

The background of the cover is a light yellow-green color with several faint, stylized leaf motifs scattered across it. Each motif consists of a stem with two leaves pointing upwards and to the right.

“A TIDAL WAVE OF ENCOURAGEMENT”

American Composers’
Concerts in the Gilded Age

E. Douglas Bomberger

The logo features a stylized green leafy branch to the left of the text.

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“A Tidal Wave
of Encouragement”

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American Composers’
Concerts in the Gilded Age

E. Douglas Bomberger

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To Joseph and Matthew, my all-American sons

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Abbreviations

ACCA	American Composers' Choral Association
IMTA	Illinois Music Teachers' Association
MMS	Manuscript Music Society (Philadelphia)
MSC	Manuscript Society of Chicago
MSNY	Manuscript Society of New York
MTA	Music Teachers' Association
MTNA	Music Teachers' National Association
NYMTA	New York Music Teachers' Association
OMTA	Ohio Music Teachers' Association
<i>AAJ</i>	<i>American Art Journal</i>
<i>BET</i>	<i>Boston Evening Transcript</i>
<i>BMH</i>	<i>Boston Musical Herald</i>
<i>BMW</i>	<i>Brainard's Musical World</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>The Musical Courier</i>
<i>NYT</i>	<i>New York Times</i>

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Introduction

A tidal wave of encouragement is sweeping over the land, and will assuredly bear upon its crest some native talent capable of and anxious to do honor to his profession and native land.

—Wilson G. Smith, 1888¹

The history of American art music has been characterized by an ongoing struggle for recognition. Owing to the unique evolution of musical life in the United States, American composers of art music—except during portions of the twentieth century—have been marginalized by the society in which they lived. The roots of this marginalization may be found in nineteenth-century America, when there was a growing rift between two musical cultures: one promoting European cultivated music and the other preferring (mostly American) vernacular music. Neither of these cultures had a natural interest in art music by American composers, and, in fact, it could be argued that each viewed it with distrust. Proponents of popular music viewed American art music as pretentious and “highfalutin,” while advocates of classical music were busy promoting the masterworks of the European canon and secretly suspicious that the American variety would not measure up to that lofty standard. American composers in the late nineteenth century, then, faced not only the normal disappointments and struggles that challenge any young composer but also a society that was predisposed to ignore, trivialize, or deprecate their works.

In an effort to show support for the beleaguered American composer, the Music Teachers’ National Association (MTNA) presented a concert of American piano works at its 1884 convention in Cleveland. The time was right for such an effort, and for the next decade, American Composers’ Concerts swept the nation in what Ohio composer Wilson G. Smith called “a tidal wave of encouragement.” The tidal wave, or tsunami, as it is now called by oceanographers, turned out to be an appropriate metaphor for the movement. This rare, but devastating, natural phenomenon typically begins with an undersea earthquake. The resulting disturbance of the water generates a wave or waves that spread out

across the ocean as do the waves on a pond. These waves are amplified as they cover thousands of miles of open ocean at speeds nearing 500 miles per hour. When the waves finally reach a distant shore, their size and power are capable of massive devastation. Wilson's use of the tsunami to symbolize the American Composers' Concert movement was insightful, as it rose rapidly to unprecedented heights and then faded just as rapidly, leaving behind a changed landscape.

The American Composers' Concert movement aimed not only to make audiences aware of the American art music that had already been composed but also to create a climate hospitable to the development of a distinctive American school of composition and the fostering of an American compositional genius if and when one appeared. The movement eventually petered out in the 1890s, as interest shifted from the promotion of American music to the inherent nature of that music—a shift that took its inspiration from Antonín Dvořák's interest in African American and Native American musics as source materials for art music. The movement *per se* lost its momentum, but the idea of performing an entire concert of American music has been revived periodically ever since.

The American Composers' Concert movement took place in an era of trade protectionism in the United States and also coincided with a period of intense missionary work by American Protestant denominations. The promoters of these concerts borrowed practices and attitudes from both of these concurrent trends in American society, a fact that had a significant impact on the development and eventual demise of the movement.

Historians have identified the period from 1886 to 1903 as the Missionary Awakening, or Third Great Awakening. Like the previous awakenings of American history, this one saw a renewed interest in spirituality accompanied by major social upheavals. The special characteristic of the third awakening was concern for the underprivileged of the United States and the unconverted of the rest of the world. During the last two decades of the century, missionary activity expanded dramatically, as a small army of American Protestant missionaries traveled to the most remote corners of the earth to win converts. At the same time, social problems engendered by rapid industrialization and the unequal distribution of wealth gave birth to a new strain of liberal Christianity dubbed the "social gospel." Growing rapidly from 1880 to 1900, this new theological perspective provided an alternative to what proponents viewed as the complacency of orthodox Christianity and shifted the emphasis of faith to a social activism that fed the poor and advocated improved working conditions. Proponents of the social gospel took their missionary zeal to America's urban slums rather than to foreign countries. Even outside the church, social reform was the order of the day as youthful protesters fomented tens of thousands of strikes, and muckraking journalists exposed the corruption of American industry and politics.

The American Composers' Concert movement likewise began as an effort to help an underprivileged group that had been oppressed by unfair competition. In the early years of the movement, the rhetoric of advocacy painted American composers as helpless victims of a system that privileged foreign composers. American concerts were presented as a means to right the injustices of previous practice and lift the impoverished composers to a position of respectability. As

the movement proceeded, it became less believable to characterize American composers as “underprivileged,” and, in fact, the correlation of American Composers’ Concerts with trade protectionism became more typical.

The movement for the encouragement of American composers took place against the backdrop of a larger national debate over trade protectionism. Free trade had been an ideal espoused and protected by southern Democrats before the Civil War, when tariffs on imported goods were kept at historic lows despite the efforts of Northern Republicans to raise them. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Republican Congress was able to increase tariffs as an emergency measure to raise funds to fight the war. During Reconstruction, tariffs remained generally high, contributing to the prosperity of manufacturers and creating a federal budget surplus by the 1880s. Critics of high tariffs claimed that the policy had reduced competition from foreign markets, thereby allowing American manufacturers to form monopolies and trusts to inflate prices; proponents who could no longer argue that the government needed to raise funds through tariffs claimed that protectionist policies helped keep wages high for American workers.

On December 5, 1887, Grover Cleveland, the first Democratic president of the postwar era, delivered a fiery message to Congress advocating a reduction in tariffs. In response to his call to arms, Roger Q. Mills, Democratic chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, fashioned a bill instituting modest tariff reform that was introduced in the spring of 1888. The Mills bill focused the Congress and the nation on trade protectionism as never before, taking up 240 hours of congressional time, the longest debate of any bill in U.S. history to that time.² The bill was passed by the House of Representatives in a strict party vote on July 21 but subsequently weakened by Senate Republicans in the fall. By this time, though, the tariff issue was dominating the presidential election of 1888. Cleveland stood by his previous statement on tariff reduction and did little campaigning. Republican Benjamin Harrison and his supporters portrayed high tariffs as essential to maintaining American standards of living and stemming the onslaught of cheap labor from Europe. In a very close election in November, Harrison lost the popular vote but won the electoral vote.

The Republicans took their victory as a mandate for high tariffs, and new House Ways and Means chairman William McKinley pushed through a new tariff bill that raised tariffs significantly. The McKinley bill was viewed with outrage in Europe and was considered a blow to all but the wealthiest manufacturers in the United States. In the 1890 congressional elections the Republicans were decisively defeated, and two years later Harrison lost the presidency to his erstwhile rival Cleveland. As the nation slipped into a depression in the 1890s and attention shifted to the money issue, the Democrats were unable to repeal the high tariffs. The Republicans came back into power in 1894 and 1896, when they again succeeded in raising tariffs through the Dingley Act of 1897.

Joanne Reitano has argued convincingly that the “Great Debate” over trade protectionism was central to American politics in the late 1880s. The question of which industries should be protected from foreign competition and to what extent they should be supported was not merely academic but a matter of serious consideration by the public and press. Traditional economic policy had advocated protection of “infant industries,” but the question of when an industry no

longer needed protection was crucial in an era of rapid industrial growth. The American Composers' Concert movement was clearly an example of protecting an "infant industry," but the debate over it, like the debate over tariffs, revolved around the question of how long it was appropriate to continue such protection.

The story of this movement is an intriguing chapter in American musical history, in terms of both the large amount of music that resulted from these promotional efforts and the issues that it raised about attempting to mold public taste through protectionist measures. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen not to consider concerts devoted to the works of a single composer, for the simple reasons that these concerts have been common throughout the history of Western music and that they often involve issues of personal promotion that were less evident in the American Composers' Concert movement. The concerts to be discussed featured miscellaneous programs of the works of several composers who had only their American background in common. Typically, these concerts were billed as being restricted to works by "native or resident composers," to allow the inclusion not only of persons born on American soil but of those who had immigrated to the United States, no matter how recently.

This study is designed to provide both a detailed history of the movement and a consideration of the critical response to the idea of all-American concerts. The novelty of the idea in the mid-1880s resulted in such enthusiasm that few critics expressed any reservations whatsoever about the movement. By the late 1880s critics dealt with such musical patriotism more thoughtfully, raising questions and objections about the concerts and the music heard. Finally, by the 1890s the critical tide turned against the movement, forcing promoters into a defensive posture that eventually spelled the end of the movement.

Organized more or less chronologically, this book traces the most important concerts and concert series in separate chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the rare all-American concerts presented before 1884, the date when Calixa Lavallée's concert at the MTNA convention in Cleveland fired the imagination of the American musical world. The second chapter traces the rise of the MTNA through ever more impressive American concerts in its annual conventions from 1884 to 1888. Chapter 3 looks at the role of the *New York Tribune's* chief music critic Henry Krehbiel in focusing the critical debate on nationalism in American music. The fourth chapter examines the Novelty Concerts presented by Frank Van der Stucken in New York, with special emphasis on the critical reaction to his festival of five American concerts in November 1887, a turning point in the maturation of the movement. Chapter 5 deals with the American concert at the Exposition universelle of 1889, analyzing the French critical reaction in light of European stereotypes about Americans. The sixth chapter describes the movement at its height, surveying the many organizations and persons who presented such concerts in the years around 1890. Chapter 7 returns to the MTNA, tracing the rapid decline of the organization from 1889 to 1894, by which time the appeal of American Composers' Concerts had worn off. Chapter 8 looks at the concerts presented by F. X. Arens in Germany and Austria during 1891 and 1892, a time when the concerts were out of fashion in the United States but could still evoke a range of opinion from German critics. The ninth chapter examines the role in the movement of composer Edward MacDowell, who was simultaneously the most famous American composer of art music and

the most vocal opponent of American Composers' Concerts. Chapter 10 is devoted to the American concerts at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, an event marred by poor planning and mismanagement of the money set aside for concerts. Chapter 11 follows the Manuscript Society of New York from its auspicious founding in 1890 through the infighting around 1900 that eventually led to its decline and fall, with consideration of the other manuscript societies in Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The final chapter, in the form of an epilogue, looks at Dvořák's American sojourn in light of the decade of American concerts that had preceded his arrival in 1892. Appendix 1 presents a list of the most prominent concerts of the movement. Appendix 2 lists the programs of the five concerts presented in New York by Frank Van der Stucken in November 1887. Appendix 3 provides the repertoire and a list of known reviews of the concerts in Europe, since these reviews are likely to be less accessible to American readers. Appendix 4 lists the works performed at public meetings of the Manuscript Society of New York from 1890 to 1901. The American Composers' Concert movement inspired thousands of articles, reviews, promotional releases, and other sources; the bibliography is therefore selective rather than exhaustive.

NOTES

1. Wilson G. Smith, "American Compositions in the Class and Concert Room," *The Etude* 6/8 (August 1888): 129.
2. Joanne Reitano, *The Tariff Question in the Gilded Age: The Great Debate of 1888* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 18.

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1

Prelude: All-American Concerts before 1884

A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.

—Matthew 13:57

Before it strikes land, a tsunami is preceded by a lowering of water levels along the coast. For those who have never witnessed the force of this natural disaster, the unusual recession of water can create a deadly complacency. Minutes before the April 1, 1946, tsunami struck the Hawaiian Islands, Hilo Bay was inexplicably drained of water, leaving mudflats where there had always been ocean. Curious residents walked out to see fish flopping on the ground, only to be inundated moments later. One hundred fifty-nine people died that day, including sixteen schoolchildren and five of their teachers at the coastal town of Laupahoe, serving as an object lesson for Hawaiian children to the present day.¹ In a similar fashion, the American Composers' Concert movement was preceded by a low ebb of interest in concerts of American art music, making the following deluge seem even greater by comparison. Indeed, the movement was primarily precipitated by the indignation of those who believed that American composers were being unfairly ignored by performers and audiences. The heights to which the movement rose in the 1880s and 1890s were inversely proportional to the depths from which it had risen in the preceding decades.

When it comes to the art music of their countrymen, Americans have remarkably short memories. As each new generation takes up the cudgel in de-

fense of American composers, they forget—or ignore—the efforts of previous generations. Much as Howard Hanson, Aaron Copland, and their compatriots saw themselves as pioneers in the promotion of American art music in the 1920s and 1930s, the promoters of American Composers’ Concerts of the 1880s believed that they were the first to come up with this idea. In fact, American concerts had enjoyed a brief vogue before the Civil War but had been largely absent from the American scene ever since.

The decade of the 1850s saw a significant growth in art music in the United States, owing, in part, to an influx of German immigrants and the American tours of the Germania Orchestra, Jenny Lind, Sigismund Thalberg, and other European virtuosi. At the same time, local musicians like pianist William Mason and violinist Theodore Thomas raised the standards of performance for musical soloists and ensembles. New Orleans-born Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869) established an international reputation as a pianist and composer, bringing European attention to American music for the first time.

Composers William H. Fry (1813–1864) and George F. Bristow (1825–1898) were vocal advocates for American composers. Fry used his position as music critic for the *New York Tribune* to campaign for more recognition of American music, and he engaged in a heated war of letters with Richard Storrs Willis of the *Musical World and Times* in 1853–54 over critical response to new American works. He took issue with Storrs and John Sullivan Dwight over their preference for German music at a time when he believed that American composers were coming into their own.² Bristow likewise felt that American composers were neglected during this era. A conductor of various ensembles and a longtime member of the violin section of the New York Philharmonic, he resigned from the orchestra during the 1853–54 season to protest its lack of performances of American works. Many of his own compositions were on American subjects, including the opera *Rip Van Winkle* (1855), the cantata *The Pioneer, or Westward Ho!* (1872), and his *Arcadian* (1872) and *Niagara* (1893) Symphonies.

In this atmosphere of musical expansion and nationalistic awareness, a group of New York musicians led by Charles Jerome Hopkins (1836–1898) founded the American Music Association for the purpose of performing concerts devoted to the works of American composers. A letter of June 16, 1855, to the editor of the *Musical World*—signed, significantly, *Justitia*—outlined Hopkins’ goals, which were remarkably similar to those that would be expressed by leaders of the American Composers’ Concert movement thirty years later. The group sought to counter the perception that American composers had not produced anything of lasting worth by giving good performances of the best American works available. The definition of the word “American” was characteristically broad: “It has not been considered necessary to confine the privilege of membership to native Americans, but to allow foreigners to belong thereto, provided only their principles are Republican, and their aim be, in common with us, the production of native art.” The fundamental idea behind the organization was the notion that American composers needed only a fair opportunity to have their works heard in order to win respect and acceptance. The letter concluded:

We think it will only be necessary for it to be generally known that there is now a chance for all young Americans who desire to distinguish themselves by musical composition to have their labors rewarded by a fair trial and impartial criticism, to secure the good will and cooperation of many individuals who otherwise would be disposed to throw a bucket of cold water upon the embryo idea of such a thing. But to all those who object to it on the ground that American music is not good music, it is unclassical, plagiaristic, or unfit to be compared with German productions, we would say, "Give it a fair trial." If Americans do not know how to compose now, it does not follow that they never *will* know how.³

Not for the last time in American history, the idealistic members of this group discovered that merely providing a "fair trial and impartial criticism" did not guarantee the acceptance of American art music. The society presented three concerts in the winter and spring of 1856, four concerts the following season, and three in its third season before disbanding. Though critics were generally supportive of the goals of the society, complaints about the concerts increased over the group's three-year history. Henry C. Watson of *Leslie's* objected after the second season to the selection process for new works. Theodore Hagen of the *New-York Musical Review and Gazette*, a critic who had recently arrived from Germany, where he had been a well-known writer on musical topics and contributor to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, repeatedly called for the organization to broaden its scope beyond purely American works. Willis was supportive of the organization but objected to the five-dollar fee required of each composer who submitted a manuscript.⁴

Despite the participation of Gottschalk, Fry, Bristow, and William Mason, the group could not be sustained beyond its third season. *Dwight's Journal of Music* credited the demise of the organization to the financial panic of 1857,⁵ but the effort to give American composers a hearing required a significant amount of administration, and its failure may also have been due to the fact that most of the work fell on the shoulders of one man. As Willis noted after the second season: "'Jerome' is the President of the Society; or rather he is the Vice-President, Financier, all the Directors, Agent, and almost Door-keeper and Type-setter of the programmes—in short, he is the Society itself. He started it, keeps it in a state of active vitality, lives in it and for it; in a very close sense he is engaged to it, and one of these days, for aught we see to prevent, will marry it."⁶ Though his pet project foundered after three seasons, Hopkins remained active in music until his death in 1898, becoming increasingly eccentric in old age. His letters to the editors of *The Musical Courier* provided amusement throughout the 1880s, as he repeatedly aired his individualistic opinions and touted his concerts and compositions.⁷

After the dissolution of the American Music Society, all-American concerts were a rarity. The society had proved that there was already sufficient music available in the late 1850s to sustain a concert series, but the perception persisted that American composers were in such a fledgling state that they had not yet produced an evening's worth of significant music. This notion became increasingly untenable in the 1860s and 1870s, as two young composers rose to prominence and established new career patterns for American musicians.

John Knowles Paine (1839–1906) was a native of Portland, Maine. He spent the years 1858–1861 in Berlin, studying organ and composition with Karl

August Haupt and others. Upon his return to the United States he settled in Boston, where he was appointed instructor of music at Harvard in 1862, eventually earning the honor of the first professorship in music at that tradition-bound institution in 1875. The appointment of a composer to an academic position and, indeed, the inclusion of a department of music in a university were new ideas in America at this time. Some of the members of the Harvard faculty felt that music had no place in an academic setting, being more appropriate for a conservatory. The high standards of Paine had much to do with changing that view, and by the turn of the twentieth century, nearly every major American university had a music department, led in many cases by a composer.

In part because of his prestigious position at Harvard, Paine enjoyed an unusual amount of success as a composer. His first and second symphonies were hailed as the equal of contemporary European works, and by the time of the American Composers' Concert movement, he was regarded as the senior statesman of American art music. He was perhaps the only composer of the era whose works were performed frequently before the advent of American Composers' Concerts. As such he was a model and an inspiration to his struggling younger colleagues.

Paine's compositional ideals were also influential. He believed that the best models for American composers of art music were the German masters from Haydn to his own day. He believed that the United States was essentially a European nation and that close connections to Europe were crucial for progress in art music. Recognizing the importance of European approval as a prelude to acceptance in the United States, he premiered his monumental *Mass in D* (1867) in Berlin, before a receptive audience that included members of the Prussian and British royal families. He made no apologies for composing in a cosmopolitan style rather than the nationalistic style of his contemporaries Gottschalk and Stephen Foster, urging his students to do likewise. His widely publicized views on the desirability of the cosmopolitan style were profoundly influential on his contemporaries, dominating the entire era of the American Composers' Concerts.

Dudley Buck (1839–1909) was also a composer and organist who studied in Germany, but, unlike Paine, he spent most of his career as a church musician rather than an academic. He was in Germany at approximately the same time as Paine, studying in Leipzig, Dresden, and Paris. He also returned to the United States during the Civil War, starting his professional career in his hometown of Hartford, Connecticut, moving on to Chicago and Boston, and eventually settling in Brooklyn in 1875. Except for a brief stint at the New England Conservatory in the early 1870s, he devoted his principal energies to composing, conducting, and organ playing.

As music director at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn, one of the country's most prominent churches, he enjoyed a position of respect in sacred music circles. While there he published numerous organ works and sacred choral works. His chief contributions to art music, though, were in the genre of the secular cantata. In particular, *The Voyage of Columbus* (1885) and *The Light of Asia* (1886) were timed perfectly to capitalize on the popularity of American Composers' concerts. His rousing *Festival Overture on the Star-Spangled Banner* for orchestra (1879) was heard repeatedly during the era. Like Paine, he

cultivated a style that was more cosmopolitan than nationalistic, recognizing that conservative American audiences felt most comfortable with the familiar sounds of European music.

If Paine and Buck achieved a modicum of success in postwar America, they were exceptions to the rule. In general, concerts of art music were dominated by European music, as conductors like Theodore Thomas pursued an agenda of introducing American audiences to the classic European repertoire. With no international copyright law in place, American publishers found it cheaper to pirate European works than to pay royalties to American composers. The American works that did find publishers were mostly light music or in the easily performable genres of songs, choral works, and piano compositions. Larger vocal works were occasionally published, but it was not until 1881 that the first American symphony (Paine's second) was published.

In this climate, the performance of an entire evening of American music was a rarity. The American centennial celebration of 1876 would seem to have presented an ideal opportunity for this sort of patriotic concert, but that was not the case. For the opening ceremonies in Philadelphia, Theodore Thomas commissioned works from both Paine and Buck, but these were overshadowed by the infamous *Centennial March* commissioned from Richard Wagner and performed on the same occasion.⁸

The following spring brought a pair of performances that were the best-publicized concerts of American art music before Lavallée's 1884 recital. Annette Essipoff (1851–1914), the brilliant Russian piano virtuosa, made her first tour of the United States in 1876–1877. Near the conclusion of her tour, she performed all-American recitals in New York (May 5) and Boston (May 12). In both cases she placed the American program prominently on Saturday evening after a week of mixed recitals, and she was reported to have dressed the stage with red, white, and blue decorations. The programs consisted entirely of short, brilliant compositions that showcased her virtuoso technique.⁹ All those represented were living composers with the exception of Louis Moreau Gottschalk, and Essipoff took the opportunity to program several works by William H. Sherwood (1854–1911), a young pianist who had recently returned to Boston after studying in Germany.

Despite her best efforts to create auspicious events, the critics were not kind in their comments on the two recitals. The reviewer for the *New York Times* called the evening “a programme of minor compositions by American musicians,” going on to state:

Gottschalk, Mills, Mason, Hoffman, and other composers were represented by light parlor pieces, none of which, however, afforded much testimony in favor of America's chances as a rival of Germany or Italy. Mme. Essipoff was not at her best, either, on the occasion we write of, and in the most effective because most characteristic works chosen for performance—that is to say, in Gottschalk's—she sacrificed both accent and expression to brilliant mechanism.¹⁰

The critic for the *Boston Evening Transcript* called the concert “precious time wasted,” adding a characteristic jab at the inadequacies of American composers: “The main thing interesting about it was to observe how the artist's genius

embellished and illuminated the composition in hand, which often suffered change into something rich and strange that the composer had but dimly conceived.”¹¹ Thus, the critics disposed of the most prominent American concerts of the decade.

All-American concerts remained a novelty in the years following, even as the works of Paine, Buck, and other younger composers gained prominence in mixed concerts. The Wellesley College of Music was inaugurated on May 30, 1881, with a concert of American art music performed by William Sherwood and the Beethoven Quartette, earning a brief paragraph in the *Transcript*.¹² Adolph Liesegang’s Chicago orchestra performed concerts of works by local composers on March 27, 1881, and August 5, 1884. Theodore Thomas tried another American concert in his 1882 summer series in Chicago, to a lukewarm response:

That “a prophet is not without honor save in his own country” has oftentimes been verified. Music, American of the classic order, seldom enlists a large portion of a programme, but that presented for the delectation of the large audience assembled at the Exposition Building last evening bore the inspiring title, “American Composers’ Night.” Something new and strange, even though it be replete with the charm of originality, can hardly be expected to raise a conservative audience to a furor of applause. So it was that the programme last evening, while its many excellencies were evidently appreciated, aroused but little enthusiasm. . . . The number for the finish fell to Strauss and Wagner, American by popularity.¹³

But change was already in the air. Since 1877 the country’s most widely read musical journal, *Brainard’s Musical World*, had been profiling American musicians with monthly biographical sketches, calling attention to a growing body of native composers and performers.¹⁴ A new journal founded in 1880, *The Musical Courier*, had been agitating for recognition for American composers in ever stronger terms. Its editor Otto Floersheim was himself a composer, and in the December 12, 1883, issue he published a proposal for an “American Composers’ Society” with the purpose of performing and publishing American works.¹⁵ Two weeks later an unsigned article decried “The Foreign Craze” in American music and drama.¹⁶ This growing dissatisfaction over foreign domination of art music coincided with both the missionary movement and the trade protectionist movement, which were increasingly attracting attention in America. The stage was set for a new movement that would give preference to American composers and right the wrongs of the previous decades. All that was lacking was a catalyst.

NOTES

1. Walter C. Dudley and Min Lee, *Tsunami!*, second edition (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1998), p. 42.

2. Betty E. Chmaj, “Fry versus Dwight: American Music’s Debate over Nationality,” *American Music* 3/1 (Spring 1985): 63–84.

3. The entire letter is reprinted in Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: Reverberations, 1850–56* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 749–50.

4. Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: Repercussions, 1857–1862* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 74–75, 204.

5. Trovator, “Musical Correspondence,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 16/16 (January 14, 1860): 333.

6. *Musical World* (June 6, 1857), quoted in Lawrence, *Repercussions*, 74, n. 9.

7. See also Nicolas Slonimsky, “The Flamboyant Pioneer,” in *A Thing or Two about Music* (New York: Allen, Towne & Heath, 1948), pp. 250–56.

8. For further information on Wagner’s role in this event, see Abram Loft, “Richard Wagner, Theodore Thomas, and the American Centennial,” *Musical Quarterly* 37/2 (April 1951): 184–202. According to Lawrence W. Levine, *High-brow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 118, Thomas also included an American concert in his ill-fated series of orchestral concerts at the Edwin Forrest Estate.

9. The program of the New York recital (incorrectly dated as May 15, 1877) may be found in Mrs. Crosby Adams, “American Composition in 1877,” *Music* 19/4 (February 1901): 432–33. The Boston program is listed in *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 37/4 (May 26, 1877): 32. Dwight was unable to attend the recital and therefore did not include a review.

10. “Amusements,” *NYT*, May 7, 1877, p. 5.

11. “Musical,” *BET*, May 14, 1877, p. 1.

12. “Musical: Wellesley College of Music,” *BET*, May 31, 1881, p. 1.

13. “Amusements: Thomas Concert.” *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, August 3, 1882; clipping without page number in Frederic Grant Gleason scrapbook, I: 164–65, Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago.

14. For reprints of this complete series, see *Brainard’s Biographies of American Musicians*, ed. E. Douglas Bomberger (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999).

15. Otto Floersheim, “An American Composers’ Society,” *MC* 7/24 (December 12, 1883): 343.

16. “The Foreign Craze,” *MC* 7/26 (December 26, 1883): 375.