

and the photos reproduced in her memoir verify that "Gigi Foster" really did pose nude. Her fear of pregnancy and pressure from her mother led her to push that career aside. What's more, she had begun to go to clubs with gay friends, where she met some lesbians, and her object of sexual desire shifted.

Directionless, lacking any adult role models but having a seemingly endless supply of pluck, luck, and brains, she met a psychologist who got her to return to school. At Hollywood High School she won acting awards and was for a short time a teenager again. On a whim, while a senior, she married a Jewish doctor—well, a child psychologist, who just happened to be gay. An alcoholic given to horrible temper tantrums, he soon abandoned her. Amazingly enough, she managed to graduate from UC Berkeley as an English literature major while working on-and-off at a strip club in San Francisco and while enmeshed in a difficult relationship with a troubled young woman. As a grad student at UCLA, where she would eventually get a doctorate in English, she survived as a teaching assistant. As she got older her relationships became less troubled, and she formed a stable, loving relationship with the improbably nicknamed Binky. Professional circumstances caused them to drift apart, as Faderman decided to remain at her first teaching job at Fresno State. There she would rapidly climb the academic hier-

archy despite the barriers faced by women in those days.

By the time Faderman met Phyllis Irwin, who would become her life partner, she was in her early thirties. Their son Avrom was born in the early 1970's, long before artificial insemination was called "alternative insemination" or Heather had two mommies. Faderman never came out in so many words to her mother and aunt, though the latter was shrewd enough to figure it out, while her mother, who died in the late 1970's, was in her own world and would not have understood.

Faderman spends relatively little time discussing her work, including her sometimes controversial theories about love between women in the past. Suffice it to say that she's a self-proclaimed social constructionist who believes that human sexuality is strongly shaped by cultural factors and that, if anything is innate, it's a general capacity for bisexuality.

Some of the dialogue in the book is undoubtedly reconstructed, a technique to which some might object, and a few of the scenes set in lesbian bars come off as slightly improbable—but who's to say it didn't all happen? But *Naked in the Promised Land* is one compulsively readable

memoir, a first-rate achievement by a fine writer whose life, from inauspicious beginnings, has been a fulfillment of the American Dream. ■



## A Musical Prodigy Who Landed in Jail

**H**ENRY COWELL, an American composer born in 1897, was a maverick in both his personal life and his musical compositions. In this first full-length biography of Cowell, Michael Hicks, a professor of music at Brigham Young, reveals why it took so long for such a biography to be written.

Cowell was not a universally appreciated composer. Many critics found fault with his music and satirized his playing style. During a concert in Leipzig, Hicks tells us, "a brawl broke out on stage, during which Cowell continued playing, even though people were throwing programs and books at him." In Russia, however, local conservatory students greeted him with adulation. Wrote Cowell: "After I played my first number for them, there rose from the hall an indescribable roaring and bellowing, like Niagara Falls and a touchdown

THOM NICKELS

**Henry Cowell, Bohemian**

by Michael Hicks

University of Illinois Press

240 pages, \$29.95

at a football game combined." Cowell had a habit of playing the piano with his fists; critics said that this created the look of a madman working himself up into a frenzy. His music, which covered a wide range of styles, was compared by some critics to marching band hymns or to the disconnected tone clusters of avant-garde music. When Cowell was 22, a major New York newspaper devoted sixteen paragraphs to extolling his musical virtues, calling him "the coming musician of America."

Cowell's maverick side first acted up when he was five years old. At that time he insisted that his violin teacher stop talking over his rehearsal. The upset teacher sent the boy packing and forbade him to return. His parents, Clarissa and Harry, were bohemian writers who socialized with philosophers, poets, and artists, but were, in Hicks's words, "cheerfully oblivious to the impracticality of making a living from writing." But bohemianism had its downside. Clarissa chose to raise her son "scientifically," refusing to hold or cuddle him as an infant. Clarissa even wrote

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that she'd leave the boy "in the middle of a big bed, like a rose in the desert." To mimic maternal warmth, hot irons were placed around Cowell until a neighbor protested and begged Clarissa to throw out her "scientific" books and raise the boy naturally.

As a boy Cowell suffered from what was then called St. Vitus dance, no doubt the origin of his unique piano playing style. "The disease was characterized by persistent tics and spasms in his extremities, especially the so-called 'milkmaid's grip'—the uncontrollable drawing of the hands into fists." He was mostly home-schooled and was a voracious reader. He studied the stories of operas and he learned the names of composers and librettists. Cowell also had the habit of rehearsing compositions he had heard at concerts, playing them over in his mind as he went about his day. This training, Cowell wrote, enabled "sounds to leap unexpectedly into my mind—original melodies and complete harmonies, such as I could not conjure forth at will."

At fourteen he started his own business, hiking fourteen miles a day into the Redwood City, California, hills to dig up huge ferns to sell for a few dollars. Stanford psychologist Lewis Terman, who met Cowell during this period, said that he considered Cowell "one of the greatest geniuses he had met," despite the fact that the young composer could not spell or do arithmetic. Terman wrote that Cowell at twelve wore clothes that were ragged and ill-fitting, and that his hair hid his ears and straggled down to his shoulders while his face and shoulders twitched occasionally with choreic spasms. As a young music student, Cowell didn't fare much better, as his complete lack of personal hygiene caused other students to avoid him.

In the 1920's he became engaged to Edna Smith. Describing that time, Cowell wrote that he longed to discover the "companionship of any girl that I considered decent." But the marriage was not to be. While driving across a railroad track to pick wildflowers, Edna and her sister were struck and killed by a train. When Edna's family awarded Cowell part of Edna's inheritance and settlement money, Cowell launched a European tour and cultivated relationships with younger men.

By now he had achieved what Hicks calls a "freakish notoriety" and amassed "a scrapbook full of awestruck reviews." Only his friends were in attendance for his debut at Carnegie Hall. But life changed again for Cowell in 1931 when he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to study non-Western music in Berlin. He later founded a magazine, *New Music Quarterly*, which published experimental scores, and joined the quasi-Marxist Composers Collective of New York. In one of his articles, Cowell condemned conductors, Broadway, big business, and society women.

In 1936 his world crashed when he was arrested on a morals charge. In Menlo Park, California, he had seduced a number of underage boys, and had a large stockpile of photographs of them for the police to confiscate as evidence. Cowell chose not to fight the charge but wrote a letter begging for mercy, claiming that he was not exclusively gay but was in fact engaged to be married. But he was sentenced to San Quentin for a period of one to fifteen years. Cowell's musical reputation suffered. Charles Ives cut off relations with him and later condemned his brand of "sissy music," saying to his wife: "I thought Henry was a man but he's nothing but a g—d—sap!" But some friends rallied to his support. In prison, Cowell organized a chorus and marching band, wrote scores of compositions, and re-ordered his life so as to win an early parole.

Hicks reproduces a number of Cowell's scores and takes pains to explain the composer's tone clusters and harmonies, a diversion that musicians might appreciate but which will be lost on the lay reader. Hicks spells out the facts of Cowell's life—where he played or when he wrote a certain piece—but only skims the surface of Cowell's personal life. As a result, the heart and soul of Cowell remains a mystery. Cowell never had a mature adult gay relationship; gayness for him was blowing as many boys as possible. The book ends after his second engagement, which prompted Ives to renew their friendship. But Hicks never tells us what happened after the marriage, whether Cowell remained true to his "decent cover," or whether he ran aground again on the shores of that real and dangerous pleasure. ■■■

## Blood of an Englishman

**I**N 1984, soon after Clive Barker's popular "Books of Blood" series had hit the U.S., Stephen King darkly foresaw the day when he would have to abdicate his throne atop the *Times* bestseller list, and knighted the young Barker as his successor, telling that year's World Fantasy Convention: "I have seen the future of horror, and its name is Clive Barker." And so, the latter has already, diabolically, taken his place. Perhaps because Barker is only fifty, Doug E. Winter takes the opportunity to give his copious output a scholarly examination vis-à-vis his singularly monstrous talent as the maestro of horror fantasy.

Winter's biography is "authorized"—a terrain that's really as dangerous as "unauthorized," especially when the subject is still

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**Clive Barker: The Dark Fantastic:  
The Authorized Biography**

by Doug E. Winter

HarperCollins. 671 pages, \$34.95

living. Winter's book is a somewhat fawning chronicle of a successful writer's life at the height of his success, and Barker's own hand in this enterprise is apparent, as he's given whole pages to speak for himself on his life and career. Barker, after all, is nothing if not media savvy. But he's also quite a Renaissance man—and something of a gay icon, at least in the UK, though he tries to escape any brand of gay typecasting. Just last year his image appeared as the film-noirish, earringed, cigar-smoking coverboy on his own darkly satiric Hollywood ghost novel, *Coldheart Canyon*, which received some of his best reviews to date.

One measure of a good biography is how skillfully the subject's early background is presented in relation to the development of his or her work, and here Winter unfolds Barker's upbringing in Liverpool, England, with storybook intrigue. Winter paints the port town as a place of such mysticism that it's easy to see how it

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