

concerned with larger issues—and the question of “collaborationist” artists is one of them. Esplá’s case, for example, is controversial and eludes easy explanations. He was neither a Nazi nor a Nazi sympathizer, but he certainly worked for what the Belgians considered the “stolen *Le soir*.” After the liberation, all writers for the “stolen” paper were banned from publishing and, although his boss at *Le soir* was sentenced to death, Esplá was never charged with any wrongdoing. As was the case with many artists confronted with the moral dilemma of cooperating (though never collaborating) with the Nazis, Esplá put his financial survival and the needs of his family first. It is certainly a great irony for a man who had fled Franco’s regime.

This study also allows a glimpse into another issue of interest to cultural historians of Spanish music, namely the Spanish exile in Brussels. Thus, one learns a great deal about major and minor figures of the Spanish circles in Brussels at the time, including Eduardo del Pueyo, Néstor Rey de la Torre, La Argentina, Joaquín Nin, Luis Galve, and Pérez-Fernández, the author’s guitar teacher mentioned earlier. Belgian intellectuals, including the controversial Paul de Man, also make brief cameos in the book.

In sum, one feels grateful that someone has taken up the task of debunking, one brick at a time, the vast amount of misinformation that exists about Esplá. De Kloe is a thorough, meticulous scholar whose work shows a masterly command of Spanish music history and its sources. It is a great pity that neither *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove, 2001) nor the *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999–), have yet incorporated his findings. The *New Grove* has promised to consider the new information, but the editors of the *Diccionario* have not yet responded.

ANTONI PIZÀ

*Graduate Center, City University of New York*

**Henry Cowell, Bohemian.** By Michael Hicks. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. [ix, 204 p. ISBN 0252027515. \$29.95.] Illustrations, bibliography, index.

Henry Cowell (1897–1965) remains both one of the most renowned and enigmatic of American composers. His reputation as an avant-garde performer, inventor of extended techniques, theoretician, and multiculturalist suggests several personalities from which it is hard even now to discern an obvious unity. Add to this an extraordinary prolificity (to the point that archivists are still trying to determine a definitive works list), and it becomes clear why Cowell remains something of a historical chimera. Michael Hicks, who teaches at Brigham Young University, presents what is billed as the “first full-length study” of the composer, although his book is far more controversial, problematic, and incomplete than that description might suggest. Before dealing with my reservations, however, let me examine what Hicks does accomplish, at times brilliantly.

Hicks’s thesis is that Cowell, who presented himself as a homegrown prodigy, a sort of “wild first fruit” of native American genius, was in fact the product of a cultural environment that almost guaranteed his emergence. According to Hicks, Cowell’s career and aesthetic stance was the natural result of growing up in early-twentieth-century California, and in particular the Bohemian community of the Bay Area. He benefitted from a series of devoted supporters and patrons, ranging from his literarily ambitious mother Clarissa, to Ellen Veblen (the wife of Thorstein), the Stanford English professor Samuel Seward, the Anglo-American poet and mystic John Varian, and the progressive Berkeley music theorist and composer Charles Seeger. This world has a very familiar feel to the contemporary reader. It is full of artists, poets, professors, mystics, and the communes and cults thereof. Indeed, Hicks drives the point home by describing Cowell’s music for a play by John Varian in an open-air performance for his Temple of the People.

The pageant was produced in a field near the beach, the makeshift stage lit by automobile headlamps, covered with cellophane. An anonymous writer described the spectacle [as] “. . . rather queer music, a piano out of doors, played boldly and freely, the high cry of a man’s dramatic tenor, then a crash of chorus . . . we came upon the extensive grounds of an old-fashioned California mansion,

where some hundreds of people sat in utter silence watching what went forward on a two acre out-door stage, the audience in the star-lit dark, the stage expanding and contracting, appearing and disappearing in the various moods of flames and lights cleverly manipulated." The story being enacted in all this, the writer explained, was "nothing less than the story at once of the creation of the Universe out of chaos and the parallel evolution of the human soul, a theme vast enough for the New Age being born in bloody travail . . ." (p. 86)

To underscore the fact that nothing really changes: In the book's central portfolio of photographs, there is a portrait of Cowell at age sixteen. A few years ago a friend had given me this picture and I have it on my office door, although I feared its provenance (the Internet) would ultimately render it a hoax. Apparently not. There is Cowell sitting at an upright piano, with long unkempt blond locks and a slightly spacey look, resembling as much as anyone Kurt Cobain or Beck; in short, a dead ringer for any one of the myriad young composers and creative musicians one encounters in America today.

One of the things this work conveys superbly is just what an original sensational presence the young Cowell must have been. Simultaneously shy and artistically arrogant, living in genteel poverty with his mother in a cabin near Palo Alto, writing reams of undisciplined but seemingly unprecedented piano works, most of them gifts for friends or for those he simply encountered, he comes off very much as an artistic "wild child." (Frequent references to his lack of physical hygiene reinforce that impression.) It is easy to see how the Bay Area progressive community would have adopted him as a sort of musical mascot, and seen him as a new type of American musician, peculiarly Californian, in contrast to the Eurocentric Northeast (again, *plus ça change* . . .).

Hicks also does an excellent job of untangling the sequence of Cowell's early compositions and teases out their underlying aesthetic and technical assumptions. At the same time, he also begins what is to become a recurrent theme of the book, that the majority of the innovations we associate with Cowell were in fact the ideas of others.

Hence, the idea of extended piano techniques came from John Varian; cluster writing from the composer's encounter in New York with the new music daredevil Leo Ornstein; and the idea of the intersection between the harmonic series and rhythmic structure outlined in *New Musical Resources* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930; reprint, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) from his studies with Seeger.

It is at this point that for several reasons the book becomes more problematic. The first is that it appears increasingly that Hicks is marshalling evidence to show that Cowell was in fact something of a charlatan, a technically deficient composer who masked his weakness by appropriating other's concepts, never developing a fully formed musical technique or artistic voice. Early in the book, Hicks describes a juvenile work in terms that prefigure this ultimate judgment:

*Flashes of Hell Fire* clearly aspires to a kind of flashy nineteenth-century virtuosity. . . . But its seemingly perpetual nondescript harmony and seemingly purposeless motion foreshadows much of Cowell's writing over a lifetime. Although many of its predilections would be trained out of him, this early piece harbors traits that would characterize much of his later and more celebrated music: the musical restlessness of youth in the form of velocity without direction and activity without structure. (p. 36)

This judgmental filter combines with the other problematic aspect of the book: it is in fact a detailed biography of only the first half of Cowell's life even though it cursorily covers the remainder in the last chapter. Hicks explains that a significant reason for this is practical. The composer's personal papers were unavailable for examination during the book's writing, only to be unexpectedly released to scholars in 2000, too late to be a factor in Hicks's writing process. In his introduction he states that the subsequent study of these documents "usually confirmed, sometimes contradicted, and always deepened my understanding of Cowell's Bohemian career" (p. 6). Overall though, the reader has to take this on faith, since after the early 1920s, when Cowell moved permanently to New York, the book takes on a hurried

tone. (For example, one leaves the work generally aware of a host of solo piano works as the core of Cowell's oeuvre, but little else. How is this reconciled with the fact that he wrote some twenty symphonies, qualifying him as a sort of American Nicolay Miaskovsky?) Hicks rightly confronts the whole tragic story of Cowell's conviction for homosexuality and incarceration in San Quentin, but one feels that the ambiguities and complexities of the case are only suggested and not fully explained. It seems clear that Cowell was bisexual, but the circumstances of his arrest suggest an inclination to pederasty as well. The first, nowadays, has gained a certain acceptance, with the latter still beyond the pale. How do these tendencies play out in Cowell's life? There may be no satisfactory answer for the morality of one age viewing another, but Hicks's only major point from this seems to be that Cowell furiously backpedaled on all levels, becoming far more culturally conservative after his release so as to fit in with the cultural establishment. The suggestion is that ultimately his earlier embrace of various radicalisms and bohemianism was hypocritical.

I agree that Cowell is still a difficult character in American music. His output is both prolific and uneven. Hicks's analysis certainly gives one pause, somewhat like a muckraking television documentary leaves one with a sour taste for a former hero. But because, as he admits, Hicks presents less than a full picture of the composer's life, his tone seems most intent on debunking his subject, no matter what protestations of admiration intermittently appear. What we do not get from the book is an understanding of why it was that so many people obviously loved and supported Cowell, and so many throughout his career saw him as a major force in American music. In the end, Hicks's book is an invaluable contribution to Cowell scholarship, and it should be read by everyone with an interest in the composer, although that recommendation comes with a warning. The author has a bias, and his judgments will have to await a full-scale biography before they can be fully tested and their truth weighed.

ROBERT CARL  
*University of Hartford*

**Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography.** By Derek C. Hulme. 3d ed. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002. [xvi, 701 p. ISBN 0-8108-4432-X. \$85.] Indexes.

From its initial appearance in 1982 (private publication in Scotland) to its second edition in 1991 (Oxford's Clarendon Press) and its present incarnation, Derek Hulme's catalog has come a long way. The new edition exceeds the previous one by more than two hundred pages. Happily, it is sturdier than its predecessor, and its sewn binding and page headers make it considerably easier to peruse. It is also less expensive. The format, however, has remained basically the same from the outset: a chronological listing of works, bibliography, and several appendices and indexes of names and of compositions. The discography remains the strongest feature of Hulme's catalog. The huge increase in recordings released since the previous edition accounts for the lion's share of its expanded size. It is a fair indication of the explosion in popularity enjoyed by the composer's music.

This has always been a very personal enterprise. Hulme devised his own system of "Sans op." designations for the works without opus numbers. Resisting common usage, he even devised his own set of abbreviations. In this post-Soviet edition of the catalog he has managed to invent a new institution, the "Central State Archives of Literature and Art of the CIS (formerly USSR), Moscow" (p. xv). The institution he means is now generally known as the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGAL), but he routinely misidentifies this and other post-Soviet appellations.

Inevitably, far fewer publications than recordings of Shostakovich's music have appeared since the previous edition. Here the compiler has been less successful in bringing his catalog up to date. The most active publisher has been a new one, DSCH, founded in 1993 in Moscow by the composer's widow. As Hulme notes in appendix 1 (p. 538), DSCH embarked in 1999 on the ambitious project of a *New Collected Works* in one hundred and fifty volumes, to include first publications of many works. Concurrently, however, DSCH has been actively releasing practical performing editions of the composer's music. Hulme had