

An Addition to Musical Bibliography

A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music (18th century) by Oscar George Theodore Sonneck. Revised and enlarged by William Treat Upton. [Washington], The Library of Congress, Music Division, 1945, xvi, 617p.

No matter how long and illustrious the annals of American musicology may become, the name of Oscar Sonneck will always occupy in them a place of honor. At a time when few in this country were interested in its musical history, and when fewer still were trained in historical research in music, Sonneck began systematically to lay the foundations for the study of the history of music and musical life in the United States. He accomplished this work both in developing the Music Division at the Library of Congress and by producing a number of important articles, bibliographies, and special studies.

One of Sonneck's cornerstones was his *Bibliography of Early Secular American Music*, privately printed in Washington in 1905. It was a title list of secular music and of books, pamphlets, essays, etc., relating to secular music, issued by the American press before 1800 or written by native or naturalized Americans, whether or not published or extant. This fundamental volume, obviously long incomplete, has been brought up to the present state of our knowledge by William Treat Upton, also a distinguished historian of American music. It is again published in Washington, but this time by the Music Division of the Library of Congress, with the most appropriate assistance of the Sonneck Memorial Fund, which the division administers.

When one considers the meager rewards of bibliographical work, it is remarkable that we should have one scholar—and providential that we should have had two—who were willing to brave the wilderness of our early music publishing. Upton had Sonneck to build on, but the difficulty of his task could not have been substantially less. Some of the difficulties of which Sonneck complained—rapid growth of collections, inadequate cataloging, the general lack of interest in the history of United States music—have, in spite

of Sonneck's splendid example, not sufficiently disappeared to make the path easy for his follower.

We can, therefore, welcome all the more the successful completion of Upton's task. Its success is seen most obviously in statistical comparisons but hardly less so in the care with which the additions have been made. As for the length of the bibliography itself, Upton contents himself with the statement that "surprisingly large gains have been made." An estimate suggests that the approximately one thousand titles of Sonneck's list have grown to three thousand in Upton's revision. In recording this remarkable increase, Upton has studied the resources of twenty-seven libraries, including the seventeen covered by Sonneck and ten private collections in addition to Sonneck's three. Naturally, therefore, many more locations of copies are given in Upton's edition than in Sonneck's.

The other striking difference between the two editions is Upton's provision of several new indexes. In part, these represent a division into separate indexes of the kinds of information found in Sonneck's single one; in larger part, however, they represent new means of using the material of the bibliography. Upton has provided lists of articles and essays relating to music; composers, with biographical information; songsters; first lines; American patriotic music, vocal and instrumental; and titles of opera librettos. The complete index of publishers, printers, and engravers is arranged by city and contains a separate entry for each style of firm name, with biographical notes in some cases, changes of address with dates, and page references to the main title list. Finally, there is a general index containing names of individuals not included in the composer index, pseudonyms, titles of dramatic productions, musical forms and mediums of performance, and other categories.

It will be a matter of regret, but not of surprise, that paper and binding, though satisfactory under present circumstances, are not worthy of the content of this otherwise unexceptionable volume.—Richard S. Angell.