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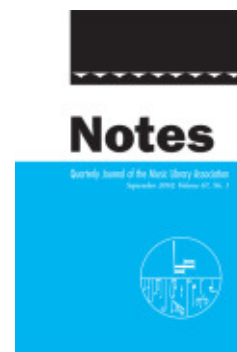
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## **"Experimentalists and Independents are Favored": John Edmunds in Conversation with Peter Yates and John Cage, 1959-61**

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# “EXPERIMENTALISTS AND INDEPENDENTS ARE FAVORED”: JOHN EDMUNDS IN CONVERSATION WITH PETER YATES AND JOHN CAGE, 1959–61

BY AMY C. BEAL



The composer John Edmunds (1913–1986) was curator of the New York Public Library Music Division’s Americana Collection at Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street for only four years.<sup>1</sup> During his brief but energetic tenure (1957–61) he corresponded regularly with Canadian-born, Los Angeles-based critic-impresario Peter Yates (1909–1976), a self-proclaimed “western representative for the Experimentalists,”<sup>2</sup> and with the soon-to-be most controversial and influential American composer of the second half of the twentieth century, John Cage (1912–1992). Simultaneously, Cage and Yates corresponded as well, often discussing topics initiated by Edmunds. Today, four archival collections—at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Music Division (hereinafter, NYPL); University of California, San Diego, Mandeville Special Collections Library (UCSD); University of California, Berkeley, Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library (UCB); and Northwestern University Music Library, Special Collections (NUML)—preserve an intact record of this three-way conversation. The Edmunds-Yates-Cage exchange is worth examining for several reasons: it sheds light on the views of a generation of musical Americans at the start of the 1960s, men between forty-six and

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1. Music Division director Carleton Sprague Smith established the Americana Section (now the American Music Collection) in 1940; historian John Tasker Howard served as its first curator 1940–56. Edmunds, after serving for four years following Howard’s tenure, resigned on 1 July 1961. Karl Kroeger, Edmunds’s immediate successor as curator of the Americana Collection, recalled that the working conditions at the Music Division were less than ideal (in terms of support in the form of either money or time for building up the collection). For accounts of the development of music in this library to about 1960, see Philip L. Miller, Frank C. Campbell, and Otto Kinkeldey, “How the Music Division of the New York Public Library Grew—A Memoire,” part 1: *1895–1959*, by Philip L. Miller, *Notes* 35, no. 3 (March 1979): 537–55; and John Shepard, “The Legacy of Carleton Sprague Smith: Pan-American Holdings in the Music Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts,” *Notes* 62, no. 3 (March 2006): 621–62. The Music Division moved to the new Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in 1965.

2. Letter from Yates to Cage, 21 August 1961, folder C-9, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

fifty who began careers in music before the end of World War II; it suggests the influence of a West Coast legacy in the history of American new music as perpetuated by three opinionated thinkers (all of whom had strong prewar ties to California, a place where institutions historically tended to carry less cultural weight than on the East Coast);<sup>3</sup> it documents an important publication series undertaken by the New York Public Library in the late 1950s; and it illuminates the background of one of the first major efforts toward the creation of a comprehensive recording archive of American music—a collaborative undertaking (never realized) that aroused strong opinions about the value of certain styles of American music and their institutionalization. These projects point to a number of concerns for American composers at a crucial moment for the expansion, survival, definition, preservation, and canonization of an “American experimental tradition.”

#### EDMUNDS, YATES, CAGE: OVERVIEW

John Edmunds, who was born in San Francisco and died in Berkeley, California, was primarily known as a song writer and as an editor of Elizabethan and seventeenth-century Italian songs (he composed hundreds of songs himself, and founded the Campion Society for the promotion of English song).<sup>4</sup> Alongside his creative activity, his administrative commitment took up much of his time: in 1960, aside from the formidable task of directing the Americana Section at the Music Division of the New York Public Library, he served as chairman of the board of directors for the Composers’ Forum of New York, as secretary for the Bauthier Society of New York, and as a member of the New York chapters of the Advisory Committee on Music for the Institute of International Education, and the boards for both the National Association for American Composers and Conductors, and the American Music Center. In addition, he sat on the advisory committee for the Music Library Association’s American Recordings Project (“History of American Music on Records”), which, at the time of Edmunds’s service, attempted to organize a series of recordings—at one time 100 LPs were planned—of major American composers from the Pilgrims through 1960.

3. According to Alan Rich, then music director at KPFA in Berkeley, the proponents of “unorthodox creativity” (Cowell, Harrison, etc.) were well represented—and perhaps unjustifiably so—on the West Coast by the period in question. Letter from Rich to Edmunds, 4 March 1960, folder 23, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

4. The John Edmunds Papers at UCB holds copies of a promotional flyer about Edmunds’s songs with publicity-minded assessments of the quality of those songs by Edgard Varèse, Alfred Frankenstein, Ned Rorem, Lou Harrison, Peter Yates, Ernst Bacon, and Henry Cowell (Cowell: “John Edmunds is one of the world’s best composers for solo voice”; Harrison: “In my opinion, our best song writer”; etc.).

During the period in question, Edmunds was highly productive. He worked in collaboration with his colleague Gordon Boelzner toward the publication of two volumes of “truly titillating bibliograph[ies]” (in the enthusiastic words of one reviewer) titled *Some Twentieth Century American Composers: A Selective Bibliography* (1959–60), with introductory essays by Peter Yates (volume 1) and Nicolas Slonimsky (volume 2).<sup>5</sup> (Third and fourth volumes were planned, to cover “minor” composers and “younger American composers” not included in the first two books, but these were never realized.) At the same time, as a member of the board of directors of the American Music Center in New York City, he lobbied for the establishment of a “Henry Cowell Award” or an “Ives Award” for the “most controversial composer of the year,” an annual prize of at least \$5,000 “awarded by a committee of eminent composers famous for their enterprising minds” (including Cowell, Slonimsky, Cage, Edgard Varèse, Henry Brant, and Gunther Schuller) for the purpose of honoring innovative composers, American or foreign. Edmunds’s two-fold description of the award speaks to his staunch commitment toward the establishment of a permanent place for experimental music in American cultural life. The award aimed, in his words, “first, to encourage responsible experiment in musical composition with a substantial prize; and second, to urge the musical community to come to grips with radically new music and share in the responsibility of accepting or rejecting it.”<sup>6</sup>

Edmunds also became involved in Peter Yates’s *Evenings on the Roof* radio programs in California, collecting taped recordings of composers talking about their own music for broadcast by Yates and for educational purposes at the New York Public Library and elsewhere. Finally, from 15 May until 15 July of 1960, Edmunds toured Europe under the auspices of the New York Public Library, giving a series of five one-hour lectures that would “deal only with composers of major significance or of radical interest” (Ives, Partch, Ruggles, Cage, and Varèse) collectively titled “Some Unorthodox American Composers of the Twentieth Century.”<sup>7</sup>

5. Fred Blum, review of the two volumes in *Notes* 18, no. 4 (September 1961): 585 (the volumes were published by the New York Public Library). Blum also points out that both Yates and Slonimsky use euphemistic language to distinguish truly “American” music (“continental individuality,” “creative force”) from music derivative of European idioms (“historical continuity,” “imitation”). Alfred Frankenstein also promoted the first volume, calling it an “invaluable pamphlet” in his article “American Music on the Gramophone,” *Music & Letters* 41, no. 4 (October 1960): 360–65, at 365. Slonimsky’s “Introductory Essay” for vol. 2 is reprinted in *Nicolas Slonimsky: Writings on Music*, ed. by Electra Slonimsky Yourke, vol. 3, *Music of the Modern Era*, 56–65 (New York; London: Routledge, 2005).

6. Letter from Edmunds to Henry Cowell, 24 December 1960, folder 5, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL; and letter from Edmunds to Harold Spivacke (chief of the Music Division, Library of Congress), 31 January 1961, folder 26, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

7. Letter from Edmunds to Roy Harris, 18 February 1960, folder 12, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL. In a separate document that describes these five lectures, Edmunds also lists “Some Additional Lectures on Twentieth Century American Composers,” which included Virgil Thomson, Roy Harris, Henry Cowell,

(At the time, the State Department distributed the two volumes of *Some Twentieth-Century American Composers* widely abroad.<sup>8</sup>) In addition to presenting this material in Europe, Edmunds optimistically had “every hope of getting them rebroadcast over university stations throughout America, thus stirring up the young to some of the major non-academic musical activities on the native scene today.”<sup>9</sup> Though his own music was considered “gentle, delicate, and quite conservative” (in the words of Irving Lowens), he was also lauded as “one of the most eloquent and active exponents of the avant-garde composer in our country today,” one who “champions this cause selflessly and tirelessly.”<sup>10</sup> Part of this “championing” included his growing interest in Cage’s radical ideas. In January 1961 Edmunds wrote to Cage regarding his views on noise and silence, and about the possibility of a new vocabulary for describing these elements.

An additional term I think we need would describe—or identify—the aural totality—organized and unorganized sound, tone and noise, and “silence.” Do you think that on the analogy of landscape, *soundscape* would be acceptable to cover the universe of audible events?<sup>11</sup>

In his consideration of new musical concepts like those of Cage’s, and in connection with all of his ongoing simultaneous professional activities, Edmunds continually solicited the input and feedback of many writers and composers, including Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Gilbert Chase, Nicolas Slonimsky, and—most extensively—Peter Yates.

Peter Yates and his wife, the pianist Frances Mullen, had worked tirelessly for the cause of new music in southern California since the 1930s through their *Evenings on the Roof* contemporary chamber music series.<sup>12</sup> Yates’s influence on Edmunds was considerable (the two had corresponded as early as 1952 about poetic song settings), given Yates’s strong,

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Lou Harrison (in addition to “some younger composers”: Julia Perry, Robert Evett, and Yehudi Wyner). A copy of this document is held in the Everett Helm Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University (Bloomington). Edmunds’s European tour was financed by the Martha Baird Rockefeller Aid to Music Program.

8. Letter from Edmunds to Slonimsky, 28 October 1960, folder 25, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

9. Letter from Edmunds to Roy Harris, 18 February 1960, folder 12, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

10. Newspaper article by “contributing critic” Irving Lowens, about a concert of Edmunds’s art song at the Phillips Gallery in Washington, DC; undated copy of the article (without the newspaper’s name) is held as a clipping in the John Edmunds Papers, UCB. Lowens began writing music criticism for the *Washington Star* in 1953, and was its chief critic from 1960 to 1978. See Janice E. Holly, “Irving Lowens and the *Washington Star*: The Vision, the Demise” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2007).

11. Letter from Edmunds to Cage, 6 January 1961 (emphasis Edmunds’s), John Edmunds Papers, UCB. Over a decade later, the term “soundscape” came into common usage for describing electro-acoustic composition and sonic environments, especially in the “acoustic design” work of Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933).

12. See Dorothy Lamb Crawford, *Evenings On and Off the Roof: Pioneering Concerts in Los Angeles, 1939–1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

uncompromising character as well as his proximity to contemporary music on the West Coast.<sup>13</sup> Yates's fierce loyalty toward living American composers influenced his arguments in favor of certain compositional trends, and his passion for protecting and promoting the artistic integrity of a handful of composers (in particular, his devotion to Cage and Harrison) grew stronger during this period. This allegiance—with the music makers themselves rather than with the academic commentators or institutions who profited from their creativity—made him something of an anomaly among critics. Yates insisted he was fighting *for* (not against) something—namely, for allowing the composers to speak for themselves, and (as he wrote to Edmunds in September 1959), for making the composers aware of one another as real people.<sup>14</sup> In one sense, he facilitated the preservation and continuation of a composers' network established by Ives and Cowell earlier in the century. From 1958 on, Yates's primary agenda in his writing was promoting "the American experimentalists . . . as the dominant, though still unaccepted strand of the American tradition."<sup>15</sup>

Cage and Yates had corresponded as early as 1948. By early 1953 Yates had become acquainted with Cage's music but knew little about his "present ideas" other than what he learned from Henry and Sidney Cowell, and from David Tudor, who visited Los Angeles around that time.<sup>16</sup> In August 1953, while Yates was in the early stages of trying to pinpoint a valid characterization of the "experimental tradition," Cage clarified to Yates how his music and Harry Partch's music differed. Cage pointed out that his prepared piano had little to do with concerns about pitch or frequency, but rather with attack and decay, timbre, duration, amplitude, etc.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he explained: "The path we are on is not a path, not linear, but a space extending in all directions." He added: "Because it is no longer a question of moving along stepping stones, 12 or 43 or what have you, but one can move (or just appear) to or at any point in this total space."<sup>18</sup> In response, the practical-thinking Yates remarked:

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13. Despite Yates's deep connection to contemporary music, Yates and Edmunds most likely first came into contact with one another through their mutual interest in early song.

14. "Though one might have thought otherwise, in consideration of your research and scholarly interest in older music, the truth is that you have made yourself, almost unobtrusively, which is the best way to do it, one of the most direct influences in the practical exploration, documentation, and personal coordination of American composition outside of Henry [Cowell] and Virgil [Thomson], whose work you should carry forward. You are serving what is to my mind the most significant purpose, making the composers aware of one another as real persons." Yates, in a letter to Edmunds, 12 September 1959, folder 33, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

15. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 25 April 1959, folder 32, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

16. Letter from Yates to Cage, 14 March 1953, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

17. Letter from Cage to Yates, 4 August 1953, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

18. *Ibid.*

The chief difficulty with your work as with Partch's, from my point of view, is that I can't do anything about it. You are out of reach of any performer not specially trained, and I can't afford to bring you or a trained protagonist out here to overcome this lag. Sound in space may need no excuse, but one has to know how to get there.<sup>19</sup>

Just a few years later, in May 1959, Cage complimented Yates's growing tenacity: "I am of the opinion you are clearly the One in America who writes about music."<sup>20</sup> (In December of that year, Yates announced to Cage: "John Edmunds has become your newest devotee."<sup>21</sup>) Yates was particularly struck by the recording of Cage's *Twenty-Five-Year-Retrospective Concert*, which became available soon after the 1958 event.<sup>22</sup> In December 1959 Cage wrote to Yates in response to Yates's focusing his attention on Lou Harrison, Harry Partch, and Cage himself. Cage advocated the music of other composers, including Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Christian Wolff, Richard Maxfield, Conlon Nanarrow, Gunther Schuller, Henry Brant—but also "Europeans who imbibe American actions": the British Cornelius Cardew, the Italian Sylvano Bussotti, and the Korean Nam June Paik.<sup>23</sup> In general, though they corresponded at length, Cage was uncomfortable with Yates's outspoken chauvinism.<sup>24</sup>

As Cage became involved with Edmunds and Yates and their various publishing and recording projects, he was also busy pursuing a permanent publisher (he first approached Hans W. Heinsheimer at Schirmer but was rejected; later he established a connection to Walter Hinrichsen at C. F. Peters). At the same time he was putting the finishing touches on his debut prose collection *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, which was being prepared for publication by Wesleyan University Press. It would be hard to overestimate the impact of these two events for the next few decades, since the nearly simultaneous availability of Cage's scores and his writings-to-date suddenly made a wider reception of his work more possible than ever before. In his disgruntled search for a publisher—he said he was angry not because "my work is unpublished, unperformed, etc." but

19. Letter from Yates to Cage, 8 August 1953, file C-6, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

20. Letter from Cage to Yates, 19 May 1959, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD. Around the same time, Yates appealed to Cage: "If I must fight the battle for American experimentalism, I need to be kept up to date" (Yates, in a letter to Cage, 22 May 1959).

21. Letter from Yates to Cage, 8 December 1959, file C-6, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

22. *The 25-Year Retrospective Concert of the Music of John Cage*, KO8P 1493-1498 (1958), 3 LPs; reissue, *Music of Our Century*, Wergo WER 6247-2 (1994), 3 CDs.

23. Letter from Cage to Yates, 28 December 1959, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

24. Yates himself characterized his promotion of the American experimental tradition "a chauvinistic onslaught for the Glorification of American Composers." Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 24 December 1960, folder 35, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.



because “these facts are part and parcel of the general lack of an intellectual life in the field of American music”—he also corresponded with Edmunds about the role public libraries might play in this dilemma.<sup>25</sup> Cage outlined four possible “paths” toward the publication of music by living American composers: (1) a composers’ cooperative; (2) publication outside the United States; (3) publication by an American university (Cage mentioned Wesleyan, Dartmouth, or the University of Illinois); or (4) “The free publication (or distribution) of music by the Public Libraries of this country.”<sup>26</sup> While Cage felt “very strongly the obligation to get my own music out of my hands,” he also felt that the public library option was the best solution because “this means of publication should be made known as available to any composer, regardless of his fame or quality (just as the libraries contain all the novels, good, bad, and indifferent).”<sup>27</sup> Cage’s speculations suggest how libraries might have stepped up to more vigorously support living American composers; Edmunds, for a few short years, tried to provide that support.

#### SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHIES

In early September 1959, Edmunds decided that he would avoid the “invidious distinction” between “independent or experimental” and “academic or traditional” simply by publishing two separate bibliographic volumes on American composers for the New York Public Library.<sup>28</sup> Edmunds and Yates corresponded extensively about the nature of these “selective bibliographies.” The first volume—which was made “with the purpose of bringing together in a single body separately published writings by and about a representative group of twentieth century American composers, a group that includes prominent men of various tendencies—conservative, moderate, dodecaphonic, and experimental (electronic and non-electronic)”<sup>29</sup>—was based on a list of composers that first appeared in the *Bulletin* of the New York Public Library (July/August 1959). The volume itself (compiled by Edmunds and Gordon Boelzner) included a preface by Edmunds, a fourteen-page introductory essay by Yates, and bibliographies for Henry Brant, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Charles Ives, Harry Partch, Wallingford Riegger, Carl Ruggles,

25. Letter from Cage to Yates, 28 December 1959, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

26. Letter from Cage to Edmunds, 31 December 1959, file C-6, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

27. *Ibid.*

28. “We’ll avoid the invidious distinction between Independent-or-Experimental and Academic-or-Traditional simply by calling the two [bibliographies] Vol. I and Vol. II. It took me a month to think of this ruse.” Edmunds, in a letter to Yates, 14 September 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

29. Edmunds, “Preface,” in *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 1:5.

Roger Sessions, Virgil Thomson, and Edgard Varèse (changes from the original list included the addition of Riegger and Thomson, and the removal of Samuel Barber). The second volume, published in 1960 with an introduction by Nicolas Slonimsky, carried the same title as the first, and included bibliographies for a handful of composers who tended to have stronger institutional ties than the first group: Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Marc Blitzstein, Paul Creston, Norman Dello Joio, David Diamond, Lukas Foss, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Howard Hanson, Leon Kirchner, Peter Mennin, Douglas Moore, Walter Piston, Quincy Porter, William Schuman, Randall Thompson, and Ben Weber. An appendix listed additional composers mentioned “In Standard Reference Works” but not covered in the bibliography itself (including Milton Babbitt, Paul Bowles, Morton Feldman, Percy Grainger, Bernard Herrmann, John Tasker Howard, Otto Luening, Colin McPhee, Alex North, Vincent Persichetti, Dane Rudhyar, Gunther Schuller, Charles Seeger, William Grant Still, Stefan Wolpe, and 192 others). A second appendix represented other composers “Not Listed in Standard Reference Works” (composers “roughly under thirty-five,” including Leslie Bassett, Earle Brown, Kenneth Gaburo, Salvatore Martirano, Richard Maxfield, Frederic Rzewski, Christian Wolff, and 152 others).<sup>30</sup> The bibliographies themselves covered standard reference material published between approximately 1940 and 1959. The term “selective” as used in the titles of these volumes provides a key to understanding how these men viewed the potential influence of their decisions, and the Yates-Edmunds correspondence reveals the profoundly subjective nature of that selectivity.

In August 1959 Yates wrote to Edmunds that he would be willing to write an introduction to the first volume, and that he had specific ideas about what such a text might suggest.

A job like this is an invitation to compose a classic, a paean of defiance, an American über alles, a Don't Tread On Me—the sort of thing our money magazines won't pay for. But do you want such a thing? Does the Library? Or shall I be sober and Virgilian? Is my subject American music or the composers in the book? Are you prepared to print whatever I write, or will some higher librarian gut it?<sup>31</sup>

A few days later Yates wrote again, continuing along the lines of his autonomous, confrontational stance: “If the individual appraisals are too candid, they are true to the facts, on which we must stand. This bibliog-

30. *Ibid.*, 2:5.

31. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 17 August 1959, folder 32, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

raphy is not meant to appease the influential—if anything, to upset them.”<sup>32</sup>

Edmunds informed Yates of all changes to the list of included composers. On 3 September 1959 Edmunds wrote a particularly revealing letter about the truly personal nature of his decisions, and his need to conceal his subjectivity.

I'm making two serious changes in the bibliography: omitting Barber from the separate issue and adding Virgil Thomson. You'll want to consider this structure in your introductory article. Nathan Broder asked me the other day what principle I'd followed in making the selection. It wasn't immediately easy to see why I'd omitted Piston and included the little-known Harrison, skipped Schuman and honored Partch, ditched Hanson and pulled out all available stops (not many, alas) for Nancarrow of whom even the angels have hardly heard. The answer is simple enough—but it's rude. Hanson stinks to my nostrils and Barber in his cultivated fashionable sincere way bothers me more still. Can you think of a formula for covering at least my inclusions without giving offense to able industrious and talented other persons? I don't like the notion that these are purely subjective choices and I'd hate to have to defend this list knowing how fallible my judgment it. Still one must account for [the] list like a man! *Experimentalists and independents are favored*—academics (whether or not they happen to teach) are slighted, Harris is officially in the doghouse—but he figures in the list because I think he has a certain irreducible substance.<sup>33</sup>

By September, when Yates had hastily completed a draft of his introductory essay, he and Edmunds continued to quibble at length about the place of certain composers (Yates wrote, for example: “I do not agree with the exclusion of Barber, for the reasons the writing makes clear. If you include Schuman, you can return the Introduction. Piston belongs among the academics. . . . Nancarrow should not be in; we know nothing of him”).<sup>34</sup> Yates's assessments of various composers was consistently passionate, often scathing (according to him, for instance, Henry Brant was “not a composer at all but a clever maker of titles”), and he felt the purpose of the introduction was to “rub people's noses” in their own ignorance.<sup>35</sup> Yates also assumed a prophetic stance about their work on the collection, and he urged Edmunds to take pride in their foresight, their courage, and their cultural leadership.

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32. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 29 August 1959, folder 32, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

33. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 3 September 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD. Emphasis mine.

34. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 5 September 1959, folder 33, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

35. Ibid.

It is not a list of the presently most admired, nor the best, nor anything else needed to justify it. But I'll bet you my intuition against yours that in another 20 years these are the composers who will stand out, as their predecessors Varèse and Copland stand out now against Carpenter and Deems Taylor—do you remember Carpenter and Deems Taylor! That is the reason for this list. Read the Introduction. . . . Be brave. Be calm. Be positive. Before all else be prejudiced. Let them come your way, as I have done 25 years.<sup>36</sup>

As Yates continued to dispute his friend's choices, Edmunds, equally prickly, responded that he would not back down on a single point.

The list will include No Schuman, Piston, Menotti, or Hanson. Riegger was an oversight—and I've set up a full bibliography for him. Barber's out for the reason I mentioned earlier today—he's not a fighting name. Don't be rigid—just because I started with him that is no reason to be saddled beyond recall. He'll be in the next list of conservatives—the good boys. Why do you tell me Nancarrow shouldn't be in? He ISN'T.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, though Yates had already submitted his essay, the pair continued to argue about the place of Barber (among others). Edmunds clarified further the true, yet officially unspoken division between the two lists—volume 1: “experimentalists and independents”; volume 2: “conservatives—the good boys.” Edmunds wrote:

Of course it was a mistake to include Barber in the bibliography. His is not a fighting name—a point you make abundantly clear in the course of your introduction. He is a liberal conservative and will fit excellently and appropriately into the sequel—the 1960 bibliography, which is to include Piston, Menotti, Thomson, Hanson, and many more distinguished and honorable contributors to the wealth of American music. The present list will include only experimentalists and independents.<sup>38</sup>

The hardening of these categories continued. A few days later Yates elaborated on his own view about what qualities defined the lists, the strategies involved in these decisions, and his assessment of the place of various composers' work within ranks of “radicals,” “conservative-radicals,” “academics” or “membership [in the] experimental group.”

36. Ibid.

37. Emphasis is Edmunds's. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 9 September 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD. Edmunds was particularly fascinated with Nancarrow's music, and carried on a correspondence with that composer between 1961 and 1982. The correspondence is housed in the Conlon Nancarrow Papers, Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland. On Nancarrow and his relationship with Edmunds, see Peter Garland, “Conlon Nancarrow: Chronicle of a Friendship,” in his *Americas: Essays on American Music and Culture, 1973–80* (Santa Fe: Soundings, 1982), 157–85, esp. 167–68.

38. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 9 September 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

I would prefer to keep Barber on the inside edge of the radicals, where to be honest your original putting him there convinced me, after initial hesitation, that he does belong; to keep him there, if necessary, as a measuring stick, using the commentary I have about him. Then Menotti would tie the two lists together at that joint. I am convinced that the motivating urge of Barber's best music is the same as Copland's, to get as far out as he can in spite of every urge to draw back. They are really much alike, and the "mature" Harris and the semi-successful Hovhaness belong there too. Sessions is a rather special case, but all these conservative-radicals, who are more than radical enough for the broad public, should be kept together. When you get into the true academics, like Piston, Porter, Hanson, and so on, the conservatism dominates. No, I am very much opposed to withdrawing Barber, not because of taste but for strategic reasons. Riegger, however, must be added. I still believe you have exaggerated the clever but musically ungifted Brant. I can't find a note of his which bears comparison with the better work of Imbrie, Bill Smith, Shifrin. He is, like Schuman, in a strategic position, which he exploits by using tricky names. Have you ever really listened to his music? He is far more conservative, essentially, than Barber. Besides a conservative listing, you should have a third "native American" listing—looking for a title which signifies non-European native-born conservatives by taste and training but experimental by contagion to include several of the names above, with possibly Ross Lee Finney as their mentor—though this might be the correct place for Porter—in comparison, say, with Sessions. . . . Do you want to send me the Introduction for rewriting when you have decided on the membership of this experimental group, or can I make my changes all over the proof?<sup>39</sup>

Though his own opinions seemed so vehement, Yates later wrote to Edmunds: "I fear your new savage mood towards musical conservatives" and advised his friend to "retain a discreet impartiality to strengthen your decision."<sup>40</sup>

Despite Yates's protesting, in compiling this first list Edmunds's taste might have had a lasting, yet heretofore unacknowledged influence on American definitions of experimental music. Through the correspondence, the notion of "fighting names" remained central, and Yates's introduction to volume 1 indeed announced in its opening sentence: "Here are fifteen fighting names of American composers." His essay continued in a sassy, polemically revisionist, and deliberately provocative tone, with name-calling right from the outset.

If I accept this group as central to the growth in American music of a continental individuality, I do not by that imply the unimportance of the American academists, descendants of Horatio Parker. No composer has labored for American music and musicianship more unstintingly than Howard Hanson. Here indeed, I am not concerned with arguing and pointing, in the

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39. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 12 September 1959, folder 33, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

40. Letter from Yates to Edmunds, 18 November 1959, folder 33, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

usual manner, from the routine to the exceptional. Here, for one of the rare occasions in American musical scholarship, we begin in the midst of the exceptional, putting to one side the decorous, however admirable, routine. . . . Student and critic alike may be inclined to put the whole business to one side, to believe that music in America should represent an historical continuity from the music of Europe, and that whatever American composer does not accept or more vigorously denies such continuity may be dismissed as experimental and at best incomplete. Incomplete becomes inadequate; inadequate deteriorates to faulty; what is faulty can be at best no more than primitive. Thus we find the word “primitive” attached to the compositions by Charles Ives.<sup>41</sup>

In his introduction, Yates announced that “these fifteen composers share one characteristic: they are all American experimentalists”<sup>42</sup>—which might seem odd now, given the inclusion of Carter, Copland, Harris, and Sessions. (Furthermore, Yates offered no apology for Varèse’s foreign-born status.) Yates emphasized “continental individuality” and praised the “exceptional” rather than the “routine.”<sup>43</sup> The main difference he noted between composers such as Cage, Partch, and Harrison—the “more native extreme of American experimentalism”—and the others was that those three “lay outside the direction of European music.”<sup>44</sup> (In his preface, however, Edmunds underscored the glaring lack of information when it came to idiosyncratic composers like Partch and Nancarrow, the second of whom, by 1959, had been discussed in only “a single article by Nicolas Slonimsky in the *Christian Science Monitor* of November 10, 1951.”<sup>45</sup>) Yates’s essay otherwise displays a strongly critical voice toward many of the first volume’s subjects, especially Sessions (“disclaims interest in the concept of an American music”), Copland (“less gifted with such powerful crude talent as Roy Harris”), Harris (“his powerful native talent was blunted and diverted by a formalistic education in Paris”), Hovhaness (“an exotic with flair rather than fundamentally an experimentalist”), and Brant (whose “fanciful” titles alone were discussed by Yates, who despised his music). Yates closed his essay by admitting that “there is not one composer on the list whom I do not admire, only four with whom I have not enjoyed personal acquaintance, and only one whom I believe inadequate to this honorable place.”<sup>46</sup>

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41. Yates, “Introductory Essay,” *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 1: 9.

42. *Ibid.*, 11.

43. *Ibid.*, 9.

44. *Ibid.*, 11.

45. *Ibid.*, 5.

46. *Ibid.*, 22.

By the time they began discussing the execution of the second volume, Edmunds had become sensitive to the fact that he might be accused of drawing contentious boundaries due to this kind of rebellious “selective” approach. Now more cautious, he wished “to avoid any suggestion that I’m setting myself up as an arbiter of importance,” as he wrote to Yates in October 1959. In order to protect himself (and, indeed, Yates), Edmunds formed an advisory committee—“to do the dirty work officially”—regarding a list of composers to be included in volume 2.<sup>47</sup> Though Edmunds continued asking for his friend’s trusted advice, he did not ask him to participate in the advisory committee, which included Nicolas Slonimsky (who would contribute the introductory essay), Alfred Frankenstein, Gilbert Chase, Carleton Sprague Smith, Oliver Daniel, Nathan Broder, and Edmunds himself. Edmunds was aware of the choices he was making in the ways he divided the American composers (though the second list was apparently voted upon by the committee), and was certain that the volume would cause “a commotion,” once “the pattern begins to dawn on the musical elite.”<sup>48</sup> Apparently only the historian Gilbert Chase “seems to have divined what was afoot,” as Edmunds admitted to Yates.<sup>49</sup> Chase wrote, revealingly, to Edmunds:

My only chagrin, in accepting your invitation to help select the names for Volume II, is that we are really left with the leftovers, and Yates has run off with the plums. The task left to be done is not at all exciting or rewarding, we must admit. It is following a safe and well-known highway instead of climbing the dangerous and alluring peaks where the view is so splendid and the air so exhilarating.<sup>50</sup>

Edmunds soon after wrote to Yates regarding his lack of objectivity in these matters: “Don’t fear my savage mood towards the more ossified academics. I try to do all my damage simply by not mentioning them.”<sup>51</sup>

In early 1960 Edmunds began discussing the aims of the new introductory essay with Slonimsky.

This second volume will be considerably larger than the first and should be of substantial value to students of American music for many years to come; hence every ray of light you can throw on the area covered will not only illuminate, it will influence. . . . As to the scope of the bibliographies: they deal

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47. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 9 October 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

48. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 15 October 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

49. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 31 October 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

50. Letter from Gilbert Chase to Edmunds, 24 October 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD. Despite his misgivings regarding the “leftovers,” Chase did help select the composers to be covered in volume 2.

51. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 3 December 1959, box 4, folder 26, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

with articles by and about living American composers (Ives in Vol. I is the solitary exception). Vol. II will cover approximately the same period as the first volume—January 1940 to March 1960—actually about six months longer, than the first. . . . The composers to be represented fully are the following: Barber, Bernstein, Blitzstein, Creston, Dello Joio, Diamond, Foss, Glanville-Hicks, Hanson, Kirchner, McPhee, Mennin, Moore, Piston, Porter, Schuman, Thomson, and Ben Weber. An appendix will list all other living American composers that can conceivably be thought to have written substantial music, men such as Imbrie, Schuller, Rochberg, Shifrin, Dahl, Irving Fine, Bergsma, Perle, Beeson, Read, Rogers, Green, and many older men such as Rudhyar, Becker, Gruenberg, Deems Taylor and R. L. Finney. Among the experimentalists we omitted from Vol. I and who will be covered in the forthcoming volume are Ussachevsky, Luening, Babbitt, Shapey, Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff. Conlon Nancarrow will also be represented here, and I hope you will devote a paragraph to this extraordinary and practically unknown composer. . . . Any significant out-of-the-way American music you know about should certainly be mentioned. Ornstein, Becker, and Rudhyar will all figure in this volume, and all were enterprising and their achievements are better known by you, doubtless, than by any other person.<sup>52</sup>

In his preface to volume 2, Edmunds wrote “choosing for the second series only seventeen composers from the large number who merit close attention was a responsibility which it seemed best to share.” He apologized for the lack of regional breadth in the selections (“the list heavily emphasizes the east coast,” he lamented, but went on to explain that “in a national musical life so completely centralized as ours is in New York it is inevitable that composers who live near the metropolis fare better in biographical dictionaries and works dealing generally with our national musical life than those who live at a distance, since writers and book publishers are largely concentrated in the east or within a radius of only a few hundred miles of New York”).<sup>53</sup>

Slonimsky’s essay was similar to Yates’s in that he first talked generally about the state of American music in opposition to Europe (an ongoing trope in the years following World War II), and then went through the list, briefly characterizing the music and attitude of most of the featured composers. From the start, he emphasized American music’s eclecticism and its diversity as an asset rather than a weakness: “The simultaneous existence and employment of the romantic, classical, empiric, and abstract styles does not mean that American music cannot find its own soul.”<sup>54</sup> He went on to characterize the composers using a variety of “isms,” from “polyphonic neoclassicism” to “modern musical construc-

52. Letter from Edmunds to Slonimsky, 10 March 1960, folder 25, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

53. Edmunds, “Preface,” *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 2:5.

54. Slonimsky, “Introductory Essay,” *Ibid.*, 2:9.



tivism” (qualified also as “anti-vocalism”). The composers themselves were subjected to a variety of these isms and other assessments: Diamond (“rhapsodic expressionist”); Riegger (“romantic chromaticism”; “esoteric expressionism”); Cowell (“utilitarian”); Sessions (“a composer of music *an und für sich* [in and of itself], without programmatic allusions”); and Carter (“contrapuntist par excellence”). Slonimsky defended Piston against accusations of academicism, writing: “The word ‘Academy’ should not necessarily be equated with a didactic establishment, codification and self-containment. Enlightened academism that embodies the best elements of the past but responds to the needs of the present, is a natural phase in the evolutionary process, when a temporary halt is made, and when it becomes necessary to consolidate the innovations.”<sup>55</sup> Slonimsky also categorized the music according to genres and forms: referential (programmatic); non-referential (abstract); choral (Randall Thompson was noted); and opera (various types, including Thomson’s “surrealistic” *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Blitzstein’s “social consciousness,” Weill’s “satirical melodrama,” and Gershwin’s “truly grand opera in the modern manner” [*Porgy and Bess*]). The foreign-born Gian Carlo Menotti was singled out as the most successful composer of American opera, while the likewise foreign-born Lukas Foss was described as a classical brand of modernism, “which lies exactly on the main line of American stylistic pursuits.” “Then there is Leonard Bernstein,” Slonimsky sighed, nearing the end of the list. Though a modernist, and despite an “element of popular music in his operatic works,” Slonimsky—without explanation—claimed that Bernstein “unquestionably belongs to the avant-garde.”

As Slonimsky brought his essay to a close, he suggested a kind of continuum of isms from conventional/tonal toward novel/atonal musical styles within contemporary American music.

The diversity of styles among Americana composers is great, and barely definable in its main currents. Neoclassical composers are the keepers of a new tradition, the builders of a new academy. The emerging style of neoromanticism grows out of American neoclassicism as original romanticism grew out of the ottocento. Pure impressionism no longer attracts creative talents, but it has a viable successor, a style which may be defined, by analogy with painting, as abstract impressionism, emphasizing coloristic elements without the stigma of obvious pictorialism. Abstract musical expressionism is the modern form of romanticism, with morbid anxiety, frustration and dejection providing points of inspiration. Expressionistic effects are achieved by means of tense and spasmodic dodecaphony, while the abstract quality is secured by a careful avoidance of emotional phraseology. The intangibility of expressiveness and

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55. *Ibid.*, 13.

the abstraction from associative images are the formative qualities of this style.<sup>56</sup>

Following a description of a number of lesser-known composers (Shapero, Porter, Haieff, Dahl, Berger, Bergsma, Mennin, Kay, Kirchner, Schuller, Rochberg, etc.), Slonimsky offered a final proclamation: “And, at the end of the line, the inscrutable John Cage and his disciples.”

Though Slonimsky surely had encountered more American classical music than almost anyone in the country, we might question what purpose such broad-stroke categorizations served at the time. Taken together, however, the two “selective” volumes, and Yates’s and Slonimsky’s spirited essays on the state of American music at the beginning of the 1960s—a decade when the old guard and the avant-garde would become more polarized than ever before—serve as important eyewitness documents. The lively but self-conscious discussion of American music as independent from Europe is a further time-sensitive theme running through both essays—not surprisingly, given the cultural Cold War context of the authors’ professional lives.

#### RECORDING INITIATIVES

In his preface to volume 1, Edmunds announced the formation of “a recorded archive of lectures and comments by American composers . . . now being formed in the Americana Collection.” He added that “it is being recorded *viva voce* on electronic tapes” with the hope that the archive would be used in the classroom and on the radio.<sup>57</sup> This project, related in various ways to the “selective bibliographies,” came to be known as the “talk tapes,” which Edmunds described in this way to Lionel Novak at Bennington College:

We have a project afoot here which I hope will be of interest to you—an archive of tapes on which leading American composers will record their comments on music, in particular their own music, discussing their principles of musical organization. The purpose will be to provide technical comments on their music by the composers themselves. Anecdotal material will be avoided as rigorously as possible. . . . The purpose of the archive is that it should serve as a source of basic information not only in the words but in the voice of the composer. Copies of the tapes would be available to any interested persons—university lecturers on American music would presumably make up an important segment. Varese talking about electronic music would engage the interest of students with spectacular success, I think. Cowell, Cage, and Virgil

56. *Ibid.*, 16.

57. Edmunds, “Preface,” *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 1:6.

Thomson could all present their ideas brilliantly, and make their music a living force upon many composers.<sup>58</sup>

Simultaneously, the Music Library Association (MLA) embarked on its American Recordings Project called the "History of American Music on Records." The project's initial stages were described several times in the pages of *Notes* during the beginning of its implementation, first, by chair Irving Lowens himself, during the summer of 1959, and later, by the appointed MLA committee (Lowens, Edmunds, H. Wiley Hitchcock, and Victor Yellin), in March 1960.<sup>59</sup> In the first of these reports, musicologist Lowens justified the project pedagogically by stating "The heart of the matter is that despite the formidable amount of recorded American music on hand, there is not enough authentic material with which to illustrate fully a reasonably detailed series of lectures on the history of American music."<sup>60</sup> In its educational aim the recordings project deliberately complemented Edmunds's selective bibliographies. The committee first decided what to exclude (popular music, folk music, etc.), and which composers' works might fall into the included categories. Then they determined what was already available on commercial recordings, since the series would draw almost exclusively on pre-existing recorded material. In their survey of available commercial releases they discovered, not surprisingly, that earlier periods were underrepresented, and that, though a wealth of materials existed from the post-1917 era, "the coverage of the contemporary scene is surprisingly uneven." Lowens concluded optimistically: "Possibly the issuance of a multi-disc, recorded *History of American Music in Sound*, meticulously engineered, with performances by first-rate artists, and released under commercial auspices, could be achieved."<sup>61</sup>

The second report cheered recent activities in the promotion and distribution of American music (including recording projects by Howard Hanson, Frederick Fennell, Carleton Sprague Smith, Karl Krueger, and several others), and offered specifics in terms of what should be included in the proposed series.<sup>62</sup> They explained their position, and their planned working method, in these terms:

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58. Letter from Edmunds to Lionel Novak, 14 May 1959, folder 21, John Edmunds Papers, NYPL.

59. Irving Lowens, "The Curious State of American Music on Records," *Notes* 16, no. 3 (June 1959): 371-76; and Lowens, Edmunds, H. Wiley Hitchcock, and Victor Yellin, "The American Recordings Project: Progress Report of the Committee, February 5, 1960," *Notes* 17, no. 2 (March 1960): 213-20.

60. Lowens, "The Curious State of American Music on Records," 371.

61. *Ibid.*, 375.

62. Particularly noteworthy was Karl Krueger's initiative, The Society for the Preservation of the American Musical Heritage (est. 1958), which produced the Archive of Recorded Performances Music-in-America Series (completed in 1972). The contents of the three-part series ("Early America," "19th Century," and "Early 20th Century") is described in Krueger, *The Musical Heritage of the United States: The Unknown Portion* (New York: Society for the Preservation of the American Musical Heritage, 1973).

We intend to base a comprehensive history of American music in sound on a detailed analysis of the complete corpus of American music from its earliest beginnings down to the present. As it is plain that no single individual or small committee is adequately equipped to deal with all aspects of our music history, the detailed analysis is to be undertaken by a group of carefully chosen expert consultants, each of whom will, we trust, accept responsibility for a particular segment. Once a determination of the essential works in an ideal recorded history of American music has been made, an evaluation of already recorded American music in terms of the Committee's ultimate purpose will be feasible. Presupposing a high level of artistic excellence, technical competence, and authenticity, we hope to utilize any recording which fits into the scheme regardless of label. We do not intend to go into the record-making business if we can possibly avoid it—we plan to act as gadflies. It is plain to us that the release of any fine recording of an American work by anyone makes our task just that much simpler. So far as we are concerned, the more American music on records, the better.<sup>63</sup>

Using what they called “Conspectus of a History of American Music in Sound”—a “foundation stone” graphic chart—to demonstrate the distribution of coverage, they proposed ten time periods and nine genre-type distinctions (solo song, chorus, keyboard, chamber music, orchestra, ballet, opera, band, and “experimental”; see fig. 1). The “experimental” category overlapped in the chart with the last five time-frames (that is, examples of “experimental” music would be included from 1901 onward). Each of these areas would be covered by one of twenty-five selected experts chosen for their “first-hand knowledge of the music itself,” since the committee was “seeking a fresh evaluation of American music and not a digest of already available commentary.”<sup>64</sup>

Edmunds, Yates, and Cage corresponded in 1960 regarding this MLA recording project. As a member of the advisory committee, Edmunds helped distribute segments of the series to the “experts” who would be in charge of making recommendations about repertoire. Edmunds gave the experimental section from 1931 to 1960 (segment 25 of the conspectus) to Cage. (Cage received an official letter, dated 24 May 1960, from another advisory committee member, musicologist Hitchcock, who requested “a tentative estimate of composers and works to be included among the 4–6 LPs illustrating your sector of the [American Recordings Project’s] history.”<sup>65</sup>) To Yates, Edmunds allocated a piece of the project designated as “American piano, chamber, and orchestral music 1940 [*recte*, 1941]–50” (segment 14). Yates was unhappy with his area, as he

63. Lowens, et al., “The American Recordings Project,” 215–16.

64. *Ibid.*, 219.

65. Letter from Hitchcock to Cage, 24 May 1960, letter held in C. F. Peters Edition archive, Queens, New York. (Thanks to Ralf Dietrich for bringing this letter to my attention.)

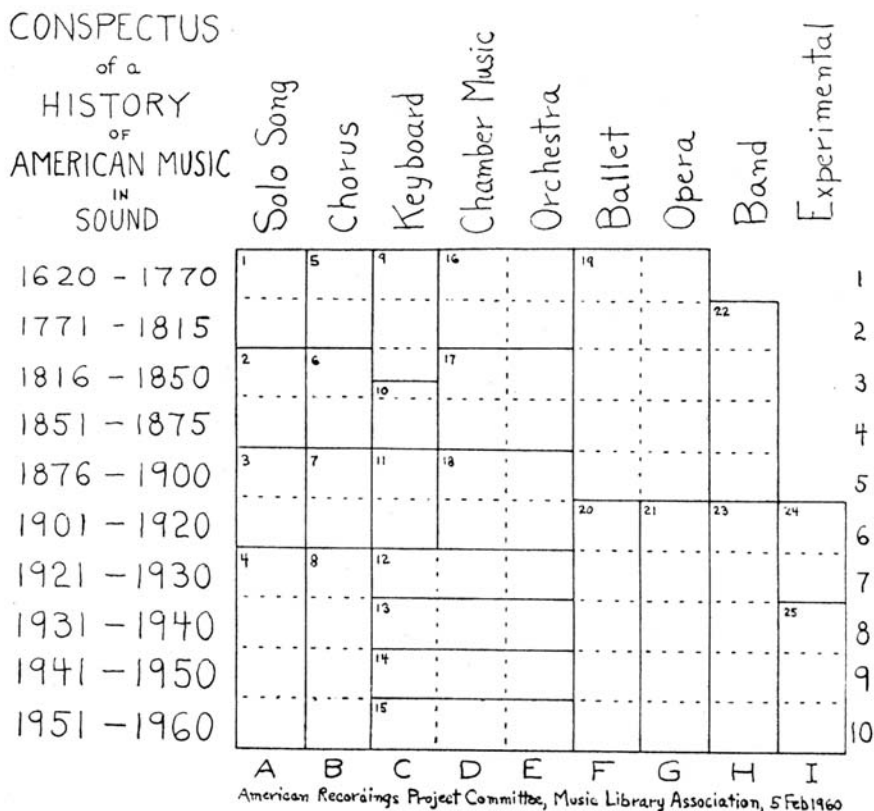


Fig. 1. "Conspectus of a History of American Music in Sound," from Irving Lowens, et al., "The American Recordings Project"

complained to Cage, asking if they could collaborate on segment 25: "I have asked [Edmunds], as I now ask you, to let me share with you the large field of the American experimental composers he has allotted to you. This is the only field of contemporary music which interests me, and I have devoted most of my recent thought to it."<sup>66</sup> Yates also implied that Cage would be unwise to put himself in the position of critiquing and selecting (and possibly excluding) works of his peers. After Cage responded positively about collaborating on segment 25, Yates clarified to Cage how he wished to consider their task.

66. Letter from Yates to Cage, 12 May 1960, file C-8, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

By the time we finish we should have established the one fact I have been dinging away at for several years now, that the American experimental tradition is central to the future development of music or sound as an art. . . . I believe that, while waiting for other matters to jell, including possible payment, we should discuss and establish one subject: the composers whom we are to claim as experimental. I would say as a starter: Ives, Ruggles, the early Cowell, Varèse, possibly Nancarrow, Partch, Harrison, and your immediate group, of whom I gather from *Harpers* Morton Feldman considers himself in some ways the real initiator. I would prefer not to include Brant, but we may have to. Luening and Ussachevsky I suppose must come in. Early Harris has a claim, even early Copland. In general, as I see it, the Experimental tradition stems from Ives, draws strength from Cowell and Varèse and proceeds through yourself.<sup>67</sup>

Yates went on to categorize the composers mentioned into three distinct groups: the electronic, the “purely tonal” (Partch and Harrison), and “the extra-tonal” (Cage and followers). Yates obviously felt protective of these composers; he wanted them for his own part of the recording project, and they belonged to an agenda for which he was willing to go to the mat.

Please let me know what other names you would suggest. When we have defined a simple presentation of our claims to composer and fields, we’ll be ahead of the others who have to spread themselves over arbitrarily divided decades. Otherwise some of the best material might be claimed away from us. Of course with composers like Ives and Cowell we must expect that others will also present a claim, on good reasoning, which to some degree we must accept. But we should hold to our own claim as primary.<sup>68</sup>

A few days later, after pondering Yates’s approach, Cage wrote that he had “been thinking that the way to tell whether something is experimental after 1930 is whether it is free of Schoenberg and Stravinsky,” thus reinforcing Yates’s ideas, and endorsing the third-stream view of American classical music in the twentieth century (of an independent branch inspired and influenced by Ives, Cowell, and Varèse).<sup>69</sup> Yates, understanding Cage’s distinction but emphasizing the necessity of “indigenouslyness” to any definition of “experimental,” responded, somewhat brusquely:

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67. Letter from Yates to Cage, 31 May 1960, file C-8, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

68. Ibid.

69. Letter from Cage to Yates, 6 June 1960, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD. It is interesting to note that Cage did not provide his otherwise oft-quoted definitions of experimentalism: “[Experimental is simply] an act the outcome of which is unknown” (“Experimental Music: Doctrine” [1955], in his *Silence: Lectures and Writings* [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961; reprint, 1973], 13–17, at 13); and: “I use [the term ‘experimental’] to describe all the music that especially interests me and to which I am devoted” (“Experimental Music” [1957], in *Silence*, 7–12, at 7).

That tactful man Lowens asking me to nominate the experimentalists 1900–21 and recommend available records. I told him only Ives. American experimentalism begins in the 1920s. . . . If I stress the chauvinistic line these days, it's because somebody must take the lead in declaring again and again in a loud voice: America has its own music, has had its own since Ives. This American music draws power from indigenous materials worked in indigenous sound and from the Orient as much as from Yurp [*sic*; Europe]. No line less strong will overcome the claims of the innumerable academics.<sup>70</sup>

As Yates continued in this (characteristically lengthy) letter to Cage, he essentially reworked his conversation with Edmunds about the “selective bibliographies” a year earlier, criticized Cage’s approach, “planned his attack,” and put forth his own ideas with typically relentless vigor.

We must avoid approaching experimental music by such a means as you outline. This method should serve you to sort the field in one way, while I sort it in the other. For example, early Harris, before he went to school trying to be elegant, is experimental but does not belong within your categories. Copland and Virgil only marginally so. So I shall try to sort the composers in my way. Then, matching categories, we can plan our attack. But we should avoid giving any public appearance of starting with the type of technical lingo you use here. . . . I think that the way to differentiate American experimental music is the extent to which it is free of academic conditioning. Thus later Cowell is largely academic. I would not consider whether or not it is influenced by Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Brahms, Schoenberg, or Stravinsky, or even by Ives. Carter was influenced by Ives but is not really experimental, nor Bernie Hermann [*sic*]. I cannot see Brant as an experimental composer, only at the edge, but I presume we must accept him. The categories you outline should be applied to differentiate among composers after we have chosen them on the ground of their independence of conventional methods. Here Ives rates high and Copland low; we should refuse Copland. Others will want him. Antheil comes in only for Ballet Mekanique, as an example of an experimentalism without substance. We do not need to give equal space to everybody, and ultimately our choice must be made in terms of what records are essential to the project.<sup>71</sup>

Yates’s tendency to equate experimentalism with independence (“free of academic conditioning”) would come to be a significant myth in the definitions of avant-garde American music, given that nearly every “experimentalist” after the New York School had academic ties either as university composition students or as college professors themselves. But the distinction remained important insofar as it drew attention to attitudes regarding the role of institutions (and the perception of audiences) for radical music at mid-century.

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70. Letter from Yates to Cage, 9 June 1960, file C-8, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

71. *Ibid.*

## CONTINUING EFFORTS

At some point around 1961, the MLA American Recordings Project was abandoned, or at least went through a series of structural and organizational alterations. In August 1961, Irving Lowens (who had served as chair of the American Recordings Project) and Vincent Duckles (then the MLA president) submitted an application for a Ford Foundation grant. Their proposal, in the form of a bound booklet titled "The American Music History Project," requested funds in the amount of \$317,910 over a period of three-and-a-half years starting in January 1962.<sup>72</sup> Drawing on the work of the original MLA committee, the proposal sought support for implementing the "multi-disc recorded History of American Music in Sound," as well as other related projects (texts, scores, microfilm archives, etc.). This proposal displayed a new draft of the 1960 conspectus (see fig. 1) included in the original committee's *Notes* report, a new version which simplified the "segments" and included the names of all the experts who were expected to take part in the project (see fig. 2). The proposal was rejected in March 1962, largely on the grounds that the project's scale was "larger than the subject may warrant."<sup>73</sup>

One month before Lowens and Duckles submitted their Ford Foundation proposal, on 1 July 1961, John Edmunds, who had been involved since 1947 in the creation of the collection in some way or another through Columbia University, the Composers' Forum, and the New York Public Library itself, resigned from his post as curator of the Americana Music Collection.<sup>74</sup> Soon after, in September of that same year, he unleashed upon the American music community a privately published and self-distributed "General Report on The New York Public Library's Americana Music Collection and its Proposed Development in Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts."<sup>75</sup> In his introduction, Edmunds explained:

72. A copy of this document is held in the John Edmunds Papers, UCB.

73. Rejection letter from Edward F. D'Arms (associate director, Ford Foundation) to Irving Lowens, 8 March 1962. A copy of this letter was provided to me by the Research Services and Archives division of the Ford Foundation.

74. On 21 August 1961 Yates wrote to Cage that he was "desolated by [Edmunds's] resigning from the library" (file C-9, John Cage Correspondence, NUML). Yates also published a scathing critique of the NYPL/Americana Collection situation in the January 1962 issue of *Arts & Architecture* (pp. 6–9, 34). Yates wrote: "Materials are still pouring in to the Collection from the unceasing activity of American musical life. To provide for the more routine duties of the Curator, Mr. Edmunds asked for additional clerical help and thus precipitated the disagreement which ended in his resignation" (p. 6). He also explained that "A committee of American librarians has created an organization, known at first as the American Recordings Project and now as the American Music History Project." Yates added: "These librarians include some fighting men" (p. 9).

75. This document is held in the John Edmunds Papers, UCB.



	SOLO SONG	CHORUS	KEYBOARD	CHAMBER MUSIC	ORCHESTRA	BALLET	OPERA	BAND	EXPERIMENTAL
1620 - 1770	1 CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH (New York Univ.)	4 IRVING LOWENS (Lib. of Congress)	8 HERBERT LIVINGSTON (Ohio State Univ.)	14		17			
1771 - 1815					DONALD MCCORKLE (Moreavian Music Found.)			20	
1816 - 1850		5 OTTO ALBRECHT (Univ. of Penn.)	9 ARTHUR LOESSER (Cleveland Inst. of Music)	15	H. EARLE JOHNSON		THEODORE FINNEY (Univ. of Pittsburgh)		
1851 - 1875	2 BEATRICE FLEXNER								
1876 - 1900		6 MARTIN BERNSTEIN (New York Univ.)		16	H. WILEY HITCHCOCK (Univ. of Mich.)				
1901 - 1920						18 VICTOR YELLIN (New York Univ.)			
1921 - 1930	3 JOHN EDMUNDS (New York Public Library)		10 NICOLAS SLONIMSKY	(Part 1)					
1931 - 1940		7 G. W. WOODWORTH (Harvard Univ.)		11 GILBERT CHASE (Tulane Univ.)	(Part 2)				
1941 - 1950				12 LAWRENCE MORTON	(Part 3)	VIRGIL THOMSON			
1951 - 1960			13 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN	(Part 4)					
							(Part 1) FREDERICK FENNELL (Eastman School of Music)	21	
							(Part 2) RICHARD F. GOLDMAN		22
							(Part 1) JOHN CAGE (Part 2) PETER YATES		

Fig. 2. "The MLA History of American Music—Diagram of Divisions with Authors," from Irving Lowens and Vincent Duckles, "The American Music History Project," Ford Foundation grant proposal (August 1961)

From my position as head of the Americana Collection I resigned on July first of this year, being convinced that since no funds were available to implement even the most urgent phases of development, I could be more useful to the cause of American music in another capacity. Hence these proposals are unofficial although projects described [here] have been discussed officially and

warmly approved in principle. I trust that when the Americana Collection is reactivated it will expand in the directions here suggested.

Edmunds proposed creating a “Library of Documents,” which would include: a Record Archive (including the “talk tapes”); a Jazz Archive, a Folksong Reference and Bibliography Center; an Iconographic File; Bibliographic Surveys of “Composers’ Associations, American and Foreign” and “Jazz Collections in America and Abroad”; a “Study of American Music in Relation to Professional Musical Organizations”; a concert/lecture/radio/symposium series called “American Music as a Living Art”;<sup>76</sup> a mechanism for distributing awards and commissions (including an award for avant-garde music, mentioned earlier); “Cooperation with Other Organizations in Related Fields and Disciplines”; and an “International Music Exchange Plan.” All of these initiatives were described in the body of Edmunds’s “General Report,” which he proceeded to send to composers, educators, musicologists, and various cultural and institutional leaders throughout the country. As a result, NYPL director Edward Freehafter and president of the NYPL board of trustees Gilbert Chapman received a flood of passionate letters in support of both Edmunds (many letter-writers demanded his reinstatement as curator of the Americana Collection) and the numerous ideas described in his report. These letters came from, among others, William Austin, Lucia Dlugoszewski, Ross Lee Finney, Alfred Frankenstein, Kenneth Gaburo, H. Wiley Hitchcock, Vincent Persichetti, Ashley Pettis, Roger Reynolds, the president of Columbia University, the deputy assistant to the U.S. State Department, and representatives from Brooklyn College, Fordham University, the Third Street Music School Settlement, the Ford Foundation, the Institute for International Education, and the President’s Music Committee. Edmunds was not reinstated, however, and soon he turned his attention to other musical agendas entirely.

#### DEFINING EXPERIMENTALISM

In 1960, in the midst of the events this article recounts, Yates wrote a text called “The American Experimental Tradition.” Perhaps tellingly, the essay was not published until thirty years later, in composer Peter Garland’s serial publication called *Soundings*.<sup>77</sup> Though Yates’s work may have been ahead of its time, it was certainly more easily received after

76. Some of his suggested concerts explored innovative and eclectic programming, such as the following suggestions: Concert I: Billings, Carter, Paine, and Barber; Concert II: “folk songs,” Copland, Brant, and Ives; Concert III: Ruggles, “folk songs from the Lomax collection,” Nancarrow, and Varèse’s *Poème électronique*.

77. *Soundings* 16 (1990): 135–43. In the years following the period in question here, Yates also wrote a number of impassioned articles for several arts journals in which he heavily criticized the state of cultural

the post-Bicentennial fervor over American music research/studies, and after Cage and his associates had been accepted as major figures of the twentieth century. Through their mid-century work on the NYPL publication projects and the MLA recording initiative, Yates and Edmunds (and more indirectly, Cage himself) helped solidify a decisively divided view of contemporary American classical music—for better or worse.<sup>78</sup> The period during which they considered these questions of style, tradition, publication and support was a particularly crucial one in the history of American new music (in fact, Edmunds's preface to volume 1 of the selective bibliography announced that "The Ford Foundation, in conjunction with Columbia and Princeton Universities, is currently developing an electronic music laboratory").<sup>79</sup> In light of these events, it seems that a historiographic study of the *idea* of American experimental music, and that music's status within a perceived "tradition," seems overdue.<sup>80</sup>

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affairs in the United States, especially in terms of state and foundation support for indigenous, independent music. See "An Open Letter to the Foundations," *Art & Architecture*, August 1963, 8–9, 32; "Music Column," *Art & Architecture*, September 1964, 7, 41; and "A Comment on the Rockefeller Brothers' Panel Report," *Arts in Society* 3, no. 3 (1965): 363–69.

78. There were additional projects as well: In February 1960 Edmunds took steps to find a publisher for a book he hoped to put together, one that would "represent in my opinion a challenging group of ideas and names, and deals with most of the original directions that promise much for the future." His proposal included essays by Yates, Cowell (on Ives), Harrison (on Ruggles), Slonimsky (on Harris), Partch, Edmunds himself (on Nancarrow and nonelectronic mechanical music), Glanville-Hicks (on "the impact of Asian concepts on the music of Harrison, Partch, and Cage"), Sessions ("on the potentialities of electronic music"), Thomson ("on style and experimentation"), Cage (on indeterminacy), and Varèse (on "stereophony"). (World Publishing rejected the proposal on 26 February 1960.)

79. Edmunds, "Preface," *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 1:6.

80. The following offers a (far from exhaustive) chronological list of English- and German-language sources on American experimental music, including related texts that have in some way contributed to the definition, acceptance, or canonization of an "American experimental tradition": Wolfgang Edward Rebner, "Amerikanische Experimentalmusik" (lecture delivered in Darmstadt, 1954), published in *Im Zeitalter der Moderne: Geschichte und Dokumentation in vier Bänden—Die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt 1946–1966*, 4 vols., ed. by Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser, 3:178–89 (Freiburg: Rombach, 1997); an English translation of Rebner's lecture is published as an appendix to Amy Beal, "Negotiating Cultural Allies: American Music in Darmstadt, 1946–1956," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53, no. 1 [Spring 2000]: 105–39, at 128–35; Stefan Wolpe, "On New (and Not-So-New) Music in America" (lecture delivered in Darmstadt, 1956), first published in English translation and with an introduction by Austin Clarkson, "On New (and Not-So-New) Music in America, by Stefan Wolpe," *Journal of Music Theory* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 1–45; John Cage, "Experimental Music: Doctrine," and "Experimental Music" (see n. 69); Cage, "History of Experimental Music in the United States," commissioned by Wolfgang Steinecke for publication as "Zur Geschichte der experimentellen Musik in den Vereinigten Staaten," trans. by Heinz-Klaus Metzger, *Darmstädter Beiträge zur neuen Musik* 2 (1959): 46–53; later printed (in English) in *Silence*, 67–75; Peter Yates, "Introductory Essay," in *Some Twentieth Century American Composers*, 1:9–22; Yates, "The American Experimental Tradition" (see n. 77); Henry Cowell, "Introduction to the 1962 Edition," in *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium*, ed. by Cowell, vii–x (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1962); Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1974; 2d ed, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Joaquim M. Benitez, "Avant-Garde or Experimental? Classifying Contemporary Music," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 9, no. 1 (1978): 53–77; John Rockwell, *All-American Music: Composition in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983); Friedrich Hommel, "Andere Fünfziger Jahre? Familienbild mit Ives, Cowell, Varèse und Cage," in *Die Musik der Fünfziger Jahre: Versuch einer Revision*, ed. by Carl Dahlhaus, 39–47 (Mainz: Schott, 1985); Rockwell, "Experimental Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 2:91–95; Niksa Gligo, "Die musikalische Avantgarde als ahistorische Utopie: Die gescheiterten Implikationen der

Where did this notion of “American experimental music” as a distinctive genre, style, or branch of American composition come from? How did that notion, from the mid-1950s on, affect composers born *during* that era? To what degree did Cage’s own definitions influence Yates, and vice versa?<sup>81</sup>

Prior to Cage’s well-known essays that explicitly address the category of experimental music (“Experimental Music: Doctrine” [1955], and “Experimental Music” [1957], both reprinted in *Silence* in 1961), only one recorded event has surfaced where the idea of experimental music was introduced as a tradition of its own within the history of American music: German immigrant Wolfgang Edward Rebner’s lecture titled “Amerikanische Experimentalmusik,” delivered in Darmstadt on 13 August 1954. Rebner’s lecture notably grouped Ives, Varèse, Cowell, and Cage as the central figures of this tradition due to their focus on sound itself rather than compositional method.<sup>82</sup> In 1956, also in Darmstadt, Stefan Wolpe reinforced this view with his lecture titled “On New (and Not-So-New) Music in America.” A few years later, following Cage and David Tudor’s 1958 Darmstadt residency, Darmstadt director Wolfgang Steinecke commissioned Cage’s essay “A History of Experimental Music in the United States.” Perhaps (though this seems unlikely) Yates did not read Cage’s essay until it was published in English in *Silence* two years later; until then, Cage’s text had been available only in Heinz-Klaus Metzger’s German translation. Despite the title of his essay, Cage did not define “experimentalism” or “American experimental music.” Instead, famously, he defined “the nature of an experimental action” as “an ac-

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experimentellen Musik,” *Acta Musicologica* 61, no. 2 (May–August 1989): 217–37; David Nicholls, *American Experimental Music, 1890–1940* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Peter Garland, “The American Experimental Tradition: A Personal Perspective,” in his *In Search of Silvestre Revueltas: Essays 1978–1990* (Santa Fe: Soundings Press, 1991), 5–16; Charles Shere, “New Music in the United States After World War II,” in *Notes on Artists and Musicians* (Berkeley, CA: C. Shere, 1992), 5–26; Frank X. Mauceri, “From Experimental Music to Musical Experiment,” *Perspectives of New Music* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 187–204; Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997); Sabine Feisst, *Der Begriff “Improvisation” in der neuen Musik* (Sinzig: Studio, 1997); David Nicholls, “Avant-garde and Experimental Music,” in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. Nicholls, 517–34 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Christopher Shultis, *Silencing the Sounding Self: John Cage and the American Experimental Tradition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998); Volker Straebel, “Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika, 1950–1980,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2d ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994–99), 9:1375–79; Michael Broyles, *Mavericks and Other Traditions in American Music* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Clemens Gresser, “(Re-)Defining the Relationships between Composer, Performer and Listener: Earle Brown, John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Christian Wolff” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southampton, 2004); and Amy Beal, “Introduction: West Germany and the American Experimental Tradition,” in her *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 1–7.

81. Cage and Yates correspondence, ca. 1960, John Cage Correspondence, NUML. As early as 1954, Yates had referred to Cage as an “experimentalist.” See Crawford, *Evenings On and Off the Roof*, 128.

82. For a historical discussion of Rebner’s lecture (see n. 80) in the context of Darmstadt during the 1950s, see Amy Beal, “Negotiating Cultural Allies.”

tion the outcome of which is not foreseen.”<sup>83</sup> Like Rebner and Wolpe before him, and like Yates, in his “Introductory Essay” of a few years later, Cage focused on Varèse, Ives, Cowell, Ruggles, and Partch. Cage, however, dismissed these composers as *not* experimental on the grounds that they predetermined too much of the musical outcome of the performers’ actions. However, a conflict of interest lay just below the surface of Cage’s essay: it seems that he wanted to allow room for his colleagues’ creative spirit to be acknowledged, claiming that “America has an intellectual climate suitable for radical experimentation.”<sup>84</sup> In mentioning the work of Henry Brant, Ruth Crawford, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhannes, Leo Ornstein, Dane Rudhyar, and others, Cage acknowledged the need for a class beyond neoclassicism and dodecaphony.<sup>85</sup> One year earlier, Cage had admitted that he used the term *experimental*: “to describe all the music that especially interests me and to which I am devoted.”<sup>86</sup> We might conclude that Cage’s views are not particularly helpful when trying to locate a historically-determined definition of “American experimental music.” After the publication of Cage’s essays on experimental music in the late 1950s, composers and writers on contemporary music continued to disagree about what “experimentalism” meant, and also about the degree to which such radical music was recognized, supported, or, in fact, neglected in the United States. For the second edition of his *American Composers on American Music*, published in 1962, Henry Cowell added a new introduction that breathed optimism.

It seemed to me even then [1933] that to be American was to honor difference, and to welcome the *experimental*, the fresh and the new, instead of trying to establish in advance the road our creative life should follow. . . . It has, of course, taken a long time for the composers who felt impelled to compose outside the old traditions of Europe to achieve the solid ground of wide recognition in their own country. Today, however, there is no question but that those who were most determined and uninhibited in their “*experimentalism*,” and who seemed so shockingly untamed in the Twenties, are now widely thought of as representing the “essence” of America.<sup>87</sup>

Aside from Charles Ives, whose work was performed more and more often in the early 1960s, it is not clear to whom Cowell was referring. In his original 1933 version of the book, Cowell had included Ives in a group of composers singled out for nationalistic traits, not for “uninhibited

83. Cage, “History of Experimental Music in the United States,” 69.

84. *Ibid.*, 73.

85. *Ibid.*

86. Cage, “Experimental Music,” *Silence*, 7. This text was written as an address to a meeting of the Music Teachers’ National Association in Chicago (Winter 1957), and was first published accompanying the recording of *The 25-Year Retrospective Concert of the Music of John Cage*.

87. Cowell, *American Composers on American Music*, vii–viii, x. Emphasis mine.

experimentalism.” Cowell’s suggestion that the experimental might be already officially recognized as the “essence” of American music was fiercely, though indirectly, denied by Yates, who addressed the then-emerging arts foundations in 1963.

Our concentration camp for the nonconforming artist is silence, a polite exclusion, no jobs, no grants, no performance, no distribution, therefore no reputation and no income, modified by the saving intervention of a minority who provide occasional jobs, occasional grants or gifts, occasional performance, but can’t overcome the largest problem, distribution. . . . If you want to find the artist who is worth supporting, look for the rugged nonconformist who puts in most of his time working at his art, who may have been shoved off the gravy-train; an artist radical to life, whose individuality disturbs us; one to whom the future may turn with reverence but who is now ostracized by the committees. . . . Look for the man who is so busy doing his job that he can’t be bothered filling out several pages of foot-long applications. Look for the man, not the degree.<sup>88</sup>

This (perhaps inappropriately) strong statement from a man who had for decades, like Cowell, promoted performances of new American music, painted a bleak picture of independent American experimental composers’ situation in the United States. While Cowell speculated about new possibilities for the music he favored, Yates remained pessimistic about the lack of recognition and appreciation for contemporary American composers. These opposing views are difficult to reconcile. In 1965, Yates criticized the first “Rockefeller Brothers’ Panel Report on the Future of Theater, Dance, and Music in America” as a naive and inadequate attempt to provide increased funding for the arts. For Yates, it was too little, too late. He wrote: “American experimental music—its leading composers, if not starving, are not conspicuously thriving—is taking leadership throughout the world; it is still resisted, with ignorance and suspicion, by impresarios and entrepreneurs, as well as by many musicians and their audiences in the United States.”<sup>89</sup> By 1965, the term “American experimental music,” as used by Yates to emphasize an “outsider” position, had been clearly established. At least to him, experimentalists were primarily working outside of official venues and systems of support. To what degree the outsider position was truly a quality necessary for identification with experimentalism, or how, precisely, outsider-ism was to be defined, is unclear. Indeed, American composers themselves, especially when speaking overseas, sometimes reinforced such stereotypes, even though most of them had academic backgrounds and received some measure of support from cultural insti-

88. Yates, “An Open Letter to the Foundations,” 32.

89. Yates, “A Comment on the Rockefeller Brothers’ Panel Report,” 364.

tutions. In America, locating experimental music historically and finding an economic place for its creators would prove difficult at best.<sup>90</sup>

As these events unfolded around 1960, Yates and Edmunds grew aware of a growing mainstream reaction to Cage. Edmunds wrote to Yates:

Strange how much opposition Cage arouses among the serious and decent musicians of the world. Here he is, with Varèse the most influential American composer living, and his colleagues here want to laugh him off as a joke. They are always willing to suffer S. Barber meekly, however.<sup>91</sup>

Soon after, Edmunds prophesized, in very strong terms, about Cage's influence:

Cage is by all odds the most radical musician in the world today, so far as I'm aware. Under all that grace and charm and good humor there is a deadly seriousness and it's a fearful matter to realize that he's attacking the Western tradition from Perotin to Stravinsky, in fact the orchestra, the chorus, and the opera. It seems to me now to be the most terrible onslaught our music has ever sustained. Though he himself is a serious man, and is heading for a newer and finer awareness of sound he is going to stir up a hornet's nest of outraged and thoroughly honorable feelings. It will seem to most people that he is merely proposing to substitute disorder for order, barbarism for civilization. It is the ideal bandwagon for the disgruntled and unimportant. The floodgates are about to open.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps Edmunds was not so far off the mark. By September 1961, a few months after Edmunds had resigned from the NYPL, Cage was "nursing *Silence* through corrected page proofs, table of contents, etc., watching for error like a hawk," as he wrote on a postcard to Yates.<sup>93</sup> Just a few months later, he wrote to Yates again: "News: All of Feldman and Wolff now available through Peters. Hallelujah!"<sup>94</sup> The floodgates opened, indeed, and with a lasting impact: Between 1959 and 1961, American music underwent a sea change, independently and institutionally, a sea change the ramifications of which we and our most daring national music are still feeling the effects of today.

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90. Noteworthy composers' collectives and other initiatives—including independent commissioning, publishing, performing, recording, and distribution projects—since Henry Cowell's New Music Society and the quarterly score publication *New Music* (1927–58) include Debut Records, the San Francisco Tape Music Center, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, the Jazz Composers' Guild, the Jazz Composers' Orchestra Association, Gamelan Son of Lion, Gate 5 Records, Soundings Press, Lingua Press, the *Pieces* anthologies, Composers Inside Electronics, the Downtown Ensemble, and Frog Peak Music (to name just a few). On Cowell's *New Music*, see Rita H. Mead, *Henry Cowell's New Music, 1925–1936: The Society, the Music Editions, and the Recordings*, Studies in Musicology, 40 (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981).

91. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 6 January 1961, box 4, folder 27, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

92. Letter from Edmunds to Yates, 25 March 1961, box 4, folder 27, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.

93. Postcard from Cage to Yates, 8 September 1961, folder C-9, John Cage Correspondence, NUML.

94. Cage, postcard (from Denver) to Yates, 1 February 1962, box 3, folder 1, Peter Yates Papers, UCSD.