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Main content

Article Preview :

The Great American Symphony: Music, The Depression, and War. By Nicholas Tawa. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. [xi, 237 p. ISBN 978-0-253-35305-4. \$24.95]

Nicholas Tawa is Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, a cofounder of what is now the Society for American Music (formerly the Sonneck Society), and the author of numerous articles and books on various types of American music. The author notes in his preface that his goal is "... to establish the importance of the American symphonists active in the years from the mid-thirties to the end of the forties." This volume is not, however, a scholarly study, but rather a "labor of love," with a "... focus [that] is as much personal as learned." He is attracted to the symphonies discussed because they exhibit the ability to communicate to a larger audience, in contrast to the works of the modernist movement which appealed to only a select few.

At the center of Tawa's monograph are three chapters dealing with, respectively, the symphonies of the mid- to late thirties, the symphonies of the World War II years, and the symphonies of the years immediately following the war. Each chapter has a similar construction: a brief introduction, giving an historical overview of the period, and discussing music's societal role during that period, followed by brief discussions of five or six symphonies from the period, in conjunction with a brief biographical discussion of their composers. It is not Tawa's intent to provide detailed analytical commentary;...

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the Sonneck Society, now the Society for American Music. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts. Country of Publication. Sort field for winners: Great American Symphony: music, the depression, and war. Winner Description: Tawa, Nicholas; Indiana, 2009. Title of a book, article or other published item (this will display to the public): The Great American Symphony: music, the Depression, and war. ISBN of the winning item: 9780253353054. What type of media is this winner? The years of the Great Depression, World War II, and their aftermath brought a sea change in American music. This period of economic, social, and political adversity can truly be considered a musical golden age. In the realm of classical music, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Howard Hanson, Virgil Thompson, and Leonard Bernstein -- among others -- produced symphonic works of great power and lasting beauty during these troubled years. It was during this critical decade and a half that contemporary writers on American culture began to speculate about "the Great American Symphony" and loo Get this from a library! The Great American Symphony : music, the Depression, and war. [Nicholas E Tawa] -- From the Publisher: The years of the Great Depression, World War II, and their aftermath brought a sea change in American music. This period of economic, social, and political adversity can truly be ... From the Publisher: The years of the Great Depression, World War II, and their aftermath brought a sea change in American music. This period of economic, social, and political adversity can truly be considered a musical golden age. In the realm of classical music, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Howard Hanson, Virgil Thompson, and Leonard Bernstein-among others-produced symphonic works of great power and lasting beauty during these troubled years.