

George Whitefield Chadwick: The Life and Music of the Pride of New England. Bill F. Faucett. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012. xii, 416 pages, 12 illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-1-55553-773-9 (paperback)

The name of George Whitefield Chadwick (1854–1931) is perhaps an unfamiliar one to the general reader, but anyone curious about the flourishing of art music composition and the establishment of musical institutions in the late nineteenth-century United States is urged to turn his or her attention to Bill Faucett's engaging and eminently readable biography of one of this nation's most significant turn-of-the-century composers and music educators. Unlike Chadwick's previous biographers, Faucett is the first scholar able to make thorough use of the composer's own correspondence, diaries, and memoirs, which are now archived at the New England Conservatory of Music. Hence, in the present book, the reader gains a real sense of Chadwick's personality and opinions through many of his own words. Faucett's text reveals Chadwick as the ambitious, hardworking, inquisitive, talented, opinionated, assertive, sociable, loyal, and good-humored man that he undoubtedly was—all the qualities desirable in a prolific composer, a beloved teacher, and an esteemed music conservatory administrator.

This new biography is the culmination of Faucett's many years of study and two previous books on Chadwick. The late 1990s saw the issue of both his bio-bibliography on the composer (an invaluable reference work for the researcher) and his analytical monograph of the composer's symphonic output. The current work is Faucett's first aimed at general music-lovers rather than music professionals, and if this book serves to heighten readers' and listeners' familiarity with the life and music of Chadwick, then Faucett will have done a great service for the history of American art music. Here, the author constructs a comprehensive narrative of the composer's life and career that incorporates straightforward descriptions of Chadwick's principal compositions. Faucett has opted to forego the use of notated music examples, but he does include a carefully chosen selection of photographic reproductions.

Across its fourteen chapters, the book traces a roughly chronological progression through Chadwick's career, beginning with the most thorough untangling yet of the family's pre-Revolutionary-era American ancestry, and moving quickly past the composer's early musical training and his period of study in Europe. The pace broadens for Chadwick's crucial decades of the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s, his most prolific composing phase and the period during which he was busy consolidating his preeminent position in the American musical scene. During these years, Chadwick's musical activities ranged from church organist and private composition instructor to choral festival conductor, conservatory professor, and even Broadway songwriter (for the musical comedy *Tabasco*). Chapter seven—conveniently the book's halfway point—heralds a key juncture in Chadwick's career, as he becomes the director of the New England Conservatory of Music in 1897. The chapter opens with a vivid portrait of an institution in organizational shambles before Chadwick takes the reins and ultimately, over a quarter-century-plus tenure, reshapes the conservatory into the leading U.S. school of music at the time.

Yet in retelling this middle period of Chadwick's career, Faucett's chronicle grows increasingly complicated. Chadwick was simply too busy of a composer, conductor, and administrator to yield a straightforward accounting of his activities. Faucett separates Chadwick's various musical outlets into topically organized chapters (chapters 6–9), but this results in a multitude of overlapping and interlocking narratives. An historical event, composition, or professional associate might receive only passing mention at first, before Faucett eventually circles back around in a subsequent chapter to supply a more thorough discussion, thus leaving the reader with a tricky amount of information to sort out on his or her own. But should one persevere through these narrative thickets, a reader's patience is amply rewarded. In the book's latter half, as the pace of Chadwick's career slows, Faucett achieves a greater narrative expansiveness, extending the book's scope and relevance beyond the composer alone to include a more

wide-ranging picture of early twentieth-century Boston's musical and cultural scene. Among other topics, there is much valuable information here on the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its conductors, the short-lived Boston Opera Company, and the profound impact of World War I on the city's musical life.

Throughout this chronicle of events, Faucett regularly steps aside from his narrative to provide musical descriptions of Chadwick's large-scale symphonic, choral, and chamber works. While these are placed helpfully within the chronological framework, in tone such passages read like record liner or program notes. When a recording of a given work is available, then these might function as a useful listener's guide, but when no recordings exist, as is true of Chadwick's First Symphony, then the descriptions—particularly in the absence of notated music examples—offer little that might help to bring the music alive in a reader's mind. Likewise, one could wish for greater analytical or interpretive insights about the music itself than Faucett seems interested to provide. Clearly the author wished to avoid unnecessarily specialized musical jargon, given his intended general readership, but when he does aim at a loftier target—as is the case with his intriguing reading of Chadwick's *Tam O'Shanter* as an orchestral critique against the perceived Germanic aggression that precipitated the First World War (286–93)—one is left with a sense of missed opportunities elsewhere in the book.

Ultimately, Faucett's biography of Chadwick does indeed “provide a useful corrective to stubborn misconceptions” about the composer's life and works (2). Later American composers, particularly Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein, took a self-serving, patronizing view towards Chadwick and others of his generation, diminishing their accomplishments for being too closely tied to the traditions of European Romanticism. Faucett's study, on the other hand, helps us to view Chadwick not as a backwards-looking conservative, but rather as one whose music instead “relied on a rich tradition” of music-making as it looked towards the American future (342). Indeed, when one considers Chadwick's legacy of composition pupils, including Horatio Parker, Arthur Foote, Henry Hadley, Frederick Converse, Arthur Farwell, Mabel Daniels, Edward Burlingame Hill, Daniel Gregory Mason, and William Grant Still, it becomes quite apparent that his sphere of influence reached across much of the United States for decades to come. Writing about Chadwick's stature at the time of his death, Faucett describes him as “the towering composer who had dominated music in Boston since the 1880s” (340). This admirable biography successfully argues that Chadwick's significance reaches beyond merely parochial interest. Indeed, it should be read by anyone with an interest in the nation's cultural and musical life across the turn of the century.

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