorus” (I haven't found a better generic title yet). The topic is the old Lorraine children's story, “Stone Soup,” which I assume you know. Perhaps you don't. Here, most people know it since it appears to have been used these last few years during the children's TV program *Captain Kangaroo* (I heard it when I was a child, in Europe). While the reading itself told me that I was on the right track, the remark that I shall remember came from a bright-eyed young man who said:

"I hope you will not take this amiss but *Stone Soup* seems to be going on from where Orff left off." Well, friend, since my interlocutor did know *Der Mond* and *Die Kluge*—though not *Die Barnauerin*, which I cherish even more—and thus did not base his words on the perennial *Carmina Burana*, I left Chapel Hill in a glow, telling myself for the nth time: Henry says he [Orff] wasn't a Nazi—and adding: as though that mattered. I hate to think of the *autos-da-fé* that prompted the loftiest Parody Masses. Better not think, altogether.

Another performance, of my setting of *The Cherry Tree Carol*, served as well to give me inner fortitude. I sort of go against the general grain of our "serious" (ouch) music. I leave the idiom alone, as I think one must, and speak in it as best I know how but with a constant endeavor to find new formats of using our performance media, the choral concert being patently that than which there is nothing more devastatingly boring. Your wife's singing angels help in this regard (I mean: help to devastate yet more).¹⁰

Just returned from seeing my old friends on Martha's Vineyard and then in Vermont. The right time of year, too, foliage just about to drive you out of your mind, and the Vineyard—swordfish steaks, lobsters, blue fish, et al—has to be one of the glory spots of the globe. The weather cooperated handsomely, slight autumn mists, a bit of sun, *le pâle soleil du nord* (Baudelaire, I think), and so the whole thing was almost a dream.

What's with you?

Let me hope you are well, content, busy up to your ears, setting things straight in your inimitable ways, and eager to precipitate yourself at the typewriter, to send a few lines to your ever faithful, admiring and devoted pal,

J.B.

* * *

95 Roebuck House
London SW1E 5BE
October 3, 1976

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for your letter. Glad to hear that you—as I do—reckon *Die Bernauerin* to be Orrfff's [*sic*] best work.

I got no closer to Martha's Vineyard this summer than Falmouth on Cape Cod, where I spent a most agreeable weekend with the Leinsdorfs [conductor Erich Leinsdorf and his wife], but after a thoroughly enjoyable—and profitable—week of lectures at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis (which I had never visited before, and which I would like to visit again), I did venture up to Mt. Desert Island, where my niece was playing in the Acadia Repertory Theater. I was curious to find out whether she was confusing inclination with talent and was delighted to learn that she wasn't. She's playing under the name of Nina Pleasants. Her right name is Cornelia and I advised her to use it. She stays with the company for their winter season in

Bangor, where she will be playing Juliet opposite her boyfriend and roommate. . . . The young, these days, have it made. . . .

A delightful afternoon yesterday at the Wyndham Theater for *Side By Side By Sondheim*—three singers doing Sondheim songs to professional perfection. The emcee got off a couple of nice ones. A song from *Company* involves an airline hostess named April. It inspired him to sigh: “O to be in April now that. . . .” And a reference to Ken Tynan’s new show, *Carte Blanche*, a sequel to *O Calcutta*, had him observing that it must be the only show in the world where you can get a standing ovation for a limp performance.

The return from Elba—where we stayed in a lovely quiet hotel with a lovely quiet beach owned by Tancredi Pasero! [noted Italian *basso*, 1893–1983]—found me faced with a substantial feature for *Saturday Review* on André Previn, covering his decade here with the LSO and BBC-TV, and pegged to his taking over in Pittsburgh. A lot of work, but it came out—I think—well, with emphasis on his TV work, where I think he has made some important break-throughs in the presentation of symphonic music on the tube. He has already contracted to do eight for PBS, sponsored by ALCOA. One of them will be on Sondheim. Watch for it.

From the enclosed you will gather that I have been less than *begeistert* by *Götterdämmerung* and *Dalibor*. I find Siegfried, as a hero, about on a level with L’il Abner. In addition to all the other stupidities, how in hell can you be lost *on the Rhine*?!?!

All the best,
H

P.S. Funny thing about that letter from Martha’s Vineyard. I hadn’t noticed that *Stereo Review* had omitted my by-line.¹¹ Bill Anderson’s reference to my mother’s letter is a funny.

* * *

1177 Race—#203
Denver, Colorado 80206
February 15, 1977

Dear Henry:

Happy New Year—very much too late, but I just noticed that I have not answered your December 17 letter yet. So, Happy New Year and may the London spring be about as dry as our winter. Went skiing twice, if you can believe it, the norm for this time of year being at least 20. But we have promises . . .

Thanks for the greetings dutifully conveyed by Dave Baskerville, whom I saw recently when I was shown around the new Auraria premises, a conglomeration of three institutions of higher learning here for which I have high hopes. I might devote a bit of my energy there as of next year—too early to tell. But this would be in line with the new-fangled academic fashion: as I am A) uninterested in accepting a full-time position and B) would

have to be outrageously expensive IF I were, I have been invited by a number of universities to appear once a month, for a two- or perhaps three-day seminar. I accepted one of them, 55 minutes' flight from here, which is about what it takes to drive into town from the suburbs, and I rather look forward to it.

My chief reason for not writing is that I indulged that passion for which you have so little use: the composing of a bit of non-Afro-American music. Actually, not quite so: whatever I now write has a leetle beet of such music in it, and I do not stand in my pen's way. But, true, this score [*A Diversion for a Consort of Singers and Players*] belongs to the world to which "all that jazz" does not belong, unless, of course, we have a merger, and I am for the merger. I wrote it for an extraordinarily sophisticated California group, and I am here to say, Henry, that if you ever have a chance to "see" the concert of the John Biggs Consort, you'd be nuts if you missed it. 16th cent. chansons come to life in a way that reminds of all those singers whom you write about, 15th cent. miniatures ditto, and a good deal of 20th century stuff thrown in, which is not ashamed to say (the composer speaketh): I HAVE heard Josquin, I HAVE heard Marenzio, as, yes, I have also heard the Duke, and ALL of it is I. A mishmash? Okay, if you will. But then, WE are a mishmash. And have to live with ourselves, after all. And, truth to speak, find it as rollicking as those poverty-ridden ancestors of ours who lived in "one" musical world. Anyway, I wrote another *Diversion*. I accept the statement I read somewhere, to the effect that all non-19th cent. music is either one of worship or else one of entertainment. Bully for that! So, rather than indulge in stuff such as "Divertimento," or—as my genial contemporaries—"Source #III"—or such, I call many of my things "Diversion." Am rather pleased with the score, especially as I found the—to me—infinately inspiring poetry of Charles d'Orleans (whom I have admired and musicalized quite a bit) which he wrote in ENGLISH. How in hell he learned English so well I still don't know (Ambassador to the royal court? but since when do ambassadors speak the language of the country to which [they] "envoy"?). I'll report about the response of the Biggs Consort, who apparently are on tour, long may they live.

I'll be off again in May, after some domestic traveling between now and then. Am flying to Ffm2 [Frankfurt am Main]—for no other reason than that is the target of the sole charters available in Denver—will hike around a bit in Apfelblüten of the Bergstrasse, look up dear old Else [Landmann] (93!) in Mannheim, who taught me piano when I was a young adolescent, then my cousin in Basel, then somehow—anything except by plane—to Jerusalem, where I'll spend a month or so with my sister, then back to the continent for some more hiking and, *unvermeidlicherweise* [inevitably], back to Denver. Last year's 18 days' foot trip—lit translation of *Fussreise*—is too strong to resist. I know of no other locomotion that excites me as much, though, admittedly, one covers little ground. But who cares? Heine came out of his *Harzreise* with more to report than John Doe from Peoria who "saw" three continents in as many weeks. I love hiking, and secured a fabulous new ruck-

sack which holds stuff that will make me look inconspicuous, my criterion of the elegantly dressed male. Wrote to Orff, by the way, telling him of the impact made (one equal to Ellington) and had a very nice note in reply.¹²

So is' es. (*so ischs*, in my part of the country).

Be well, old friend!

[Jean Berger]

* * *

[Denver]

November 5, 1977

Dear Henry:

The big local news is the problem-fraught situation of the DSO (Denver Symphony Orchestra). So far, the season has been postponed, and we hear ever more ominous rumors to the effect that the whole season will be canceled, which would, of course, be tantamount to the disappearance of the orchestra altogether. It is interesting to discuss the matter here. As all other so-called professional orchestras, the DSO clearly has been a mere museum displaying the works of the past, that is, of a very limited past. In that respect it undoubtedly has rendered a service to, say, 1,500 or 1,750 Denverites—the city having close to a million inhabitants. Nobody would want to deny this handful of so-called music lovers their dope, obviously. On the other hand, it would be insane to expect a tax to be levied in order to make a go of it. And it is on this point that I always run into fierce arguments. What! you, a musician, object? Yes, I do. I am willing—reluctantly—to pay local taxes for, let me suggest, the elimination of our street crimes. These concern me. The DSO does not. And I see the end of the professional orchestra in the impending future, for two reasons. First, a medium which is not predicated on the continued renewal of its substance has no meaning, hence NEEDS not to exist. Secondly, the orchestra comes from a phase of history in which human labor was the cheapest commodity available—this, going by the assumption that Carl Theodor [1724–1799, Electoral Prince of the Palatinate, including Mannheim, famous for its virtuosic orchestra] actually did pay his musicians, a matter of some doubt to me. Nowadays, we can no longer afford an orchestra musician to tune his fiddle, let alone play.

Curiously enough, my clinging to what history teaches me is beginning to give me a bit of a local standing. Tomorrow I shall address an adult education group in a church prior to the service, during which I'll conduct the (very good) choir in one of my scores. The thing about America is that if you hang on long enough, someone, in all likelihood, will listen to you. And as long as people have understood that I am not *preaching* the demise of the orchestra or that of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, sung in Italian to an un-Italian audience, but that I am merely convinced of both of these matters being irrelevant, they might perhaps be willing to listen to what, in my opinion, IS important.

Am assembling several intriguing tours, January in the Southland, mainly a small state university in Alabama where I have gone a number of times

and always have a ball with the virtually illiterate students. Later on, a composer-in-residence stint—half a semester—at a southern California college, and I AM looking forward to that. This has been the result of an ever-growing number of letters I receive from students—unknown to me personally—who want to study composition with me. As I have always turned down positions in composition, including a few chairmanships, for the simple reason that I am not sporting enough to include the avant-garde in my scope of viable musical methods, it pleases me to accept now a position which is, in point of fact, based on my rejection of non-tonality. Later on, perhaps April, I'll probably be in Lima, where a very active cultural attaché at our Embassy has prepared the ground for some performances of my song cycles on Spanish and Portuguese texts. I have had a checkered life, and at several points it was the most natural thing to do to compose in those two languages. Where I then lived, that's what was spoken.

All the best, friend—write soon again!
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
London SW1E 5BE
November 16, 1977

Dear Jean:

I'll tell you who needs the DSO: the members of the DSO—and some bureaucrats involved in its administration. I suppose it may be argued that the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Berlin, Vienna and Amsterdam may have some use in putting their cities on the map and giving Chambers of Commerce a best foot to put forward (culture is still a con game, and it still works), but I doubt that the same can be said of any orchestras one or two rungs down on the symphonic ladder. And what is one to say of London, which has five—all overworked and underpaid—playing the same repertoire to the same brainwashed British sheep, plus tourists! I can't remember, off-hand, when I last went to a symphony concert.

I'm off to the USA in a couple of days for my annual autumn visit, combining lectures and family affairs. I'm doing my "Art of the American Popular Singer" at the Curtis [Institute] and have just learned that "attendance is compulsory!" Times are changing, even at the Curtis, and at the Curtis that takes some changing!

While I'm away, Virginia will be hard at work preparing a December 20 Purcell Room recital program devoted entirely to selections from Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, to be played on an 1823 Clementi fortepiano. Listening to her practice, I have noted that Clementi, like Cramer, was better in smaller forms than in sonatas and concertos, and very much better on the instruments of the period.¹³ I have even come to the conclusion that it is not

so much a matter of their keyboard music's not having survived as it is of their not having survived the evolution of the piano. Both structure and charm get lost in the resonance of a modern grand.

Otherwise, not much news, and what there is is bad. Power workers striking and favoring us with periodic blackouts. Elevator engineers striking and leaving the aged and infirm stranded in high rises (tower blocks). And now the firemen striking. Strike-happy Britain! *Herrliche Zeiten!*

I return December 11 to face the dismal lunacy of Christmas and New Years!

Alles Gute,

H

* * *

[Although most of the letters of 1978 contain few compelling items of musical interest, this letter is noteworthy for Pleasants' forecast, in paragraph three, of the expected impact—sonically and commercially—of digital recording and the still-to-be-developed compact disc.]

* * *

95 Roebuck House

London SW1E 5BE

October 5, 1978

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for your letter and news. Happy landing in New Hampshire. Having a sister living in Peterborough and a brother a few miles up Route 202 in Antrim and an elderly old friend in Franklin—also having been a truck driver for Camp Tecumseh on Lake Winnepesaukee in the summer of 1928—I know it well, and avoid it from December through April. I would avoid it in November also, were it not for family Thanksgivings, which have a way of coinciding with the first blizzard of the year—or maybe the second! And then there are the black flies in June! But taxes are moderate and liquor is cheap.

Alassio was fine and Elba pure bliss: perfect weather, perfect swimming, all varieties of pasta, and pizza made as it should be made and seldom is.

Back to London and right into a big journalistic chore for *Stereo Review* covering the most ambitious undertaking yet in the new field of digital (computer) recording.¹⁴ The greatest breakthrough—according to the people on the job—since the LP and stereo. What I heard on the playbacks from the digital tape—sonic spectaculars by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Morton Gould—suggested to me that they may well be right. But for commercial distribution it all still has to be transferred to disc. Digital discs and the substitution of laser beam for stylus are a few years off—but in the offing!

Little else of moment unless you're fascinated by the spectacle of the British trade unions vs. the British people. I'll be in the States (Washington,

Philadelphia and New York) the first two weeks of November. I shall look forward upon my return to a letter and your new address.

Alles Gute,

H

* * *

2 Adams St.—#1606

Denver, Colorado 80206

February 9, 1979

Dear Henry:

Your description of the frantic efforts made to instill new life into the hackneyed oratorio (and other) repertoire was delicious. It so illustrates the problems of our musical times: the transcendental—and essentially German—attitude *vis-à-vis* music as a para-religious phenomenon is no longer possible, and in most cases religion is no longer possible either. And so the format of the “concert,” which is the result—so I think—of the demise of religion in the early 1800s, must be given some aspect which meets the 20th century metabolism at least halfway. But obviously, as all such graftings or matings, it doesn’t really work.

I am not sure that I read correctly, but I seem to recall that one German university after another is doing away with its musicological courses in medieval music. If this “info” is indeed correct, it would be the explanation of all our woes, for it began, all of it, with the German Romantic attitude which revered “old” music—*die alten Meister*. From there—say, the early Palestrina and Bach *Ausgaben*—repertoires were frozen, put on pedestals, adored and repeated ad nauseam. I venture to think that such an attitude of historicism, which, so I decidedly feel, is an exclusively German trait, has lost its impact on the remainder of the Western world, as has, of course, the impact of all Teutonic art (you pointed this out so well). It’s time to let go, to invent new formats and, with them, new contents.

Enclosed a review of a recent effort of mine.¹⁵ Actually, I can tell you that the performance of *Stone Soup* served to convince me anew that Orff (and all those of us who think as he) is right in believing that the performing arts must start from the theater—unless, of course, they start from the sanctuary (does one “perform” a mass? yes, one does). I have no illusions about my own achievements, as you must know by now, but I do believe that I am a sort of way-pointer. The response to *Stone Soup* was simply staggering, following a first part of what was a reg’lar choral concert with all the terrible tedium that this implies. As in so many other instances, I came away with the renewed conviction that our problems have nothing whatsoever to do with tired tonality, with obligations to replace it with some other idiomatic process, with a compulsion toward novelty or what have you, but have everything to do with our willingness to be ourselves and to whistle a simple tune in F-major if THAT is what our musical psyche is geared to. It was fun, anyway.

My new digs are splendid so far; I am qualifying with “so far” because #1506 is, as yet, unoccupied. I am hoping that no rock-bass-thumping loudspeakers will be moving in. Do you have similar soundproofing problems in England? After all, Virginia has a whole collection of keyboard instruments. I went to the point of spending time in #1506 while a friend played on my piano: result was acceptable and, pending my impending neighbor’s disposition, should be okay; if not, an added rubber mat on which the piano will be placed should erase all difficulties.

Thanks for allowing me to quote (abundantly, I warn you) from your letters. I am not at all sure that I shall proceed with the “book.”¹⁶ The project will have reached its target one way or another, in that it is successfully keeping me from composing at this time. I must not compose for a while (terrible danger of repeating myself without knowing it), and as composing is very decidedly an addiction worse than smoking, the “book” is channeling the craving elsewhere. So, even if I throw all of it in the wastebasket, it will have helped.

Be well, friend—

As ever—
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
London SW1E 5BE
March 1, 1979

Dear Jean:

Delighted to read of the success of *Stone Soup* and of its composer as pinch hitter—if with baton rather than bat. Yes, let’s forget the Germans and have some fun.

I have no knowledge of what’s going on with musicological courses in medieval music in Germany, but I can assure you that they are flourishing here and in Paris, if not the rest of France. Holland, too, with American-trained musicologists very much in the foreground (Alan Curtis, Bill Christie, etc.). They are bringing more enlightenment to the subject than the Germans ever did!

Hope things work out in No. 1506. We have no problem. The house is remarkably soundproof for a modern dwelling. We hear nothing from our neighbors, and I can’t hear Ginny’s fortepiano or harpsichord in my study next door! Speaking of such acoustical problems, did I ever pass on to you this excerpt from an article on “toilet etiquette” from a German etiquette book of about twenty years ago:

Waehrend und nicht erst nach der Benutzung soll man sich der beruehmten Kette bedienen. Dieses Gesetz gilt umso eiserner je kleiner und hellhoeriger die Wohnung. Danken wir der Technik, die uns mit der Wasserleitung ein Mittel zur Beseitigung unerwueschter Geraeuschkulissen in die Hand gegeben hat!

[During rather than after utilizing [the toilet], one should pull the famous chain. This rule applies even more strictly the smaller and more poorly soundproofed the apartment. Thanks to this piece of engineering, we have been given with the waterworks a means to eliminate undesirable background noises.]

I pass it on to German teachers for the manner in which so many essential elements of German grammar are assembled in three relatively short sentences.

Hugo Wolf is out at last—at a smacking \$20!—and off to a good start, as reflected in the enclosure. The reviewer has made only one—but an unfortunate—mistake. My Hanslick [book of translated critiques] was a selection. Wolf is not. It is complete, pretty much down to the last superfluous adjective, my objective being to achieve an English prose style that reads like Wolf and not like Pleasants.¹⁷

You have probably read something of our wretched winter, the coldest in fifteen years, and punctuated by storms and public service strikes, the latter with appalling consequences. I spare you the details. The only consolation is the apparent near certainty that the next few months will see off this egregious Labour government, as hapless an assortment of gutless Apparatchiks as can ever have been assembled this side of the Iron Curtain!

I almost forgot: My attention was recently called to a new book, *Ezra Pound and Music—The Complete Criticism*, compiled and edited by R. Murray Schaffer of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, published in the USA by New Directions. It costs £25, so I am reading old Ez courtesy of the Westminster Music Library. He was a nut (well, he was something of a brilliant nut, anyway!) on the relationship of words and music, and I think you would find much in the notices he wrote in London sixty-odd years ago to repay your investment of time.

All the best,

As always,
H

* * *

2 Adams St.—#1606
Denver, Colorado 80206
September 11, 1979

Dear Henry:

Enclosed a copy of my review of your Wolf book.¹⁸ My original was more lavish on your own contributions, especially with regard to your glossary after each review, which I consider one of the most enjoyable parts of the book. The editor at the *Post*, however, cut most of that out—I trust that you, the much-published journalist, have gone through similar experiences . . .

To continue on our recent chapter regarding the economic metamorphoses of our publishing outfits, I had a recent publication at G. Schirmer,

well done, nice cover and, as always at Schirmer, good engraving and such. The score is 26 pages long, not counting covers, and lasts perhaps six minutes in performance. Its price is \$3.50. When you remember that the felicitous choral budgets of our colleges—this score could be done only at the college and university level—are those who now have as much money per year as they did ten years ago, and when you also remember that not all budgets have fared as well, then \$3.50 for ca. six minutes of program is grotesque, of course. Fifty copies would run, say, 150 bucks (there is always a bit of discount in the U.S., don't forget), and that could be as much as half the total annual budget. So, two possibilities: either the score will not be done at all (as I anticipate, in fact) or else it'll be Xeroxed to hell and back, which gives me a "belle jambe," as we used to say. An earlier work of 71 pages, lasting perhaps 20 minutes (or else, a solid part of the program), published by Schirmer in 1965, still sells for \$1.50.

I said "metamorphosis" (-es) because I think that in some years it will have become clear that the traditional manner of conveying musical thought, i.e., via the printed score, cannot go on much longer. It'll be the gas lamp of the musical future. And its fate will determine that of the gas lamp-lighter, yours truly, to wit.

There remains the remote possibility, of course, that somebody will actually do something about our economic collapse, make Chrysler cars illegal rather than giving the company an artificial shot in the arm, as it is now being planned. If that time should come, if we did indeed live within our capabilities as we used to do it when America could still be mercilessly exploited, then possibly our economic fate will take an up-turn, our bright politicians will again think of our educational institutions as being at least as important as a manufacturing outfit which produces ante-diluvian monsters, and then perhaps our musical budgets will again become comfortable. Friend, by that time, I won't give a damn any more. Six feet under, is what I mean.

A former student has "researched" the ASCAP situation. There appear to be two attorneys available to us standard composers in cases of grievances, both of them appointed by the federal government. I shall proceed. I counted—for the last reported quarter—11 radio broadcasts of mine (domestic, that is); this count is, of course, woefully insufficient: my methods of finding out are limited to letters of well-meaning friends. Eleven, okay? my ASCAP return for that quarter said: none. Some of the European broadcasts do yield anywhere from \$50 to—in one Swiss instance—\$200 per broadcast. Even my miserable 11 could have bought me a ticket to London, where it would be my pleasure to return the hospitality and buy you a Guinness in your nearest pub.

Well, let me hope that something will turn up, after all, and let us to the Guinness . . .

Best to both of you—

[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
 London SW1E 5BE
 September 22, 1979

Dear Jean:

A thousand thanks for the lovely notice, and congratulations on a fine job. You ought to do more writing. And besides, we authors don't have the same problems with Xeroxing. On the other hand, we don't have ASCAP, as inadequate as that institution may be. Libraries buy your book—at a discount, of course!—and from there on out it's on the (author's) cuff!

You are right about Hanslick being remembered "chiefly as the reactionary who didn't recognize the genius of his time, Richard Wagner." And it's a tragedy, and not only because "nobody cares to be tomorrow's Hanslick." Hanslick recognized Wagner's genius, all right, and he was one of the first to do so, as documented in his extensive review of *Tannhäuser* in 1846. But he didn't like the way that genius was headed, sensing (correctly) that Wagner was leading the European musical tradition toward the abyss of a collapse of the tonal system. But legend has it the way you put it, and the effect on subsequent music criticism has been catastrophic . . .

H

* * *

95 Roebuck House
 London SW1E 5BE
 November 4, 1979

Dear Jean:

Thank you for your letter and enclosure, and delighted to see you blossoming as a book reviewer. I have done a lot of it and love it. Would do more if it paid better. But what pays in the byways that you and I travel? I read somewhere recently that a movement toward Public Lending Right legislation is being contemplated in the USA. It won't become a reality in my lifetime. The free library tradition is all very well, but where does it leave those of us who write the books? I pull one of my books from a stack in a library, see stamps indicating twenty or thirty withdrawals and note that all I got was ten percent of the original purchase, minus ten percent agent's cut. Food isn't free. Housing isn't free. Electricity isn't free. Clothing isn't free. Why books?

I'm okay again, and about to take off on my autumnal journey to the USA: Ohio, Texas, Oklahoma and the usual stops along the eastern seaboard. A couple of lectures along the way to help cover expenses.

One of my lectures is "With an Ear to the Past," an introduction to the problems and delights of listening to old singers on old records. I never fail to mention and dwell upon a curious paradox of our musical life at this stage of the twentieth century: Hundreds of earnest musicologists and performers are devoting their lives to rediscovering (insofar as possible) the

performance practices and conventions of the eighteenth century and earlier. But if anyone were to play nineteenth century music according to the practices and conventions of the time (and the older records tell us a good deal about them), he would be thrown out of the hall and castigated by the gentlemen (?) of the press. . . . My thought for today!

All the best,

H

* * *

[Denver]

May 31, 1980

Dear Henry:

Thanks for the letter and the enclosed goodies. This time I was particularly impressed, for it has seemed to me a major irony (read: problem) of our times that we possess the finest performing groups, notably orchestras, history has ever known—without there being a repertoire composed for them. Let's face it: there is no 20th century symphonic or operatic repertoire. There are some isolated pieces and that's about it. A good, a superb symphony has always required several hundred not-so-good symphonies as its fertile soil. We have been trained to listen to "performance" and not to the music. I once was a left-footed organist. I loved the organists' attitude who cherished the "chiffs" and the wheezes and the "ciphers" and the woe-fully out-of-tune notes. There is life in that. I listen to Solti and the Chicago Symphony, and it's all glossy—superb, all right, but also ah-so-hygienically dull. Anyway, my pat-on-the-shoulder to you for that wise—and, I gather, daring—remark.

I allowed myself another concert—or rather half-concert: left at intermission—of so-called avant-garde music, this time at Denver U where, by rights, the guys—composition majors—ought to try to compose replacements for "The Church's One Foundation" [The University of Denver houses the Iliff School of Theology]. It was, of course, terrible. Albanbergian with a vengeance. Is their midwestern soul really "zuffering" à la Vienna of the '20s? I cannot believe it. It was all so terribly antiquated, especially the ah-so-frantic efforts to come up with "far out" sounds. One fellow played an endlessness for piano AND to piano. So? I recall Lou Harrison's abomination for bass fiddle and empty Maxwell House coffee cans, which had to be sawed according to the "composer's" meticulous measurements. Pitch, don't you know. Jesus. However, the event took place in the chapel of St. Thomas Seminary, straight to the south of me. Since living in my "condo" on the 16th floor, I have always looked at its campanile—really, the best false Tuscan you've ever seen—which gives the whole landscape within my view the feeling of Florence, with the exception that its eventual focal point is the ever snow-covered Pike's Peak, and no such thing in Tuscany. It's really quite glorious. I spend hours just gazing at what destiny finally bestowed on me after all the *Dreckloecher* I lived in. And so I welcomed the opportunity of seeing what my campanile looked like from close up. That, too, was love-

ly. Denver, when all is said and done, is quite a town, and don't you dare tell anybody. Let 'em all go to San Francisco, for God's sake. Anyway, my latest and, I hope, forever last venture in the area of academic crap . . .

[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
London SW1E 5BE
December 12, 1980

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for yours of November 17, which arrived shortly before my return from stateside tour that took me to Dallas, Tulsa, Philadelphia, Washington and New York. A pleasant—and very expensive!—trip, memorable almost exclusively for rewarding reunions with old friends. I would add the pleasure I always derive from Sunday afternoon football on TV, and I might add the discovery of Chinese beer, although it is certainly neither of a character nor quality to erase my memories of Styrian beer—or Bamberger, which I remember vividly from several visits to that lovely town and from drinking its more widely distributed varieties elsewhere in Bavaria. I am happy to report, by the way, that the Summer Vocal Institute will, contrary to previous expectations, be back at Graz next summer.

Delighted to hear that J. B. is being celebrated in Indiana and Georgia, although one would never know it, of course, from reading the music pages of *The New York Times*. That's an odd and sinister thing about the musical scene in the USA. If it's not in New York, it isn't. In Europe in the old days, and even today, if to a less extent, thanks to the jet plane, one could make a career and achieve due recognition in one locality, say Vienna, Munich, Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg, etc., but in America you can make a career in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis or wherever, and no one elsewhere will be the wiser. Chicago maybe, or Philadelphia or Boston or Los Angeles, but to a far lesser extent, unless you happen to be a Stokowski or Koussevitzky. Ask Ormandy. Who could tell you who the conductors are in Detroit, Buffalo, Rochester, Denver, Kansas City, Atlanta, Dallas, San Francisco, Seattle, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, New Orleans, Syracuse, and so on and on? Or who was the conductor in Pittsburgh if André [Previn] were not on the box?

Am still at work on Friedrich Wieck and will be for some time.¹⁹ It's heavy going, primarily because his German was so bad. Plenty of good sense and insights, and a conservative point of view congenial to my own conservatism. But trying to put his German into an articulate and reasonably literate English without obscuring the character of the author makes Hugo Wolf seem like Hanslick!

The dark days are upon us—we are on the level of Labrador!—and, of course, the time to offer seasonal—and seasonable—good wishes.

As always,

H

P.S. About the problems of the Denver Symphony Orchestra: As I think I may have written before, cities don't need orchestras. Musicians do, and the administrators—and, of course, the society ladies who head the committees and organize the money!

* * *

[Denver]
December 24, 1980

Dear Henry:

Am out of proper stamps, and even on Dec. 24 the po promises to be so crowded that, with my apologies, I am writing you on this utilitarian paper. You won't mind, I am sure.

I loved your letter and enclosures, as always. Your fleeting reference to Hanslick brought to mind a book given me by a fascinating man in Bayreuth, who collected in it virtually everything that has ever been printed about the Festspiele since their inception. (In Bayreuth, you sprinkle Wagner on your *Salzkartoffeln*). The Hanslick article was amazing in that it showed a deep insight into Wagner's purposes and achievements, with what most of us (who haven't read Hanslick, if truth be told) would consider a very unexpected fairness and, chiefly, sensitivity. I was impressed.

My own recent direction—note, writer of EPICS!—has to do with the recent—say, last four or five years—revival of interest in studying the piano. The war baby generation is now middle-aged, kids are gone, Mom, who had dropped out of school to produce the kids, is now free to finish college and often—very often—adds renewed interest in piano lessons. Men also do. In one case close to me, husband and wife (both now in their mid-seventies, actually, she being my first cousin) are taking lessons from the same teacher. My Denver friends tell me that the influx is remarkable. The trouble is that the old [John] Thompson method, designed to please moronic infants, no longer works. This is where I come in. I wrote, more or less tentatively, a set of pieces, sent them to my San Diego publisher and received a call from their keyboard editor: terrific! and write another set at once!—I did. The two just came out, and I shall take the liberty of mailing them to you, with special attention to Virginia.²⁰ As I never wrote for the piano before—though actually I am a pianist and, God knows, no singer—this activity has turned on a new faucet. I have two other cycles—one, rather, a *Sonatina*—at the San Diego firm, for approval, and just finished a set of *Seven Inventions*. I can't tell you how much fun it is not to have to tell myself: don't let the keyboard guide your hand.

First reports from San Diego indicate an early landslide. The day may come yet when I'll be able to afford that inflatable canoe. Never mind a yacht, who wants it.

No snow this winter. It's terrible. I take sun baths on the terrace, I lunch on the terrace, I read and bourbonize on the terrace, and my skis—brand new!—are yelling from the closet. New Yorkers and Texans do go skiing, of

course, from which one can only conclude that they must be possessed of a prodigious urge to get out of Texas and New York. But let me not give up hope. It may snow yet.

The Denver Symphony is back after all, limping along in its disastrous hall. I wrote them a spirited letter last year, after a concert during which a piano concerto was played, the lid of the concert grand having been taken off (people sit behind the orchestra also and could not see the divine arm waver with the lid still on). Of course, you saw the pianist's fingers go a mile a minute, but what you heard was strictly zilch. My letter thanked the administration for being considerate enough not to deprive back seat visitors the view of Gaetano's handsome features and invited them, at the same time, to do it right the next time, i.e., take out the sounding board, too. I am unsure of the reaction.

But our new theater company is superb. I'll go see *Henry IV* tomorrow: Christmas freebie! We really do have extremely fine theater in Denver at this point. You of all people will understand how much it pleases me to be able to be positive about something!

With this, and with my *allerbesten Wuenschen zum Neuen Jahr*, both to you and the *Frau Gemahlin*—

I am, as ever

Cordially,
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
London SW1E 5BE
January 8, 1981

Dear Jean:

Many thanks for your letter and the piano pieces, which arrived in good order a few days ago. Virginia played them through last evening on the harpsichord—and was delighted! As was I. So much so, indeed, that she will work out what seems to her an appropriate registration, and then we shall set up our portable Sony cassette deck and record them for you. She has not played them through yet on her recently arrived replica Rosenberger (1795), but on the basis of what we heard last night, we have no doubt that they will be effective on that instrument, too.²¹ Something tells me, however, that we may prefer them on the harpsichord. I don't know how you managed it, not yourself being a harpsichordist, but you have avoided all the mistakes made by just about every contemporary composer who has tried writing for the harpsichord; thick chording, percussive requirements, etc. What I have in mind at the moment is a cassette with harpsichord on one side and fortepiano on the other. I have not the slightest doubt that these pieces will sound better on a Viennese fortepiano than on a modern grand.

Your reference to Hanslick suggests that you have not read my Hanslick translation, a selection originally published by Simon & Schuster as *Vienna's Golden Years of Music* in 1950, subsequently reissued in paperback with

additional material by Penguin Books as *Music Criticisms 1846–99* by *Eduard Hanslick*, [and re-published by Dover Publications as *Hanslick's Music Criticisms* in 1988]. I hesitate to name him the greatest of all music critics, not having read them all, but I reckon him the finest of all those I have read. One line alone would come pretty close to putting him on that pedestal for me: “But when an art enters a period of utmost luxury it is already in decline. Wagner’s operatic style recognizes only superlatives, and a superlative has no future.” A copy of one or the other should be available in one of your libraries. If not, let me know and I shall see that you get one.

I hope that by now you will have had some snow. We have had none and don’t want any!

All the best,

H

* * *

[Denver]

February 17, 1981

Dear Henry:

The delay in my answer was caused by a long tour in the Southern states, from where I returned just a few days ago. The chief event was a “J. B. Festival”—I seem to be accumulating these of late—at Belmont College in Nashville. It was very hard work: 190 high school singers (from 9 schools) performing a very difficult long work of mine which they had never rehearsed—despite all previous promises. But it was also fun and enlightening. My information tells me that rehearsing was not always the tedium which [it] is today most of the time but that, rather, spontaneous music making was possible, even with ensembles. I had three rehearsals, all told, of which the first merely served to show the unprepared singers for what they were. Thus, two rehearsals actually, and only one in which my small instrumental “combo” took part. Still, we flew. Wrong notes, needless to say, but the spirit was there. It was quite a revelation, to me AND to my singers and players.

Thanks for your very nice words on my piano cycles. Indeed, if Virginia were to make a tape of them, I’d be the happiest man on earth. (As you know by now, I am not used to hearing my music done by performers of her attainments.) A third set is now being prepared for (probably) June issue, and two more have already been written, including a set of *Seven Inventions*, going from C to B, but don’t let that—OR the title—fool you. I believe in fun, with or without counterpoint... So, thanks in advance for thinking of recording the pieces (I mean: do thank Virginia for me, please). And while I am saying thanks, our local libraries evidently do not have the Penguin book on Hanslick’s writings. And I no longer use the CU library in Boulder much. So, if it is no effort to you, I would indeed love to read him: the sample which I wrote you about—in the Bayreuth publication—was terribly exciting. Thanks for this, too!

We did receive a bit of snow, nothing spectacular but enough to go up to the mountains on Thursday this week. The weather in Denver is, quite simply, incredible: 26 this morning, but I just came in from 45 minutes on the terrace, in trunks, broiling in the sun.

As we form our views and opinions over the years, they are apt to guide our attitudes. I had an invitation from a Denver organization to write a fairly long work, a considerable sum of money being attached to the suggestion. I turned it down. The score was to be for chorus and full orchestra, and while there are as many ways of writing for such a medium as there are of skinning a cat, my friends made quite clear what they wanted, and what they wanted was so post-brahmsian, so mushy post-everything that I simply could not engage in the task. It felt wonderful to have said no: I donned my Cary-Grant-type outfit and went on a massive “vacation-y” shopping spree, buying all sorts of nonsense (which did include, however, a celery root which I prepare *à la française*, and it comes out superbly well). In most of my commissions I have learned that it is better if I “invent” a score, write some or most of it, to the point of having enough for a sensitive director to understand it, and THEN accept a commission. It doesn’t always work that way, of course, as in a recent instance when a Chicago church sent me a very handsome invitation for a 15 minutes score.²² But I did clear my text with them, in any event, and from a recent letter I understand that Chicago is happy. I’ll fly out in April to conduct the premiere. (My medium in this score is full chorus, two soprano solos and a solo viola. I love the viola. I play it terribly. This, plus not being able to sing, is my major sorrow . . .)

No more for today. Let me hope that both of you are well and content and that I shall hear from you before too long. Current planning calls for my spending the second half of April and much of May in Oaxaca. Mexico came my way late in life, and the response has been pure passion.

As ever—

[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House

London SW1E 5BE

March 9, 1981

Dear Jean:

Thanks for your cheerful epistle of February 17. It’s easier, at this time of year, to be cheerful in Denver than in London. And now, in addition to the eternal overcast and darkness, we have a [Parliamentary] Budget coming up that will have cigarettes costing close to a pound a pack and a bottle of vodka about six (\$13). God may be merciful to sinners, but not Chancellors of the Exchequer!

I can’t help you with Hanslick for the moment but will try to locate a paperback for you. I have only my file copies.

We’ll try to tape your cycles for you this week. Ginny has been working out the registrations on the harpsichord. If you have perfect pitch, you will

be in for a bit of a shock. Both harpsichord and fortepiano are tuned at A=415. And speaking of pitch, I listened to a radio broadcast of *Rigoletto* with Giulini and the Vienna Philharmonic yesterday, and the pitch was very close to a semitone high. There was poor Domingo singing “Parmi veder le lagrime,” and those As were B-flats. Not just almost! Our Steinway is tuned at 440, and I had to lay down the law to the tuner. They all are tuning at 443 or 444. As you will note, I tune the harpsichord and the fortepiano, but NOT the Steinway. Guess I could if I put my mind and arm to it—which I don’t intend to do.

Not much to forward in the way of clips. Things have been slow in that field. But I think you will enjoy the Carl Davis piece.²³ I have been watching and admiring his work on TV underscores for a couple of years and was glad of this opportunity to do a piece on him. I was especially taken with the juxtaposition of Bernstein under MUSIC and Davis under PERSONALITIES. That’s what a guy like Davis is up against. If it ain’t for a concert or opera or oratorio, it ain’t music!

All the best,
H

* * *

2 Adams St.—#1606
Denver, Colorado 80206
April 15, 1981

Dear Henry:

When you have gone through the years of conducting choruses, where an intonation of “A” as 415 is par for the course—albeit the target WAS 440—then there simply are NO surprises. Thus, I am looking forward most anxiously to hearing Virginia’s playing of my *Diversions*. And do thank her—and you—for it.

We have all heard about the high prices in England, and to this inveterate traveler and Anglophile the news is painful. Is it really all that bad? Aside from your reports about vodka and cigarettes—both of which one can live without—are the old little B&Bs really out of reach? the little corner eateries? I’d really like to know, for the most recent reports place England out of reach. It’s as simple as that.

While on the topic, I am off to Mexico next Monday, Oaxaca to be specific. As I must have mentioned before, I adore the country and, returning [to] the above matter, my last trip to the Yucatan—November 1979—showed Mexico to be still most affordable. The Oaxaca trip has much to do with self-knowledge. I now know beyond doubt that an uninterrupted residence in Denver—or anywhere, for that matter—is apt to make me feel gloomy. Europe is far away and, further, a trip to Europe, in my case, is a nostalgia-lade, backward-looking venture. Mexico has no such emotions to me. So, in order to arrive at the pendulum existence which is probably Hitler’s most enduring mark on my psyche, I am hoping that Oaxaca might turn out to be

“my” city. If not, I’ll enjoy the trip anyway: I’ll have very nice company and, having just gone through a miserable flu bit, I have no objection to a vacation.

The flu had hit me just as I was about to fly to Chicago for the premiere of a commissioned score. I managed to get through it all, including three seminars at Northwestern. Another bonus was an evening spent with Edward Lowinsky, a “classmate” of mine, and his young wife. Ed is one of today’s leading musicologists, as you may know. Despite our backgrounds, which are quite similar, we are two totally different persons, not only because I turned my back on scholarship. Still, it was fun to discuss things, for, clearly, much of my thinking has indeed been influenced by my musical upbringing. The major chat revolved around my choice of composing exclusively for the amateur performer. And while good old Ed continued to have trouble with so many churches doing my stuff (“how come a nice Jewish boy . . .?”), he could not resist my argument according to which I must consider a phase of music vital to the extent that it opens itself up to constant renewal of its musical substance. Such is life. Such is art. And in America the professional orchestra, at best, tolerates an occasional new work, hardly ever integrates it, whereas the amateur world is clamoring for new scores, constantly new scores. If such includes churches, so be it. Or amen, as the case may be. I have no objection against people finding gratification, perhaps bliss, and maybe peace of mind, however they arrive at it. Drugs, psychiatrists or the Methodist Temple in Chicago. I find, further, the American attitude of not only accepting my non-Christian past but of virtually including me in person in all goings-on, most refreshing, though there can be a limit to the amounts of Lutheran coffee I can drink, while yearning for more potent stuff all the while. Needless to say, much of my stuff is secular, addressing school choruses, those of colleges and universities, and—with luck—community organizations. Anyway, it was refreshing to cross swords with one who was similarly armed and extremely apt in using his defenses. I had a ball.

This summer I’ll be on weekend binges for my San Diego publishers. I have never read anything by anybody about the rather typical American format of the “reading clinic.” I love to run these, since—in addition to being the most efficient promotional device—they are also refreshing musical events. Nobody minds Palestrina’s “selling” Catholicism. Well, our clinics are every bit as reverential. The nature of the divinity has changed a bit, true. Am I supposed not to believe in the almighty dollar?

As always—

Cordially,
[Jean Berger]

* * *

95 Roebuck House
 London SW1E 5BE
 April 30, 1981

Dear Jean:

So you will have been sunning yourself in Oaxaca while we have been enduring the coldest April these isles have experienced in this century!

What you have been hearing about London prices is true, although it helps, of course, to do without spirits and cigarettes. The £ has been falling, and that helps. But even then, your B&B will run you from \$40 to \$50 a night. Restaurants and public transport are high. It's an expensive town, the most expensive, I think, in all of Europe with the possible exception of Oslo.

The enclosed *programme* will tell you why Ginny has not yet got around to recording your *Diversions*. Preparing it and commuting to her professorial duties in Cambridge has kept her more than busy and preoccupied. She hopes to get to Berger this weekend and is looking forward to it, as she very much likes the pieces.

I have been busy with a polemic on the sins of opera and concert telecasts (the restless camera work, the close-ups, isolations, etc.!) and a big-gish piece on pitch and transpositions in opera. Tuning and singing to instruments at A=415 has helped to impress upon me the cruelty of compelling singers to sing Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini a full semitone higher than was required of the singers for whom their operas were written. And I am indignant at these new "authentic" editions that take no account of the pitch at the time and place of composition.

Enjoy Oaxaca! In the meantime I leave you with the following from an article on pitch in an old issue of the AMZ [*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*]: "*nicht würde haben ausgeführt werden können!*" [which could not have been performed.]

All the best,
 H

* * *

2 Adams St.—#1606
 Denver, Colorado 80206
 May 19, 1981

Dear Henry:

Your quote reminded me of one we used to have fun with as children: "*O Du der Du die das badische Land beglueckende Verfassung . . .*," [O you, so fortunate to be in the blissful country of Baden] etc. Can't remember the verb. In German, who needs it?²⁴

Another area of which your brief dissertation on authenticity to the letter but not to the pitch reminded me was Elizabethan vocal music, both in the sacred—i.e., anthem—area and the secular, i.e., madrigal. I had long

been amazed by the recurring Shakespearean references to the extraordinary art of music, and I could not believe that what Will heard was what I heard: the current rendition of an English madrigal simply doesn't jibe with *Hamlet*. So, research or, rather and very simply, thinking. And I came up with the naïve statement that a composer who writes for a certain medium THINKS that medium and that, consequently, if our media of vocal ensemble singing did not give [composers] Wilbye and Morley Shakespearean status, then our media must not be right, be they composed of SATBs. It is, of course, the "As" that gave the show away. An Elizabethan alto voice was exactly that, i.e., a high male voice, or else counter-tenor, or whichever term might have been used. Thus, with the, as yet, small-scaled boys' trebles being no more than a wondrously fitting upper-third decoration—and England has always loved this sort of "descant" (the Italian Baroque "Terzseligkeit" being one in which the LOWER third decorated the tune stated in the upper voice)—I had therefore a sort of organ-pipe continuum of male voices, from bass via baritone via tenor to countertenor. Such a medium of homogeneous sound permitted a Byrd, or whomever, to start a "tune" in a lower voice, shift it to the next voice range when the rising melody made this desirable, and so on. I've discovered such "tunes," which start from an "A" in the bass range and eventually go to the high "G" of the counter-tenor, a compass hardly ever surpassed by Verdi's most rambling arias. And heard thus, the thing doth take your breath away, and I can believe the Bard gasped. Wilbye's "Weep, weep mine eyes" (with the two "weep," there being another one with only one "weep") is a sample of this compositional procedure, which, as said, very simply takes advantage of the current medium of performance. Our split-level ensemble sounds—two pairs of voices, TB and SA—cannot render such a composition unless "authenticity" takes into account the original medium and somehow tries to re-capture it.

Dixi.

Mexico was magnificent. Oaxaca turned out to be a total delight, a city full of 17th century buildings in surprisingly good condition, an impressive variety of churches where the original aristocratic design and plan is now adorned by very naïve statuary, paintings, flower offerings and, last but not least, touchingly beautiful Indians—Mixtecs, Zapotecs, kneeling, praying, devoted to their rosaries—who completed the picture. I ambled for days, even though I am not normally much of a sightseer. Oaxaca is a town where you eat—and drink—out of doors, on the *Zocalo* (main square), and one meets people easily. In sum: I recommend it heartily and, to return to one of our favorite topics, unless you are exclusively devoted to waitresses in *dirndls*, I can promise matching delights derived from Mexican *cerveza*. Not to mention the tequila . . .

Am now in the process of kissing Gutenberg goodbye. The dire fact is that printing costs are now such as to effectively prohibit the publication of anything but the sure-fire "anthem-length" piece. Thus, I am trying to convince at least one publisher to proceed on the basis of Xeroxing, in other

words, without investing large amounts in an edition of several thousand copies which may never sell. Wish me luck! I may have pointed the way! (Alas, I also may not . . .)

All the best—

As always—

[Jean Berger]

Notes

¹ Program notes for premiere of Berger's *Psalms 67: Let the People Praise Thee*, 4 April 1965, MENC, Western Division Convention, Long Beach, CA.

² Henry Pleasants, "America's Impact on the Arts: Music," *Saturday Review* (13 December 1975): 89.

³ The quotes, above, are almost certainly from the typescript of HP's talk. In slightly altered form, they appeared later in his article, "Afro-American Epoch: Emergence of a New Idiom," *Music Educators Journal* 57 (September 1970): 33–37.

⁴ Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 in A Minor, composed 1825, one of the late quartets.

⁵ Cecil Effinger's Musicwriter, invented in 1954 and manufactured between 1956 and 1990 by Effinger's Music Print Corporation in Boulder, CO.

⁶ California-based composer, conductor, and arranger for films and television, orchestra trombonist, producer of recordings and broadcast commercials, music publisher and, at the time of this letter, creator/director of the Music Management Program at the University of Colorado, Denver campus.

⁷ Vera Zorina (1917–2003) was a German born dancer and actress (and second wife of George Balanchine). She was most well known for performing in Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake* at its 1948 premiere, as well as in subsequent performances.

⁸ HP, "America's Impact on the Arts: Music," *Saturday Review* (13 December 1975) : 88–93.

⁹ It's likely that Pleasants was speaking of art critic Harold Rosenberg's 1975 book, *Art on the Edge: Creators and Situations*, New York: Macmillan, 1975; London: Seeker and Warburg, 1976; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983.

¹⁰ See HP's letter of 2 August 1969, published in the *AMRC Journal* 10 (2000): 8. Pleasants quoted his wife Virginia as referring to the choral backing of film and TV underscores, as well as "pop" recordings, as "heavenly voices" or "heavenly choir."

¹¹ Reference to HP's article on Ethel Waters' 80th birthday observance: "Happy Birthday, Ethel Waters," *Stereo Review* 37 (October 1976): 119.

¹² JB to Carl Orff dated 11 December 1976; Orff to JB by photo-postcard, undated.

¹³ Johann Baptist Cramer (b. 1771, Mannheim–d. 1858, London) was a professional performer on the pianoforte and a composer of sonatas and, especially, *Études* for that instrument.

¹⁴ HP, "The Digital Frontier," *Stereo Review* 41 (December 1978): 44–45.

¹⁵ Glenn Giffin, "Unique Work Works for Classic Chorale," *Denver Post*, 7 February 1979.

¹⁶ An unpublished correspondence-based memoir with the working title, "To and From: For Solo Voices and Typewriter."

¹⁷ *The Music Criticism of Hugo Wolf*, translated, edited, and annotated by HP. (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1978).

¹⁸ JB, "Music Critic Wolf Sheds Light on Era," *Sunday Denver Post*, 9 September 1979.

¹⁹ HP had begun work the year before on a translation of Friedrich Wieck's treatise on the piano and singing, *Clavier und Gesang: Didaktisches und Polemisches*, first published in 1853, with further editions in 1875 and 1878.

²⁰ *Diversions for Keyboard and More Diversions for Keyboard*, Neil A. Kjos Music Co.

²¹ Michael Rosenberger (1766–832), "the most distinguished of a family of [Viennese]

piano builders,"at the turn of the nineteenth century. Richard Burnett & William Dow, *Company of Pianos* (Goudhurst, England: Third Millenium Information, 2004), 116–117.

²² *Canticle of the Sun*, commissioned by the Chicago Temple (First United Methodist Church) for its 159th anniversary in 1981.

²³ Carl Davis: an American conductor and composer of television and film scores (b. 1936), who has lived in the UK since 1961.

²⁴ Berger's line contains an untranslatable joke about German grammar.

Tom MacCluskey

In Honor of Jean Berger and His Gifts

As I'm putting the finishing touches on this 746th-or-so attempt to write something worthy of Jean Berger, it's fitting that today, 27 September 2009, is the 100th anniversary of Jean's birthday. My desire in this essay is to thank Jean and others for the deeply fulfilling and rewarding career that I've experienced.

I'll arrive at the age of seventy-eight two days from now, and I confess to having an intermittently hazy memory. So, I'll play the memory card and say that it's the source of the difficulty I have in recalling any day-to-day details of my thirty-one-year relationship with Jean—with the exception of one vividly remembered event which I'll describe below. In reality, there are only two periods of direct association that I had with him, although we communicated more than occasionally during some of those thirty-one years. The two periods of closest association were: 1) between 1961 and 1967 while I was a graduate student and a teaching assistant in the College of Music at the University of Colorado at Boulder; and 2) when in the fall of 1971 I was an assistant professor in the music department at Colorado Women's College while Jean was chair of the department.

I don't recall enrolling in any classes taught by Jean at CU in the sixties. My work with him occurred in "special-studies" situations—one-on-one. At no time did we "hang out" together, drink coffee together, ski together, or pursue other social, recreational, or professional activities together. I was a loner (still am) and always very busy (still am). I think I visited his home only once in the 1960s. I also visited him at his apartment in Denver several times between 1988 and 1991 before he died in 1992.

I studied music analysis with Jean. Those studies gave me a solid basis for seeking and participating in countless musical endeavors that have filled my life with extreme joy, intense focus, and satisfying successes.

Before continuing, it's important to thank two other professors at CU who contributed *equally* to these times of fulfillment: Cecil Effinger and George Crumb. I consider all three (including Berger) to have been the giants of my professional education. Years ago, I began to refer to them as the "Berger-Effinger-Crumb Triumvirate." In addition, major and minor contributions were made by numerous other professors, teachers, and flight instructors: the hundreds of students I taught through the years; my co-students; my employers, coworkers, and fellow performing musicians; also

record producers, recording artists, conductors, composers, recording engineers, and recording maintenance engineers. Probably, there are others who are temporarily or permanently locked in the hazy areas of my memory. My study of musical analysis with Jean Berger and the results of that study are the focuses of this tribute.

Perhaps the word that best summarizes what I learned from Jean is *precision*. Although I don't recall that he ever used the word, he required precision in whatever I presented to him—be it a piece of printed music with hundreds of symbols representing my analytical conclusions, written documents supporting those conclusions, or verbal statements regarding the conclusions. If what I presented to him wasn't as precise as he desired or was inaccurate in any way, I soon learned what he did desire. This was followed by a precise and crystal-clear explanation of how he had arrived at his own conclusions.

Prior to meeting Jean, I was no stranger to precision. Landing an airplane on an aircraft carrier requires an enormous amount of precision. "You'll be precise, or you'll be dead." My naval flight instructors pounded this into me during more than nine months of basic training in 1954–55. When I say, "pounded," I mean it *literally*. At the time, I flew a propeller-driven, naval flight-training aircraft with fore-and-aft-cockpits (SNJ-5). I'm a flight student seated in the forward cockpit; my flight instructor is in the aft-cockpit. The control column ("stick") that I'm using to maneuver the aircraft is directly attached to my instructor's control stick in the aft-cockpit. If my wings are not precisely level or angled as properly for the maneuver I'm attempting, if my airspeed is not precisely at the designated airspeed, if my aircraft's nose-attitude isn't precisely as required at any given moment, or if I'm not precisely meeting any one of a multitude of other stipulations, my instructor may violently yank *his* control-stick sideways so that *my* control-stick will smash into the inner-side of my left or right knee. The severity of the instant pain is indescribable! Many are the evenings I hobbled into my quarters with purple bruises on my inner-knees during flight training at various fields near the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida. Be assured that I learned to be precise! When flying formation with my wing tips as close as ten feet away from the "birds" on either side, I didn't dare fly any other way but *very* precisely. I was trained to emulate and fly as an equal with my instructors—because it kept all of us alive.

Soon after I received my naval aviator's wings, I was ordered back to the Naval Aviation Training Command to become an advanced-training flight instructor. Not only did I have to emulate my former instructors, I had to *be* one of them. For two more years as a naval aviator, I taught many other young men to be extremely precise whenever they took control of an aircraft. One of the urgent incentives for this was to avoid having them kill me!

Jean Berger's requirements for precision didn't involve violence, pain, or potential death. In fact, he was one of the gentlest persons I have ever known. But, my experience with him was that his expectations for his students were very high—especially if he had confidence in them. The vast-

ness of his knowledge, the precision and clarity with which he presented this knowledge (in such considerate, often humorous ways), and indeed the integrity of his very being inspired me to emulate him as much as possible. As a novice at nearly seventy-eight, I'm still involved in that effort!

This precision, as well as a myriad of intimate tidbits of musical insight, history, techniques, and wisdom acquired from the Effinger-Berger-Crumb Triumvirate and a host of others, proved to be a huge reservoir from which I could draw and add whatever was necessary while following various paths during my career. In fact, there is one specific skill related to "precision" that proved to be among the most important throughout this journey.

Before I describe that skill, I'll provide some background: I took piano lessons from my mother from ages seven to eight and percussion lessons between twelve and fifteen. My first professional engagement occurred in 1945 when I was fourteen—I played drums in a dance band for a New Year's Eve dance for which I was paid the mouthwatering sum of fifty cents. Throughout high school and college, I continued performing in dance bands and jazz groups—more often as a drummer, but increasingly as a pianist.

During my senior year at Boulder High School, I took a course in music theory. This opened an entirely new and marvelous world that has sustained me to this day. At CU from 1949 to 1953, I majored in composition because a theory major hadn't been established. Cecil Effinger was my major professor. I believe that my years of playing in dance bands and jazz groups throughout high school as well as my fascination with both chord construction and chord progression prepared me for "acing" theory and ear-training courses during my first two years at CU. In fact, a few weeks after I began my freshman year, my exasperated theory and ear-training professor gave me an order: "I don't want to see you raise your hand in my class ever again unless you're asking a question. My questions are directed to the other students, not you." I obeyed. When I became a sophomore, he hired me to be his paper-grader. Also, on a number of occasions, I taught his freshman theory class when his proclivity for adult beverages during the previous evening left him in a less-than-professorial condition. When my phone rang before 8:00 a.m., I knew who was calling.

In 1961, after I had completed a bachelor's degree in music, instructed in the Navy, and returned to nightly performing in combos and bands, I began working toward a master's degree in composition at CU and became a teaching assistant in theory and ear training. When the degree was completed in 1963, I became a full-time instructor and added instrumentation and form-and-analysis courses to my teaching load. Also, I became a doctoral student. Having worked with Cecil and Jean during the previous two years, I added George Crumb to complete the Triumvirate.

In May 1965, I became the music critic for the *Rocky Mountain News* (RMN), one of Denver's two daily newspapers at the time. Cecil had urged me to apply for the job, and he was very generous in recommending me to the editors. During the first year or so, I wrote one to three performance reviews each week. By the time I resigned from the RMN in September 1973, for at least the previous two years I had been reviewing as many as seven

concerts or events each week as well as writing a Sunday column, *Musical Musings*, that the editors had inaugurated in early 1967. I wrote more than 1,600 reviews and columns during my eight-plus years at the RMN.

Both Jean and Cecil were guiding lights for me through the RMN years. On occasion, after reading one of my reviews or columns, one or the other would call and point out some angle I had missed, or suggest a more precise way of describing something. They were especially helpful in encouraging me to become more historically informed. This enabled me to nurture and deepen the insights I used in my writing. Both mentors gently nudged me into continually refining my focus. Again, more and more precision. Always, finer tuning.

The “specific skill” to which I referred above is: as a result of the in-depth education I received through the Triumvirate and others, I became well skilled at hearing accurately what happens in music as it flies by. I learned to discern musical events in the realms of melody, rhythm, harmony, form, tonality, dynamics, timbre, and other musical parameters. This heightened ability is useful only if it is combined with the ability to describe accurately and clearly what the ears have heard. Therefore, a sharp-eared describer must also possess: 1) a brain with a substantial memory bank into which the listener can pack all of his or her observations in the order in which they occur; 2) a substantial musical knowledge in order to perceive the simple and complex relationships among all the events; 3) a substantial and pertinent vocabulary to use in describing the events and their relationships; and 4) the ability to put words together so that the descriptions are understandable, interesting, and enlightening to other listeners and readers. Whenever I use the term “perceptive ears” in this essay, I’m implying the combination of both abilities—those of perceiving *and* describing.

I’m convinced that all the formal education and on-the-job training that I acquired beginning with my entry into junior high school eventually coalesced into my having perceptive ears. They’ve served me extraordinarily well throughout my professional career. Possession of perceptive ears was unquestionably beneficial to me as a music critic. As I’ve already said, the precision involved in musical discernment and description was honed to a sharp edge in my studies with the Triumvirate. With Cecil Effinger, the development of perceptive ears was related to the creative process. With Jean Berger and George Crumb, this development was related to the analytical and descriptive processes.

Returning to 1965, I’ll describe a chain of events that links the mentoring I received from the Triumvirate with nearly everything I’ve done during my professional life. Becoming the RMN music critic in that year led to diminished performing activities for me over the next thirty-four years (1965–1999). Also, only two years after I became employed by the RMN, I gave up a fellowship and dropped out of the CU doctoral program in mid-1967. My mother’s death in the spring of that year made it very clear to me that life itself is an uncertain proposition. Once I realized the full extent of this fact, I quickly came to the conclusion that I was already contributing

more to the art of music as an educator and writer than I ever would as a composer and so I never glanced back regretfully after saying goodbye to the incomplete doctorate.

In 1967, after having reviewed numerous rock concerts (among many other genres) for two years for the RMN, I used my perceptive ears in analyzing many pieces of recorded rock music. Then I wrote a series of RMN Sunday columns that described some of the, to me, extremely interesting technical facets of the music as well as the historic sources from which they were derived. Among other things, these facets included harmonic and melodic modalism, unique rhythmic devices, and intriguing formal structures. That same summer, the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) held a remarkable, eleven-day symposium in Tanglewood, Massachusetts, that brought many music educators face-to-face with major personages in other fields of education, philosophy, sociology, etc. The net result was that the music educators were urged to come to grips with modern music and recognize that rock/pop music was not only here to stay but it was also an important cultural and social force to be reckoned with. The educators were also urged to bring this music into their classrooms for study, in and of itself, and for serving as a platform for guiding their students beyond this music they already loved into all the other areas of music including, especially, so-called classical music.

The late Joanne Baird, president of the Colorado Music Educators Association at the time, sent copies of my columns concerning the Tanglewood Symposium as well an earlier mentioned set of my columns concerning rock music to the MENC headquarters in Washington, D.C. The columns were forwarded to Charles Fowler, a forward-looking champion of contemporary musical genres and the editor of the *Music Educators Journal* (MENC's official magazine). He contacted me, and I became a writer for the *Journal* throughout the 1970s. In 1969, he invited me to visit and write about a six-week "Youth Music Project" in Madison, Wisconsin. After only three days, I became quite disillusioned with the project because none of the invited "experts" were focusing on rock music itself—all the discussions flitted around the perimeters: the social issues, the lyrics of the songs, the poor musicianship of the performers, etc. Many of the music educators showed arrogant disdain for the music being played by the youths who had been invited to perform. On the final day of the project, I was invited to speak during the closing session. Instead of focusing on the topic chosen for me, I used top-of-the-head, non-scholarly language as I blurted out descriptions of as many of rock's musical attributes that I could describe in my allotted five minutes. After a brief moment of stunned silence, a huge cheer went up as the entire audience jumped to its collective feet, and its collective arms went up in overhead applause. None of this would have happened had I not received my education via the Triumvirate and others, and had I not been involved in such a wide variety of musical endeavors.

My extemporaneous speech had been recorded, and it was published in the November 1969 issue of the *Journal*. As a result of this miniscule event in Madison, my life was changed significantly. I was booked solidly through-

out every summer for eleven years (1970–1981) in colleges, universities, conservatories, and other institutions in many areas of the United States to present one- and two-week workshops to music educators concerning methods for using pop and rock music to teach the fundamentals of music: melody, rhythm, harmony, and form. These were the most pleasurable and rewarding experiences of my lifetime teaching endeavors because nearly all these educators were extremely appreciative of receiving information and developing practical classroom skills that had not been taught to them during any of their formal education.

Directly related to these activities, I was invited by the United States Information Agency in 1971 to create, produce, and present educational multimedia events involving rock, jazz, and electronic music in various cities in Europe and Japan. (I had studied and been involved with electronic and computer music at CU for several years during the 1960s under the tutelage of Dr. Philip Batstone.) In addition, from 1971 through 1978, I performed more than 250 electronic-music “informances” as a partner in a duo known as the Denver Electronic Music Circus. Most of our presentations were sponsored by Young Audiences, Inc., in many public schools in the Denver-Boulder area.

Also in the 1970s, I was invited by the Follett Publishing Company to co-author *The World of Popular Music: Rock* as well as *The World of Popular Music: Folk and Country*, two of Follett’s four educational packages designed for elementary through high school students and published in 1975. Four long-playing records were included in each package; many of the tracks were musical examples I had composed and recorded with a Denver studio group specifically to illustrate the concepts discussed in the texts. Had I not reviewed country, folk, and rock concerts during the 1960s and 1970s, and thereby been forced to make in-depth studies of those genres, I would never have been guided into any of these projects.

Throughout every year in the 1970s, I was invited to participate as a lecturer, panel member, symposium speaker, interviewer or interviewee, electronic-music composer/performer/teacher or what-have-you at numerous educational institutions, music educators’ organizations, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Symphony guilds and other organizations in various cities were especially keen for an informance I developed and presented numerous times. Beyond that, I was requested several times to appear as an “expert witness” in court hearings in Denver concerning my opinions as to the type of music performed by touring musicians: Bob Dylan, John Denver, Sly & the Family Stone, and others. The city fathers needed to know whether the music of any of these performers was going to exceed the limits of the city’s sound-amplitude ordinances. (Bob and John: probably “no;” Sly: probably “yes.”) Once again: Could any of this have been achieved without perceptive ears?

At the beginning of this essay, I promised to describe a vivid memory regarding Jean Berger. In June 1971, Jean telephoned me from Colorado Women’s College (CWC) in Denver where he was chair of the music department. At the time, I was completing my tenth year as a TA/

instructor in the College of Music at CU. He asked if I was interested in joining the music faculty at CWC as an assistant professor teaching music theory and related subjects. I told him I needed time to catch my breath and think about it. Approximately 3.2 seconds later, I replied with a hearty, "Yes!"

About five weeks after I began teaching at CWC in September, Jean asked me to come into his office. After shutting the door and offering me a chair, he said, "Tommy," (nobody but Jean called me Tommy by that time in my life; I was 40, he was 62). "Tommy, every September when the leaves change color and begin to fall, the only thing I can think about is sitting at an outdoor cafe in Basel and having a glass of wine. Yesterday, I finally made the decision that this would be my final semester in academia. This morning, I resigned from CWC. I recommended to Dr. Kenny (Dumont Kenny, CWC president at the time) that he appoint you as chair of the music department." I nearly fell out of my chair.

Dumbfounded, I replied, "Jean! I've been here less than two months, and I'm only an assistant professor. There are a couple of music professors who've been here at least twenty years, and they're full professors. Why me?" After explaining why he and Dr. Kenny had chosen to bypass all of the music faculty members, he said that Dumont had concurred with him, and that, if I agreed, the appointment would be made.

Even more incredulous, I said, "Jean, I've never done anything like this. I have NO idea how to chair a department." He asked, "Do you want to know how I run this department?" He continued, "Come over here." I followed him to the corner of his office where he had a battered olive-green, five-drawer filing cabinet. Very slowly, almost ceremoniously, he opened the top drawer. I looked in. It was empty. He closed it without saying a word. Then, with the same dramatic flair, he opened the drawer below. (The mood was as if a composer had written "mysterioso" in the score.) That drawer, too, was empty. After closing it in the same manner and maintaining "silencio," he proceeded to open and close the remaining three drawers with absolutely no increase in tempo or change of timbre. The entire passage took at least five minutes to perform—approximately one minute per drawer. When the performance was completed, Jean rose to his full height (maybe 5'5"), looked straight up into my eyes and said VERY SERIOUSLY, "Tommy, this is how I run the department. You can do that."

Within three months, Jean had joined the ranks of the worldwide jet-set conductors, and I had moved into his office. Nine and a half years later, after the number of music majors had increased from eleven to forty-five, there were two olive-green and one gray five-drawer filing cabinets in my office. All fifteen drawers were bulging with the documents I had accumulated during that near-decade.

The fourfold increase in music majors was the direct result of my having developed a music-industry major at CWC in the spring of 1972 that, once launched in the fall, proved to be quite successful. Both Jean and Cecil had given me solid encouragement in this endeavor. It was a program in which the students blended essential business courses with nearly all of the tradi-

tionally required music-major courses during a period of five years. Although not all the students who graduated from the program acquired jobs in the music industry, *every* young woman who wanted a job was offered, in fact, a far better corporate or business opportunity than she would have received if she had graduated with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in music.

The CWC administration and Board of Trustees were delighted with the program. Most of the traditional liberal-arts faculty members were not. During the following nine years, they moved very slowly in making any practical curriculum changes even though student enrollment was plummeting between 1973 and 1981. As a result, increasing numbers of professors, even those who were tenured, were phased out each year. Part-time instructors and adjuncts replaced the traditional, entrenched faculty. In November 1981, the trustees pulled the plug, and CWC died.

Although I had been one of the two remaining tenured professors, I had resigned two months previously after Soundstream, Inc., the pioneering company in digital recording, had hired me as a digital editor. Apparently, among the four or five *digital* music editors who existed worldwide in this entirely new field (all in Salt Lake City where the company was located), none had experienced the intensive music education that I had received during my undergraduate and graduate years at CU, none had any background as music educators, none had 35 years as a professional music performer, and none had attained my age of 50. In fact, all were young, brilliant computer geeks, and some performed in rock and roll or pop music groups. Two or three had experience in electronic music because they had studied with composer Vladimir Ussachevsky at the University of Utah. As I said above, I had been involved in electronic and computer music at CU, and I had my Denver Electronic Music Circus experience under my belt.

I was hired at the completion of my Soundstream interview. Two months later, after I completed training as a digital music editor, I was transferred to the new Soundstream studio on the Paramount Film Studios lot in Hollywood. After becoming the general manager of Soundstream in 1984, I moved on to New York City in 1985 when a Soundstream studio was built into the RCA Studios at Times Square on 44th Street. Once again, for me, the Effinger-Berger-Crumb Triumvirate had truly triumphed!

GE acquired the RCA Corporation in 1986, and RCA Records was sold to the Bertelsmann Music Group in Germany in 1988. The former RCA Studios became the BMG/RCA Studios and, in 1992, moved one block north to 45th and Broadway at Times Square where the brand-new Bertelsmann Building was located. From 1985 until 1992, I was involved mostly in the digital editing of new classical recordings. My job as an editor was to plumb the depths of the highly sophisticated Soundstream software to create, mold, and manipulate every individual digital splice so that the listener was totally unaware that it existed. When I had joined Soundstream in 1981, the total number of edits (“splices,” a term carried-over from tape editing) on a two-sided long-playing record was perhaps twenty-five per side. (Commercial CDs weren’t available at that time). Seven years later (1988), I edited a CD in

which I had to make more than 1,000 splices! One well-known writer, in a review of this solo performance stated, “Midori is meltingly poetic, shaping every phrase with exquisite care and awesome atmosphere.” Another wrote, “[this performance] is notable for the cleanliness of technique, strongly projected tone, and high musical values.” I don’t deny that it *became* a fine performance, but the producer and I definitely pulled the wool over quite a few ears. The CD was a best seller for the artist.

Soon after I arrived at RCA’s Manhattan Studios in 1985, numerous classical record producers who had previously flown to Salt Lake City or Los Angeles to preside over their editing projects, realized that they didn’t have to baby-sit me while I edited their recordings. Thereafter, they’d send the session tapes to me along with the project scores marked with the desired splice locations. When I completed the editing, I sent them a cassette of the results. (Recordable CDs weren’t available until the early 1990s.) If necessary, they’d call and inform me of the splices they could hear. I’d repair the splices, record a master digital tape, send it to them, and move on to the next project. (Actually, it was never that simple; but that was the net result.)

Once, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, for whom I had edited several classical CDs, came to the RCA Soundstream studio because he wanted to be present while I edited the cadenza in one of his concerto recordings. The score was *loaded* with splices in the cadenza—sometimes only one note per splice! After that session, he always referred to me as the “Splice King” and the “Splice Doctor.”

When BMG moved to the Bertelsmann Building in 1992, the hardware portions of the Soundstream system were so old and irreparable that resurmounting the system in the new studios wasn’t feasible. Although I worked on many projects simultaneously, I spent nearly two years in the early 1990s remastering most of the recordings made by the “Violinist of the Century,” Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987). The entire RCA Heifetz Collection spans 65 CDs. I earned a Grammy with this collection. Similarly, I remastered most of the recordings made between 1928 and 1976 by pianist Arthur Rubinstein (1887–1983). This 96-CD, historical collection was nominated for a Grammy, but it lost to another worthy nominee, Louis Armstrong.

All in all, I completed more than 1,000 projects during my seventeen-year career in the recording industry (1981–1998). Some of the projects were as mundane as copying a master tape for another engineer, but most were of the variety described above. I was extremely fortunate to have been able to edit new recordings of many of the late-20th-century’s classical artists and ensembles, Broadway shows (*Follies*, *Candide*, etc.), and jazz artists/groups (Brubeck and Shearing to name only two). In addition, I remastered the recordings of countless earlier artists/ensembles: pianists (Horowitz et al.); Toscanini, Munch, Koussevitsky, and numerous other conductors; top-tier orchestras, operas, and chamber ensembles; both opera and pop singers (Enrico Caruso, Jussi Björling, Leontyne Price, Jan Peerce, Frank Sinatra, and Dick Haymes, among others); jazz bands (Herman, Dorsey brothers, Shaw, Miller, et al.); pop and rock performers—Presley, Denver, Fleetwood Mac, and many more. Without perceptive ears and a

Triumvirate-spawned knowledge-bank nestled between those ears, none of the above would have happened.

After leaving BMG/RCA in September 1998 and Manhattan the following year, I “retired” to my favorite area of Colorado, its southwest, Four Corners region. In Durango, I immediately became involved in playing pseudo-jazz piano as a soloist, singer-accompanist, and group member or leader. I’ve presented nearly two-dozen lectures concerning a variety of musical topics at Fort Lewis College and served on the boards of various college and local arts organizations. For three years (2003–2005), I wrote the program notes, as well as produced, co-recorded, and edited a CD for Durango’s Music in the Mountains Summer Festival. For the past eight years, I’ve played solo piano once weekly from May to September on the outdoor patio of Durango’s delightful Cyprus Café, and for nearly two years, I’ve played solo piano from one to four nights every week of the year at Durango’s most elegant restaurant, the Mahogany Grille, in the famed Strater Hotel. My goal is to continue performing until I finally croak and fall off of my piano bench.

This morning, 27 September 2009, during the approximately 440th live broadcast of my three-hour *Sunday Morning Mostly Classical Music Program* on KDUR in Durango (2001–present), I played eight recorded tracks of Jean Berger’s choral compositions. Unbeknownst to my radio audience, I rejoiced in their beauty, and, at the same time, cried in remembrance. The generous gifts that I received from Jean Berger, Cecil Effinger, George Crumb (and, of course, many others)—their wisdom, kindness, nurturing, patience, and prodding—paved the way for the incredibly fulfilling career that I’ve experienced. All three were gentlemen and gentle men. Bravissimo to all three of you, and a humbly reverent thank you from every cell of my heart.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Linda Laird Giedl received a bachelor's degree with honors in music history and literature from the University of Colorado in 1964. Her faculty advisor Jean Berger remained her friend—despite wide geographical separation—until his death in 2002. After receiving a master's degree in voice performance from Northwestern University, she went on to pursue a 27-year career in writing, editing, and event coordination at The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in its Boston world headquarters, where among other roles, she served as project manager for a revision of the *Christian Science Hymnal*. She was active with The Hymn Society and wrote for its quarterly journal, *The Hymn*, as well as *The Christian Science Monitor*. During her time in Boston, she performed as a choral and church musician with a long list of world-renowned conductors and organizations. Since returning to Colorado, Giedl has served on the boards of St. Martin's Chamber Choir (2005–07) and Vera Scammon's S.O.S. International Vocal Competition (2003–04) and continues to volunteer in Denver's service and arts communities.

Carol A. Hess is a professor of musicology at Michigan State University. Her research explores the music of the Americas and of Spain; she has also published on Brahms. Her books include *Enrique Granados: A Bio-Bibliography* (1991) and *Manuel de Falla and Modernism in Spain, 1898–1936* (2001), which received several prizes including the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award (2002). In 2005, Oxford University Press published her *Sacred Passions: The Life and Music of Manuel de Falla*. The recipient of several teaching awards, Hess has twice been a Fulbright Lecturer, first in Spain (1998) and then in Argentina (2005). She is on the Board of the Society for American Music and is presently completing a book on Pan Americanism and music during the first half of the twentieth century.

Tom MacCluskey grew up in Boulder and received a BMus degree in composition from the University of Colorado in 1953. He served in the armed forces and then returned to the university, where he met and studied privately with Jean Berger. From 1965 to 1973 he taught and wrote music reviews for the *Rocky Mountain News*, while earning a national reputation as a performer lecturer on rock and popular music for high school and college students. He chaired the music department of Colorado Women's College, in Denver, from 1971 to 1981. With the closing of CWC, he left academia to try his hand in the booming digital record production business. He moved to New York City in 1985, continued his career with BMG/RCA Studios, and remained in the industry until 1998. Although nominally retired to southeastern Colorado, MacCluskey still performs regularly on the piano and prepares three-hour Sunday morning classical music programs, broadcasted each week on KDUR in Durango.

Order Form

Back Issues of *American Music Research Center Journal*

Quantities are limited, so order today!

Additional copies of the *Journal* are available for purchase at the following rates:

Domestic: \$25 per copy
Foreign: \$28 per copy

Please indicate the number of copies and check domestic or foreign rate:

	Quantity	Domestic	Foreign
Volume 17, 2009:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 16, 2007:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 15, 2005:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 14, 2004:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 13, 2003:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 12, 2002:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 11, 2001:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 10, 2000:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 8/9, 1998–99:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 7, 1997:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 6, 1996:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 5, 1995:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 4, 1994:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 3, 1993: (photocopy only)	_____	_____	_____
Volume 2, 1992:	_____	_____	_____
Volume 1, 1991:	_____	_____	_____

TOTAL COPIES ORDERED _____

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make checks payable to American Music Research Center and send your completed order and payment to:

American Music Research Center
301 UCB
Boulder, CO 80309-0301