Women's Volunteerism, State Propaganda, and Subsidies for New Music in the USA: Following the Money on CRI 145

DANIELLE FOSLER-LUSSIER

Abstract

In 1961, the National Council of Women of the United States and the National Federation of Music Clubs sponsored a long-playing record of contemporary music by five American women composers: Mary Howe, Louise Talma, Julia Perry, Vivian Fine, and Mabel Daniels. As project organizers Anne Hull and Grace Spofford intended, the LP immediately became part of the US government's propaganda program: the United States Information Agency circulated copies worldwide, as did the two sponsoring organizations. The making of this record, published by Composers Recordings, Inc. as CRI 145, allows us to witness a remarkable entanglement of interests: how volunteers assisted the government in projects that aligned with their own long-standing purposes; how musicians inside the United States recruited resources from US government agencies that were intended to reach people in other countries; and how government patronage supported an ostensibly private industry. Tracing the funding and labor that went into Hull and Spofford's "special record project" demonstrates that hidden subsidies from the US government and the work of women volunteers altered the market for new music in the United States.

In early 1961 the pianist and pedagogue Anne Hull asked music club members all over the United States to send money in support of a "unique and altruistic" project. Hull reminded club members of their "ardent interest" in promoting American compositions.[1] Then she described a way for them to further that goal: the creation of a long-playing record documenting the music of American women composers. Writing in *Showcase*, the magazine of the National Federation of Music Clubs, Hull called on the Federation's members to join the National Council of Women of the United States in sending tax-exempt contributions to defray the cost of making the recording.

[1] Anne Hull, "Special Record Project: American Women Composers To Be Heard," *Showcase: Music Clubs Magazine* 40, no. 3 (1961): 37. Throughout their advocacy for the record project, Hull and her colleague Grace Spofford asserted that the National Federation of Music Clubs had 600,000 members; this number has proved difficult to confirm. As of this writing, the Federation's website claims more than 90,000 members. National Federation of Music Clubs, "About Us," https://www.nfmc-music.org/about-us/.

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Figure 1: Portrait of Anne Hull, credited to Blackstone-Shelburne, New York. Library of Congress, Music Division, Anne Hull Papers, box 4, folder 39. A good faith effort has been made to locate the copyright holder.

Hull explained that this record had a role to play in US foreign relations. The International Council of Women—the umbrella organization to which the National Council belonged—had held its triennial conference in Montreal in 1957.[2] There, Hull reported, delegations from National Councils of Women from several countries had brought "many fine records of serious music" by women composers—"while we Americans had hardly a handful!"[3] At the next triennial conference in Istanbul, Hull hoped, the National Council of Women of the United States would be able to represent American music by bringing their own recordings and playing them for convention delegates from around the world.

Important as this international conference might be, the National Federation of Music Clubs ("the Federation") and the National Council of Women of the United States ("the NCW") aimed higher still. They envisioned this recording as an intervention that would achieve a substantial global reach. Their joint fundraising appeal framed the need in the broadest geopolitical terms:

> In the contest between freedom and communism, a major battleground is in the field of the creative arts. In order to support the argument that freedom is the ideal climate for the full flowering of the creative arts, every possible opportunity for presenting convincing evidence should be utilized.[4]

After the record was released later in 1961 as CRI 145, it immediately entered the stream of musical propaganda distributed by the US government. The United States Information Agency (USIA) purchased

[2] Twenty-nine nations from five continents sent delegations. International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting,* Montreal, Canada, June 5–15, 1957 (Conseil international des femmes, n.d.), 157–63.
[3] Hull, "Special Record Project," 37.
[4] "Project: To record and distribute representative works of important American women composers" [open letter to donors], April 22, 1960, p. 1. Smith College Archives, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, SSC-MS-00150, Grace Harriet Spofford Papers [**hereafter Smith/Spofford**], box 18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee Recordings of American Women Composers."

at least 255 copies for distribution to its libraries in East and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.[5] USIA's Music Advisor, Angelo Eagon, sent a thank-you note to the NCW, praising their work and asking to be kept informed of their future projects.[6] The NCW also made their own efforts to promote the record, sending copies to the forty-five other countries represented in the International Council of Women (ICW) and ensuring that it would be played on the radio all over the United States.[7]

Figure 2: Album cover for the "Special Record Project," released in 1961 as CRI 145. The flower that forms the center of the cover is a stylized version of a sakura, or cherry blossom, a symbol of Japan; the stars and the choice of red, white, and blue emphasize the US-made content of the album. The small print at the bottom reads: "Sponsored by the National Council of Women of the U.S., Inc. and the National Federation of Music Clubs."

This article explains how women's voluntary organizations, individual musicians, music institutions, and government agencies worked together to make Hull's "special record project" a reality. This long-playing record is not a typical example of musicians' engagement in US government propaganda activities—as Hull claimed, it is "unique." But was it "altruistic"? Throughout the first six decades of the twentieth century, Federation members had built institutions to support classical music in the United States. They also demonstrated the existence and excellence of American classical music to peoples abroad,

[5] [Angelo Eagon], "Contents of Packets of Phonograph Recordings Sent to the Field in F.Y. 1962." National Archives at College Park, RG 306, General Records of the United States Information Agency, [**hereafter NA/USIA**]; Historical Collection; Entry A1-1066, Subject Files, 1953-2000; Music, 1948-2000; box 197, folder "Music, 1961."
[6] "It's Music to Our Ears!" *Bulletin of the National Council of Women of the United States* 9, no. 4 (1962): 4, Smith/Spofford, box 18, folder "National Council of Women."
[7] "Report of NCW Music Committee for Biennial Meeting," October 10, 1962, Smith/Spofford, box 18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes"; Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, President, NCW, letter to Anne Hull, September 25, 1961, Library of Congress, Music Division, Anne Hull Papers [**hereafter LC/Hull**], box 4, folder 20. See also "Comments from National Councils Abroad on Recording of American Women Composers," New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division, MssCol 2103, Records of the National Council of Women of the United States, 1888–ca.1970, Microfiche Edition, [**hereafter NYPL/NCW**], box 12, folder 13, fiche 445. Hereafter box/folder numbers are abbreviated: e.g. b12 f13. On the broadcasting project, see Merle Montgomery, "We're on the Air! It's Time to Tune In!" *Music Clubs Magazine* 51, no. 5 (1972): 5.

"acquainting the rest of the world with the very worthwhile works penned by Americans."[8] Theirs was no small ambition: Federation leaders aimed "to make America the Music Center of the World."[9] To the Federation's members, the work of propagating concert music composed in the United States felt like volunteerism, and they systematically raised money and moved information to advance their cause. Their voluntary advocacy also purposefully advanced the propaganda interests of the US government and the commercial interests of American musicians.[10]

Examining the intervention these volunteers made with their "special record project" allows us to see the interplay of these interests. First, the record reveals the substantive engagement of US musicians at home with US government programs that were intended to reach people in other countries. The Federation and the NCW maintained contact with US government agencies, and both organizations explained government programs to their members. We will see that the record's content aligned very well with the talking points the US government was trying to convey worldwide. The US government in turn understood the utility of women's labor and used it in distinctive ways.[11]

Second, this record's creation allows us to see how government patronage altered the market for new music in the United States. Hull's record project relied in several ways on government resources. Congress had appropriated these funds for the creation and distribution of propaganda that furthered US interests, not to support the arts. But as the US propaganda apparatus expanded rapidly in the 1950s, musicians found numerous ways to use these resources to advance their work. Emily Abrams Ansari has described how a group of male composers acquired influence over the State Department's Cultural Presentations program: these men used their role as expert consultants to direct that program toward US

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[8] *N.F.M.C. Proceedings, 1937–39,* 140–41. National Federation of Music Clubs Archives, Greenwood, Indiana [**hereafter NFMC**], series Activities/Projects, b21, folder "Activities/Programs, International Music Relations." Men were permitted to join the Federation and served in significant roles, but the Federation was organized and led by women, and the vast majority of members were women. On advocacy for music by women's organizations, including the Federation, see Linda Whitesitt, "'The Most Potent Force' in American Music: The Role of Women's Music Clubs in American Concert Life," in Judith Lang Zaimont et al., eds., *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*, vol. 3 (Greenwood Press, 1991): 663–81; Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890–1930* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 44–75; Marian Wilson Kimber, "Amy Beach and the Women's Club Movement," in E. Douglas Bomberger, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Amy Beach* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 22–37, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108991124.003; Marian Wilson Kimber, "Musical Iowana: Iowa Women's Clubs and the Promotion of Iowa," *The Annals of Iowa* 78, no. 4 (2019), 334, 340–41, https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.12610; and Wilson Kimber's forthcoming book.

[9] "Federation Aims," *The Musical Monitor: The Official Magazine of the National Federation of Music Clubs* 9, no. 4 (1920): 162. See also Addye Yeargain Hall, "The New Course of Study for Juvenile and Junior Clubs," *Official Bulletin of the National Federation of Music Clubs* 2, no. 2 (1922): 4. Thanks to Phoebe Hughes and Sarah Rosemann for paid assistance in securing and scouring Federation sources.

[10] The historian Kenneth Osgood defines propaganda as "words and deeds used for their impact on the perceptions and attitudes of others." Per Osgood, propaganda always seeks to persuade; it does not necessarily include lies or ill intent. Kenneth A. Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (University Press of Kansas, 2006), 185. The commitment to global messaging about the United States was a key component of US foreign policy during and after the Second World War. See Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (University of California Press, 2015), 3–9, 216–18, and corresponding endnotes, https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520284135.001.0001.

[11] On government recruitment of women, see Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (Manchester University Press and Palgrave, 2002), 45–63, 171–192; and Laville, "The Committee of Correspondence: CIA Funding of Women's Groups, 1952–1967," in *Eternal Vigilance? 50 Years of the CIA,* ed. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Christopher Andrew (Frank Cass, 1997), 104–21.

classical music, benefiting their colleagues and their segment of the music industry.[12] Most of the women involved with the Federation and the NCW profited less directly from their support for the government's programs. But these women recognized that government programs could help them achieve their long-standing goal of winning respect for American classical music abroad.

The remarkable collaborative effort that led to the worldwide distribution of Hull's record allows us to see a larger pattern in which US musicians recruited US government resources to support their projects. Each of these entanglements of interests is too complex to treat fully in this article, but the special record project sheds some light on each of them, allowing us to witness women volunteers' agency in moving music markets and government power and the profound impact of indirect US government support in advancing the cause of "new music" in the United States.

Sponsoring Organizations and Women's Ambitions

Anne Hull (1888–1984) and her colleague Grace Spofford (1887–1974) were the two individuals most committed to the record project. They had likely known each other since the 1910s, when both studied and taught at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore.[13] Spofford was the first dean of the Curtis Institute of Music, then directed the Henry Street Settlement Music School in New York. She "retired" in 1954, but spent the next twenty years working ceaselessly to build international connections through music. Spofford was the Federation's Chairman of International Music Relations; chaired the NCW's Music Committee; and served as Vice-Convener of the ICW's Standing Committee on Arts and Letters. She traveled widely for UNESCO events, served on President Eisenhower's People-to-People Music Committee, and was present at the founding of the International Society for Music Education. She was in touch with numerous government officials and executives in non-governmental organizations that were doing international music work. She was an important figure in conveying US government and United Nations initiatives to music organizations, and vice versa. These organizations, in turn, saw Spofford and other connected women as a resource that amplified their work.

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[12] Emily Abrams Ansari, "Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy: An Epistemic Community of American Composers," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 41–52, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2011.01007.x; and Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 39–55, 66–67, 80–86, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190649692.001.0001. For a related case of musicians advising major US foundations, see Michael Sy Uy, *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller, and the NEA Changed American Music* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 38–44, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197510445.001.0001.

[13] Anne Adlum Hull earned an Artist Diploma and Teacher's Certificate (1913) from the Peabody Institute. A professional pianist, she performed with major orchestras and toured with Mary Howe as a piano duo. She taught piano, piano pedagogy, and music appreciation at Peabody, Greenwich House Music School, Henry Street Settlement Music School (under Spofford), and the Juilliard School. (CV in LC/Hull b5 f10.) Grace Harriet Spofford graduated from Smith College in 1909, spent two years as piano instructor at the University of Heidelberg, then completed the Teacher's Certificate (1913) and Organ Certificate (1916) at Peabody, soon rising to leadership there. See S. Margaret William McCarthy, "Grace Spofford: Educator, Internationalist, and Organization Woman," *IAWM Journal* 2, no. 1 (1996): 17–21, https://iawm.org/wp-content/uploads/journal-archives/Volume2-No1-February-1996-FINAL.pdf.

Figure 3: Portrait of Grace Spofford, credited to Sarony, New York. Courtesy of Smith College Archives, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, SSC-MS-00150, Grace Harriet Spofford Papers, box 2, folder "Photographs—G. Spofford."

Inspired by the efforts of UNESCO and the new cultural exchange programs of the US government, Spofford approached the NCW with a proposal to make a record of women's music in 1954. She was rebuffed by Ruth Ottaway Sokoloff, who refused to support the project because women were not producing music of equal quality to that of men: "We cannot fathom why women are not so successful at composing, but they are not." Sokoloff added guiltily, "I should not have dampened Grace's ardor about records of women's works and playing them at the Triennial . . . [but] we could not be proud of the very light program of non-inevitable music which they would probably hear."[14] Sokoloff's dismissal of women artists was not unusual in the NCW or in the Federation. Although Sokoloff saw the NCW's Music Committee as a "clearing house" that should disseminate information about "women's creative work in letters, art and music," the NCW's investment in the arts was small and scattershot.[15] Likewise, the Federation aimed to promote music of the United States, at home and abroad: music created by women was only a part of that ambition, and when the Federation wanted expert opinions it frequently turned to male composers and conductors, not to women. Even so, the Federation did sometimes sponsor projects that advanced the music of women composers—and Hull and Spofford were both committed to that cause.[16] Hull had a financial interest in this topic: while teaching piano and music appreciation in New York, she was also working as the New York business manager for the composer Mary Howe. Hull and Spofford worked together on the NCW's Music Committee, and both were active in the Federation's leadership. They teamed up to move both of these large organizations at the same time.

[14] Ruth Ottaway Sokoloff to Charlotte [Leyden, NCW President], November 3, 1954, NYPL/NCW b12 f1, fiche 436. Ottaway was a longtime member of the Federation's Board of Directors (president 1929–1933) and held numerous leadership positions in both the Federation and the NCW from the 1920s to the 1950s. Leyden was working closely with the United States Information Agency: see Ethel Schroeder (IOC), Memorandum to Miss Wanda Allender (I/R) thru Mr. John Begg (IOC), July 28, 1954, NA/USIA; Entry A1 56, Subject Files, 1953–1967; b6 f8, "National Council of Negro Women."
[15] Ruth Ottaway Sokoloff, letter to Mrs. Seton, Mrs. Horch, and Miss Spofford, November 11, 1953, NYPL/NCW b12 f1, fiche 436.
[16] See Marian Wilson Kimber's forthcoming book for discussion of clubwomen's advocacy for women composers.

Even though the record project aligned with these organizations' long-standing interest in international work, women's music was not a top priority for them, so it would take many months for Hull and Spofford to convince them. The ICW and the independent national councils affiliated with it grew out of the women's suffrage movement, but their agenda was not limited to voting rights: they sought to "overthrow all forms of ignorance and injustice," seeking educational equity, equal pay, and "the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom, and law."[17] The ICW (founded 1888) had begun with delegates from North America, Western Europe, and India; by the 1960s it had grown to comprise national councils in more than forty countries, many in the global south, and it had consultative representation at the United Nations. The NCW (also founded 1888) was itself a federation that claimed more than four million members. Its leadership consisted of delegates from dozens of national women's organizations—including voluntary associations representing formal and informal political organizations, racial or ethnic minorities, religious groups, specific professions, and more.[18]

This multi-level federated structure meant that information about the goals, programs, and fundraising efforts of the United Nations and its cultural arm, UNESCO, flowed out from the ICW's central leadership to many thousands of women volunteers who were willing to work on them. As an NCW brochure exclaimed, "Who wouldn't do one more thing to ease world tensions?"[19] NCW and ICW leaders routinely monitored and intervened in international affairs. In the 1950s and '60s the NCW's extensive national network provided hospitality for foreign visitors, and they often organized informational events for the public featuring politicians and dignitaries, including State Department and USIA personnel. As the United States escalated its foreign propaganda efforts during the first decade of the Cold War, the NCW aligned itself with those efforts: "it was very important for the women of the free world to cooperate in order to have the message of democracy at least as prominent as that of the communists."[20]

Spofford's desire to arrange an international exchange of recorded music by women composers reflected these priorities, although her vision was more expansive than what voluntary organizations were able to undertake. Spofford had proposed the listening event for the ICW's triennial conference in Montréal in 1957: she asked the ICW's constituent national councils to send records of compositions by women that could be played at the conference. Hull's statement that "many fine records of serious music" were contributed for the conference reflected more hopeful ambition than reality. Only two countries, Germany and Belgium, sent records, and because it proved difficult to find a suitably equipped space in

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[17] Louise Barnum Robbins, ed., *History and Minutes of the National Council of Women of the United States, Organized in Washington, D.C., March 31, 1888* (E.B. Stillings, 1898), 10, 12.

[18] See National Council of Women of the United States, *International Directory of Women's Organizations* (Research and Action Associates, 1963). The ICW and NCW sought to give women a public voice in all matters concerning human "well-being," including education, safety, and public morals. As federations of heterogeneous groups they often refrained from taking positions that were not shared across member organizations. Their commitment to "well-being" did include discussions of equal pay, the right of married women to work, and equal access to education, as well as advocacy against human trafficking and espousal of anti-racist principles. Though this agenda resonates with feminisms of today, these organizations often framed issues of concern in ways that differ significantly from activist expressions of our time. See, e.g., *The Year Book and Directory of the National Council of Women of the United States, Including the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Convention* (National Council of Women of the United States, 1928), 17–27; Els Flour, "Survey of a Century and a Half of History," in *Women Changing the World: A History of the International Council of Women 1888–1988,* ed. Eliane Gubin and Leen Van Molle (Éditions Racine, 2005), 17; and Catherine Jacques and Sylvie Lefebvre, "The Working Methods of the ICW: From Its Creation to the Second World War," *Women Changing the World*, 99, 105–106.

[19] Trifold brochure, undated. Smith/Spofford b18, folder "National Council of Women."

[20] Report of Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, President, Minutes of the Combined Meeting of the Executive and Finance Committees and of the Committee Chairmen, NCW, April 17, 1958, p. 2, NYPL/NCW b3 f82, fiche 113.

the conference venue, the event did not happen.[21] At the Montréal conference, though, Spofford did succeed in getting the ICW's Arts and Letters Committee to adopt her idea of a recordings exchange as part of its official plan of work for the next three years.[22] Having gotten the international committee's approval for this proposal, she then used that approval as leverage to convince the NCW to take up the "special record project."[23] Within the Federation, Hull was making similar arguments. She proposed to the Federation's Executive Committee that it promote recordings of women composers' music.[24]

In November 1959, Spofford and Hull approached the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music to see if they could obtain sponsorship for the special record project: there they made the case for the record's significance in international exchange. They received a demoralizing reply from Donald L. Engle, who managed the fund:

> I think there is a basic serious problem of the value of the creative efforts of our women composers. It seems to me that when they can equal their male colleagues in what they offer, they will ultimately receive equal consideration. Then their works will be recorded by the major companies on a commercial basis, and we will no longer need to apologize to people overseas for the status of our ladies in the musical scene.[25]

Hull vented about the dismissive conversation in a letter to her close friend, the conductor William Strickland:

> What do you think, really, is Mr. Engle correct? Am I out on a limb, to believe that some works by women composers have been neglected, that they are really as good as some works already recognized as being worth while? Or am I being just carried away by my own conviction which briefly is that composers are composers, music is music, and that some music is overlooked because of this awfully boring idea that a 'Woman' composer is different and inferior to a 'Masculine' composer . . .?[26]

Strickland, who was then in Japan, assured Hull of his agreement and his support.[27] His participation was essential to the special record project: he would eventually engage the Imperial Philharmonic of Tokyo and lead the orchestra in recording the music of five US women composers.

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[21] Minutes, NCW Music Committee, April 16, 1957, Smith/Spofford box 18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes"; Spofford to Anna Lea Lelli, Convener, ICW Standing Committee on Arts and Letters, November 28, 1956 and Spofford to Katie Bromham (Belgium), December 13, 1956, both in NYPL/NCW b12 f3, fiche 437. Cf. Hull, "Special Record Project," 37.

[22] Spofford arranged to have the Belgian and German records played on WNYC radio. Grace Spofford, "Report as Given at International Council of Women Executive Meeting, Venice, April 19, 1956" (typescript and handwritten minutes); and "Standing Committee on Arts and Letters: Report of the Meetings held in Montreal June 6, 8, 10, 1957," all in Smith/Spofford b16, folder "I.C.W. Standing Committee on Arts and Letters—Reports, etc." Cf. Minutes, Biennial Meeting, Board of Directors, NCW, October 30–31, 1958, p. 11–12, NYPL/NCW b3 f87, fiche 116.

[23] Minutes, Biennial Meeting, Board of Directors, NCW, October 30–31, 1958, p. 11–12. NYPL/NCW b3 f87, fiche 116; and Minutes, Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, NCW, November 5, 1959, NYPL/NCW b4 f3, fiche 117. Spofford's use of international organizations to gain leverage over national organizations mirrors a strategy from the earlier suffrage movement. According to the historian Leila Rupp, women used their international ties to press their national governments for the right to vote within their own countries. Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton University Press, 1997), 111, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691221816.

[24] Minutes, Executive Committee, National Federation of Music Clubs, August 4, 1959 [and August 9, 1959], NFMC, series Proceedings/Minutes/Reports/Programs, b21, folder "1959 Biennial Convention-Meeting materials. San Diego, California."

[25] Donald L. Engle, letter to Anne Hull, November 6, 1959, Rockefeller Archive Center, FA1420, Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music Records, Series 1: Project Files, b94 f12, "National Council of Women Music Committee."

[26] Anne Hull, letter to William Strickland, November 4, 1959, Library of Congress, Music Division, William Remsen Strickland Collection [**hereafter LC/Strickland**], b9 f26.

[27] Strickland, letter to Hull, November 10, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17. On Strickland's work in Japan, see Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*, 51–56.

Musicians' Network and State Resources

The composer Mary Howe, whose music appeared on the "special record project," was another linchpin of the social network that would finally get the project off the ground.[28] The intimate relationship between Hull and Strickland was cemented over decades by Howe's patronage. It is worth examining the threesome's business dealings in some detail, because these transactions reveal the difficulty of getting new music performed and illustrate how funding for new music became entangled in the US government's propaganda programs.

Howe (1884–1972) had gotten to know Strickland during the Second World War, when the Army stationed him near her home in Washington, DC. Strickland programmed her music after the war when he served as founder and principal conductor of the Nashville Symphony.[29] The State Department chose Strickland for a Fulbright fellowship to Vienna for two concert seasons, 1951–53: the fellowship covered the cost of Strickland's international travel and paid his living expenses for two years while he built a reputation in Vienna as a guest conductor.

Figure 4: Portrait of William Strickland. Library of Congress, Music Division, William Remsen Strickland Collection, box 25, folder 4. Photographer unknown.

Howe saw Strickland's fellowship as an opportunity. Before the sharp increase in foundation, university, and government funding for new concert music in the mid-to-late 1950s, composers often covered the expenses of publication, paid to have parts copied for the players, and even funded concerts

[28] Howe earned an Artist Diploma from the Peabody Institute in 1922 and studied composition with Nadia Boulanger. She and Hull played professionally as a piano duo in the 1910s and '20s. Active as a composer throughout her career, she held many leadership roles in the Federation and was a prominent patron of the National Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Washington, and the National Cultural Center (later the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), among others.

[29] Mary Howe, letter to Strickland, April 10, 1942; Strickland, letters to Howe, September 5, 1942 and February 23, 1947; Hull to Strickland, November 4, 1949, all at New York Public Library, Music Division, JPB 04-39, Mary Howe Papers, 1884–1972 [**hereafter NYPL/Howe**] b48 f4.

themselves in order to get their music performed.[30] Howe was fortunate to have the means to bear these costs, and she was pleased to take advantage of the government as a co-sponsor. Before Strickland left for Europe, Howe gave him some money to support the performance and recording of her music in Vienna, making it clear that during his fellowship she was only covering specific project expenses.[31] After Strickland's Fulbright money ran out in October 1953, though, Howe put Strickland "on retainer." By the end of 1954 she had sent him more than $10,800 from her "scheming account." (Adjusted for inflation, in 2025 this sum would come to about $126,000.) Roughly half of the money she sent was intended for his living expenses; the rest was to cover performance and recording costs, including payments to soloists and recording engineers.[32] While he was in Austria, Strickland led multiple performances of Howe's music, including high-profile concerts with the Vienna Symphony in 1954 and 1955 that included Howe's "Castellana," "Axiom," "Stars," "Sand," and the world premiere of her "Rock."[33]

Figure 5: Mary Howe on the podium with William Strickland in Vienna, 1955, credited to Photo-Ernst, Vienna. Library of Congress, Music Division, William Remsen Strickland Collection, box 26, folder 1. A good faith effort has been made to locate the copyright holder.

[30] Engle's reply to Hull and Spofford (above) implies that a commercial market existed for recordings of contemporary concert music, but both male and female composers in this genre frequently self-funded their projects, unless they had access to personal patronage. See John Kreidler, "Leverage Lost: The Nonprofit Arts in the Post-Ford Era," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 26, no. 2 (1996): 80, https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.1996.9942956; Uy, *Ask the Experts*, 1; Carol J. Oja, "Women Patrons and Activists for Modernist Music: New York in the 1920s," *Modernism/modernity* 4, no. 1 (1997): especially 131–38, 143, https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.1997.0004; and Minna Lederman, "No Money for Music," *The North American Review* 243, no. 1 (1937): 131.

[31] These payments likely totaled between $600 and $800—adjusted for inflation, the equivalent value today would be at least $7,000. Strickland, letter to Howe, July 28, 1951 and [Howe] letter to Strickland, August 2, 1951, both in NYPL/Howe b48 f4; and Howe, letter to Strickland, December 15, 1953, NYPL/Howe b48 f5. Inflation estimates were generated through the CPI Inflation Calculator at the website of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

[32] E. Wilder Spaulding, Cultural Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Vienna, letter "To whom it may concern," June 22, 1953, NYPL/Howe b48 f11; Correspondence and financial records in NYPL/Howe, b48 f3-f5; Contract between Howe and Strickland, December 18, 1953, NYPL/Howe b48 f12.

[33] Concert programs, April 30, 1954, February 15, 1955, March 4, 1955, all in LC/Strickland b3 f3. The Vienna Symphony was a different orchestra from the more famous Vienna Philharmonic.

Howe urged Strickland not to disclose her payments.[34] She did not want it to seem as though she was violating State Department rules by increasing his stipend during his fellowship. But keeping their financial relationship quiet also enhanced Howe's reputation. Letting it be widely known that she was sponsoring his concerts would have weakened the promotional value of these international performances, making them seem like a vanity project. Critics and Howe's composer colleagues in the United States prized European performances, and associating these performances with Strickland's prestigious Fulbright award gave Howe a bigger platform both in the Viennese press and at home. Howe maximized her investment by asking her agent, Hull, to distribute news items about the Vienna performances to influential music critics and editors in the United States.[35]

Howe's sponsorship of Strickland was relentlessly tactical, even to the point of a breach of ethics. When the Federation decided in 1956 to begin offering a $1000 award for the musician or group who had "performed the greatest number of serious American works abroad," Howe ensured that Strickland would win the first award, while also concealing her participation on the award committee.[36] She was deeply involved in every phase of the planning and selection processes. Over several months, Howe repeatedly suggested Strickland to Federation president Vera Wardner Dougan as a candidate for the award, first subtly, then directly, then assertively—and even told her assistant to submit his materials to the competition on his behalf. Howe helped select the award committee and vetoed conductors who might be Strickland's closest rivals in international work.[37] Howe was one of two judges who submitted the final decision to the Federation, but she urged Dougan not to publicize her name in connection with this award. Dougan complied: she suppressed the names of the judges when she reported on the award to the membership.[38]

Howe's support of Strickland helps us see the financial incentives and prestige opportunities that were beginning to support more and more contemporary music projects in the 1950s. The Federation's purpose in instituting its annual award was to entice American musicians to perform more US music abroad, in line with their goal of making the United States "the Music Center of the World." But the award also had other effects. It drew US citizens' attention to the virtues of government music programs: that year and subsequently, most of the awardees had traveled on behalf of the State Department. When Dougan consulted USIA and State Department officials about setting up the award, they explained that the award's propaganda value was much enhanced by its evident independence from the government.[39] By raising Strickland's profile, Howe and the Federation made it more likely that the government would offer him further sponsorship. Howe could then use his projects abroad—jointly funded by herself and

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[34] Howe, letter to Strickland, December 15, 1953, NYPL/Howe b48 f5.
[35] [Hayesel B. Fraser] letter to Anne Hull, April 12, 1955, NYPL/Howe b48 f14; and Hull reply to "Frazel" [Fraser], April 17, 1955, NYPL/Howe b48 f15.
[36] Vera Wardner Dougan [President, National Federation of Music Clubs], "Presentation of 1956 Award Abroad February 17, 1957, New York City," p. 2, LC/Strickland b7 f11. Howe visited US government officials in Washington to secure their cooperation with the award project: Merle Colby, letters to Vera Wardner Dougan, March 16, 1956 and May 17, 1956, NYPL/Howe b43 f17.
[37] Letter exchanges between Howe and Dougan, March to November 1956, NYPL/Howe b43 f17, f18, and f19. On the submission of materials, see [Hayesel Fraser on behalf of Howe] to Pat Anderson, November 21, 1956, NYPL/Howe b43 f19.
[38] Dougan, letter to Howard Hanson, December 21, 1956, NYPL/Howe b43 f19; Howe to Dougan, September 25, 1956, and Dougan to Howe, September 29, 1956, both in NYPL/Howe b43 f18; Dougan, "The President's Report," *Music Clubs Magazine* 36, no. 4 (1957): 5, 68.
[39] Merle Colby, letters to Dougan, March 16, 1956 and May 17, 1956, NYPL/Howe b43 f17. Cf. Laville, *Cold War Women,* 46, 48–49.

the government—to develop performances and recordings of her music, and the Federation would be pleased to have a confirmed advocate for US composers continuing his work overseas. Howe's strategy leveraged not only her personal fortune but also the national network of the Federation and the increasing musical investments of the US government to ensure that her works would be heard abroad. Advancing the career of her champion, Strickland, would further this goal.

A generation younger than Hull and Howe, Strickland (1914–1991) was formed by their influence and remained a lifelong friend to both. Before meeting Howe, Strickland had demonstrated a commitment to repertoire from the United States: he routinely conducted new music by William Schuman, Samuel Barber, Walter Piston, Robert Ward, and many other US composers. Perhaps as a result of Howe's and Hull's influence, he developed some interest in music composed by women. In addition to his performances of Howe's work in Nashville and Vienna, he also programmed Julia Perry's *Stabat mater*—he exclaimed to Howe that this concert would include "2 American composers who are women and 2 American soloists who are women!"[40] In the early 1950s Strickland was most excited about recording projects: he saw particular opportunity in the creation of new record labels specializing in recently composed music from the United States.[41] Strickland was in touch with Robert Ward, one of the founders of the new record label Composers Recordings, Inc. (CRI). He sent Howe's Vienna recordings to CRI, and they were among the first records the label issued (1956 and 1958).[42] A few years later, CRI would also issue Hull's and Spofford's special record project, again featuring Howe's music conducted by Strickland.

Like Howe, but at a larger scale, CRI had developed a reliance on government-funded artists. In the years after his arrival in Japan, Strickland repeatedly secured State Department grants to lead orchestras in Asia and Europe, and CRI came to depend on him to make recordings of recently composed American music with those orchestras. Like Howe's Vienna recordings, Hull's and Spofford's special record project was funded from multiple sources, including private contributions. But the US government's quiet patronage would remain essential to the making and the distribution of the special record project.

Funding and Making the Special Record Project (CRI 145)

Apart from Hull's feminist motivations and her role as promoter of Howe's music, she also wanted to make this record for another reason: Strickland was running out of money. He had gotten to Tokyo in January 1958 as an invited guest conductor, paid by the orchestras he led. From Tokyo, he made brief run-out trips to Manila and Seoul on American Specialist grants from the State Department. After these successes, the State Department sponsored longer stays so he could work with orchestras in Manila (October–December 1958); Tokyo (January–March 1959); and Saigon (April–July 1959).[43] Foreseeing the end of his government funding, he wrote to Hull in June 1959 that despite "the financial squeeze," he wanted to stay in Japan to make more records of American music. Strickland felt that Japanese orchestras

[40] Strickland, letter to Howe, April 9, 1954, NYPL/Howe b48 f6.
[41] Several small labels specializing in recent US music launched in the early 1950s. The American Recording Society (begun 1950) was sponsored by Columbia University's Alice Ditson fund. The Louisville Philharmonic Society's commissions and record series (begun 1953) were sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. CRI was conceived in 1953 and launched in 1955 as a private company with close ties to the Ditson fund and the American Composers Alliance. Richard Metzger, "The Role of Foundations in the Recording of American Music," M.A. thesis (University of Chicago, 1972), 18–24, 43–47; Avery Claflin, "Introducing Composers Recordings, Inc.," *American Composers Alliance Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (1955): 11.
[42] Strickland, letter to Howe, April 14, 1955, NYPL/Howe b48 f9.
[43] Strickland, "Chronology," LC/Strickland b4 f8.

were "hungry" for this kind of work, and he was proud of the records he had made for CRI: "aside from being my great interest and pleasure," he wrote, these records were his "biggest and best advertisement."[44] Hull, who was managing Strickland's business affairs in the United States, responded with an idea. "The Nat. Council of Women, and the NFMC are becoming slightly interested in records of works by women composers; so it struck me that perhaps a commission to do some in Tokyo might possibly work out."[45] Hull asked Strickland how much his other CRI records had cost, and she began outlining a plan for assembling a panel of judges to choose music and raising private money to make the recording.

Strickland responded to Hull immediately by telegram—"very interested recording project letter follows affectionately"—and soon thereafter sent a cost estimate based on his prior experiences with the Japan Philharmonic:[46]

cost of orchestra for one hour of music, incl. rehearsals and recording session	$1000
rent for recording studio	$270
Tape	$50
extra expenses for mailing scores, etc.	[$180]
conductor's fee	$500
total	$2000

For Strickland's earlier recordings, he had been paid either by the State Department, by the orchestra's management, or by the record company that wanted the recordings—but now that he had no government or industry funding, he asked a $500 fee for himself. As orchestras were beginning to raise their prices, he gave Hull an estimate of $2000–$2500 as the total cost of making the tapes. "To be blunt," he added, "I am very interested in this project not only for itself but I must earn money here soon or go down the sink!"[47] He suggested Howard Hanson, Robert Ward, and William Bergsma as possible judges to advise the NFMC and NCW on the content of the record. (Hanson would later be replaced by Henry Cowell.) Strickland asked Hull to speak to Ward about issuing the disc through CRI: "I am positive they will be very interested."[48] Soon thereafter, Ward reported to Strickland that "Anne Hull was in for a long talk and she is busy stirring the pot on the suffragette project."[49] In further exchanges that summer and fall, Hull and Strickland nailed down the details. Both took it for granted that they would include music composed by their patron and friend, Mary Howe. Hull also suggested that it would be wise to add at least one more composer who could afford to contribute funding for the record, such as Mabel Daniels.[50]

Throughout this period, Hull and Spofford worked to convince the executive committees of the NCW and the Federation, presenting Strickland's cost estimates and explaining the alignment of the

[44] Strickland, letter to Hull, June 18, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.
[45] Hull, letter to Strickland, July 4, 1959, p. 3, LC/Strickland b9 f26. Emphasis original.
[46] Strickland, telegram to Hull, August 2, 1959, and letter to Hull, August 9, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.
[47] Strickland, letter to Hull, August 9, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.
[48] Strickland, letter to Hull, August 9, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.
[49] Robert Ward, letter to Strickland, October 2, 1959, LC/Strickland b11 f1.
[50] Hull, letters to Strickland, July 4, 1959 and September 3, 1959, LC/Strickland b9 f26; Strickland, letters to Hull, August 29, 1959 and September 10, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.

record project with the organizations' purposes.[51] Hull foresaw that the NCW might be more likely to spend money to support the record; but as a non-music organization, the NCW did not have the infrastructure to market audio recordings, nor was its audience likely to be enthusiastic about contemporary orchestral music. The Federation, by contrast, could promote the record to thousands of club members who were already interested in music.[52] After Hull's and Spofford's unsuccessful query to the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, they began approaching individual donors in the networks of the NCW and the Federation.[53] Hull also made a radio appearance to drum up support.[54]

Hull had hoped to be able to make the tapes early in 1960, but it would take another full year to secure enough money. One disappointment was that the amount she had to raise exceeded her and Strickland's expectations. Strickland had explained to Hull that she would not have to raise money for the discs' manufacture, but only for the tapes: "discs are made and financed by recording companies when and if they accept a tape."[55] But CRI asked Hull to pay for the discs' manufacture as well, adding $1,000 to the cost.[56] The majority of CRI's records presented music composed by members of the American Composers' Alliance; the Alliance underwrote the pressing of these records.[57] Of the five composers represented on the special record project, though, only Vivian Fine was a full member of the Alliance, so the album was ineligible for Alliance funding.[58] Perhaps Ward and others at CRI also saw that Hull could raise the money from her large partner organizations and wanted to save the Alliance's funds for other projects. CRI balked at paying Strickland, possibly because they were accustomed to having Strickland's fee covered by other organizations. Hull would pay him directly out of the funds she raised.[59]

As a result of Hull's nationwide publicity efforts, individual donors contributed in widely varying amounts. The donors named in the NCW's records were women, most of them involved with the Federation at the national or state levels. Mrs. Blant Burford, former president of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs, sent $5. Mildred Bliss, a renowned patron of the arts in Washington DC, sent $500. As Hull had expected, two of the composers whose works appeared on the record contributed money—Howe $250 and Daniels $50—and so did other women musicians who were not represented on the album, such as Glad Robinson Youse and Sophie Drinker. Elsie Irwin Sweeney, a major donor to the Indiana University School of Music, was serving as the Federation's International Music Relations chairman: she sent $300 of her own, as well as the $200 that had been allotted to her committee. The NCW gave $200

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[51] Minutes, National Federation of Music Clubs, Executive Committee Meetings, August 4 [continued on August 9], 1959, p. 8, and Minutes, National Federation of Music Clubs, Executive Committee Meetings, October 1–2, 1959, p. 10, both in NFMC, series Proceedings/Minutes/Reports/Programs, b21, folder "1959 Biennial Convention–Meeting materials. San Diego, California"; Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, NCW, January 21, 1960, p.3, NYPL/NCW b4 f5, fiche 118.
[52] Hull, letter to Strickland, September 29, 1959, LC/Strickland b9 f26.
[53] Minutes, NCW Music Committee, April 6, 1960, Smith/Spofford, b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee–Reports and Minutes"; "Project: To record and distribute works of important American women composers" [Open letter to donors], April 22, 1960, Smith/Spofford, b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee Recordings of American Women Composers."
[54] Hull, letter to Strickland, June 7, 1960, LC/Strickland b9 f26.
[55] Strickland, letter to Hull, August 29, 1959, LC/Strickland b12 f17.
[56] Hull, letter to Strickland, September 29, 1959, LC/Strickland b9 f26; Memorandum of Agreement between Composers Recordings, Inc., National Council of Women of the United States, and the National Federation of Music Clubs, NYPL/NCW b12 f13, fiche 444.
[57] Roger Goeb, letter to Jacob Avshalomov, October 3, 1958, New York Public Library, Music Division, JPB 07-2, Composers Recordings, Inc. Records, 1946–2007 [**hereafter NYPL/CRI**], ser. 1, b1 f1. Some records were underwritten by the Alice M. Ditson Fund or the National Institute of Arts and Letters, but it was not unusual for a composer to self-fund the expenses of recording for CRI.
[58] Howe was listed as an Affiliated Member. Membership list, *Bulletin of the American Composers Alliance* IX, no. 2 (1960): inside front cover.
[59] Hull, letter to Strickland, June 7, 1960, LC/Strickland b9 f26.

from its treasury and the Federation agreed to backstop any costs that could not be covered through fundraising. After Hull published her article in the Federation's magazine in January 1961, though, the last donations rolled in, making the Federation's backstop unnecessary.[60]

Listening to the Special Record Project

The music chosen for the record served a variety of purposes—not only Hull's, Spofford's, and Strickland's, but also those of the US government. The record included different generations of women representing different schools of composition. Mary Howe's and Mabel Daniels's music was gentle and accessible to listeners; these pieces made a clear connection between US-composed music and European orchestral music from earlier in the twentieth century. The orchestration and harmony of Howe's *Spring Pastoral,* composed in 1936, recall Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and *Nuages*. Howe's writing for the orchestra is gently dissonant throughout, with solo wind instruments emerging from clouds of string sounds. Daniels (1877–1971) was the eldest composer on the record: her *Deep Forest* (1933) is even more strongly reminiscent of Debussy, with whole tone and augmented sonorities, lots of parallel motion in the strings, abundant harp, and interjections from flute, horn, and oboe soloists.[61] These two composers, the most similar to each other and the most conservative in style, were also the ones Hull had identified as most able to contribute money to make the record.

The other composers on the record appear to have been chosen both for their diversity of styles and their impeccable credentials, including Guggenheim fellowships, Ivy League degrees, and famous teachers. Louise Talma (1906–1996) was a generation younger than Howe and Daniels. Her Toccata for Orchestra (1944) is a high-energy, cinematic piece, by turns serious and light. The piece is bookended by urgent-sounding fanfares. It incorporates elements from popular and theatrical music—syncopation, occasional sounding of blues scales, and a waltz suitable for a merry-go-round—but also passages of neoclassical counterpoint.[62] Vivian Fine's orchestral suite from the ballet *Alcestis* was a very recent work (1960) comprising four short movements of ballet music composed for Martha Graham's ballet company. Fine (1913–2000) emphasized the work's abstraction: "the music does not deal with the myth in a descriptive way, but depicts its dramatic and emotional aspects."[63] *Alcestis* contrasts austere and richly chromatic counterpoint with vigorous ostinati and heroic passages for brass. Jagged melodic contours correspond to Graham's angular choreography. Fine's and Talma's pieces presented contrasting aspects of new music: Talma's Toccata leaned closer to theatrical music of the day, and Fine's represented an ascetic and internationally respected form of modernism.

Julia Perry (1924–1979) was a student of Luigi Dallapiccola and Nadia Boulanger and was the only

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[60] [Hull], "Special Record Project as of June 30, 1960," "Special Record Project—American Women Composers. Joint project of National Council of Women and National Federation of Music Clubs" [September 25, 1960], and "Special Record Project as of April 10, 1961," all in NYPL/NCW b12 f13, fiche 444; Hull, letter to Strickland, August 27, 1960, LC/Strickland b9 f26; Minutes, Music Committee, NCW, October 27, 1960 and March 2, 1961, both in Smith/Spofford, b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes."

[61] See J. Michele Edwards, "Daniels, Mabel Wheeler," Oxford Music Online, first published 2001, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07177.

[62] The *Toccata* received mixed reviews. Kendra Preston Leonard, *Louise Talma: A Life in Composition*, paperback edition (Routledge, 2020 [2014]), 110.

[63] Vivian Fine, preface to *Alcestis,* facsimile of manuscript score, 1960. The publisher and place of publication are unspecified in the score; it may have been produced by Composers Facsimile Edition, a series issued by the American Composers Alliance.

African American among the five composers. Perry's *A Short Piece for Orchestra* (1952) represents a modern and virtuosic sensibility, with vibrant textural and topical contrasts. Strident unison passages impress the listener with a sense of urgency and recur throughout the piece. We hear solos and duets that are more lyrical, but still disjunct rather than tuneful; they are accompanied by delicate, spacious counterpoint or by quiet, sustained dissonances. The orchestra is used sparingly: Perry's piece includes pointillistic passages where contrasts between instrumental textures and timbres (celesta, xylophone, a pair of muted trumpets) become the most noticeable feature. Composed when interest in Anton Webern's music was at its peak, Perry's work integrates some of his innovations in timbre and texture without committing to other elements of his style. In all, the special record project was representative of contemporary concert music in the United States in that it showcased a broad range of personalities and musical idioms.

The record's existence and its content helped bolster one of the USIA's key talking points—the idea that classical music was "vigorous and popular" in the United States.[64] As part of USIA's information program, agency officials circulated brochures full of compelling statistics that pointed to "the vast number of performances sponsored by symphony orchestras" and "the meteoric rise in audiences for fine music."[65] Contemporary music was of particular interest: when USIA's Music Advisor, composer David S. Cooper, toured foreign service posts in 1956, he reported to the Agency that whereas German audiences "cling to the traditions of the past," US audiences were forward-looking: the "United States . . . may be considered the center of contemporary music rather than Europe."[66] The large quantity of contemporary music that was being recorded for sale in the United States helped make the case for a classical music boom, especially in the field of new music. As the "1960 Concert Music U.S.A." brochure described it, the Schwann Long Playing Record Catalog for that year contained "1,468 compositions of 426 contemporary composers available on 2,594 recordings."[67] These figures were meant to demonstrate that the United States was a leader in the field, and that people in the United States cared not only about money and industry, but also about the arts and cultural life. Hull's and Spofford's special record project, and CRI's record projects in general, contributed to this overall picture of robust circulation of "serious music" in the United States.

The record's gendered framing reflected Hull's and Spofford's feminist aims, but it also accorded with the USIA's strategy of portraying US women in a variety of social roles.[68] It offered tangible evidence that these composers were succeeding as professionals. The liner notes described Fine as "a teacher, pianist and, of course, a full-time composer" and explained that "more and more genuinely talented women are becoming composers and working seriously at the profession."[69] In addition, the inclusion of Perry aligned with the USIA's goal of demonstrating America's embrace of racial diversity. Because media around the world frequently highlighted US racial violence and discrimination, the USIA developed strategies that countered those messages. Across the late 1950s, USIA propagandists moved from describing the progress of African Americans toward civil rights; to creating feature stories and films about successful Black

[64] Duncan MacDougald, Jr., "Concert Music U.S.A.," Broadcast Music, Incorporated, 1951.
[65] "1960 Concert Music U.S.A.," Broadcast Music, Incorporated, 1960. The circulation of this series of brochures via USIA is documented in The President's Music Committee of the People-to-People Program, Annual Report, 1960, p. 5., Harvard University, Radcliffe Institute, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC 448, Catherine Filene Shouse Papers, 1878–1998, folder 474.
[66] "Report on The European Trip of David S. Cooper, September 25–November 9, 1956," p. 39. New York Public Library, Music Division, JPB 87-33, William Schuman Papers, b42 f4.
[67] "1960 Concert Music U.S.A.," Broadcast Music, Incorporated, 1960.
[68] Laura Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 154, 157, https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812201239.
[69] Don Jennings, liner notes to CRI 145 (Composers Recordings, Inc., 1961).

athletes, entertainers, and public figures; to presenting images of an integrated society—no longer talking about civil rights, but portraying everyday Americans in racially integrated settings without comment.[70] Whereas Howe's Scottish-Welsh ancestry was mentioned in the liner notes, Perry's Black identity was not named. The USIA's music libraries enacted this form of representation on a larger scale, too: their collections included robust representation of Black American musicians working in many genres of music, presenting integrated multiculturalism as a settled fact. Hull's special record project offered evidence that Black composers were succeeding not only in jazz and popular music, but also in classical music.

The special record project's alignment with the US government's propaganda priorities was not coincidental. Throughout the music ecosystem, musicians were taking advantage of government propaganda programs wherever possible. Even though the record was billed as a private effort, produced by a for-profit record label, and marked as a product of the Federation and the NCW, those who contributed most to its creation were all involved in government activities. Strickland worked closely with USIS personnel in US embassies in Europe and Asia, and with the State Department as a major sponsor of his work.[71] Henry Cowell, who assisted with the selection of music, had been hired by the State Department for multiple international projects and had extensive connections at USIA.[72] The leaders and membership of the NCW contributed to both overt and covert US government projects and cooperated closely with USIA.[73] Federation president Vera Dougan served on President Eisenhower's People-to-People Music Committee, which was supervised by USIA; so did Grace Spofford. In 1957 Spofford had attended a five-day USIA workshop on the "World Ideological Conflict": the workshop covered principles of international propaganda and strategies for responding to critics of the United States, modeled on the training given to US foreign service officers.[74] And as we have already seen, the Federation paid attention to government projects, explained them to club members, and highlighted them through its award programs. I have argued elsewhere that "soft power" lies not in the ability to transmit a particular propaganda message, but in a state's ability to recruit voluntary participation in its projects.[75] Here we see a similar kind of recruitment, not abroad, but at home.

Perhaps the most impressive case of coordination between private and government actions is CRI. The record label's intimate collaboration with the government is evident in every aspect of its business model. On the production side, using State Department-sponsored conductors helped the label contain costs by recording abroad with non-union musicians. Tapes made in the United States could cost more

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[70] Melinda M. Schwenk-Borrell, "Selling Democracy: The U.S. Information Agency's Portrayal of American Race Relations, 1956–1976" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 209–35, 262–70; Melinda M. Schwenk, "'Negro Stars' and the USIA's Portrait of Democracy," *Race, Gender & Class in Media* 8, no. 4 (2001): 136–37.

[71] The USIA's overseas operation was called the "United States Information Service" (USIS).

[72] Amy Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (University of California Press, 2006), especially 10–11, 86–88, 154–56, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520932814.

[73] Laville, *Cold War Women,* 111–12; Laville, "The Committee of Correspondence," 104–21. In the latter source Laville mentions only in passing (114) that Rose Parsons, who worked with the CIA to guide the Committee of Correspondence, was also president of the NCW.

[74] On Spofford's participation, see Minutes, Music Committee, NCW, April 16, 1957, Smith/Spofford, b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes." On the program, see "World Ideological Conflict" [program booklet], Harvard University, Radcliffe Institute, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, MC 288, Papers of Anna Lord Strauss, 1918–1977, b9 f182, "President's Program: People-to-People Partnership, 1956–1965"; and Laville, "The Importance of Being (in) Earnest: Voluntary Associations and the Irony of the State-Private Network During the Early Cold War," in Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford, eds., *The U.S. Government, Citizen Groups, and the Cold War: The State-Private Network* (Routledge, 2006), 52–54, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203002490-6/importance-being-earnest-helen-laville.

[75] See Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy,* 216–22.

than $8,000 for one LP; at $3,500, the special record project was affordable, and it was just one of many albums recorded overseas.[76] CRI also benefited from government patronage on the purchasing side. From the mid-1950s into the 1960s, David Cooper and Angelo Eagon, USIA's music advisors, purchased thousands of long-playing records from CRI for the agency's use.[77] Indeed, the US government was the label's largest customer: USIA purchases might account for 40%–60% (or more) of initial sales of each record.[78] By partnering with government programs to further its mission, CRI had purposefully developed an unacknowledged cost-sharing plan for getting contemporary music onto records. None of this activity was an illegal use of government resources, but it was not what Congress had envisioned when they appropriated funds for propaganda.[79] This pattern of state patronage amounted to a hidden subsidy for the "new music" industry.

Cooper (a composer) and Eagon (a pianist as well as a diplomat) undoubtedly knew that their purchasing mattered for the industry: they were well connected and communicating freely with musicians and musical organizations. It is more difficult to judge how many other USIA or State Department officials understood how much the agencies' programs were affecting the production of contemporary music. Certainly, by 1960 economists inside and outside the government were studying the effects of government spending, and they were well aware that government purchasing programs could create unintended "subsidy effects" on markets for goods and services.[80] Especially because government support for music was ad hoc, indirect, and coming from several different agencies and programs, it may have been invisible to most people inside the government. Expenditures that were big enough to be a meaningful source of support to musicians were still miniscule by government standards.

Within the orbits of the NCW and the Federation, some people did understand and comment on these programs' subsidizing effects. Gertrude Macy, who managed the private agency that approved artists for State Department-funded tours, acknowledged at an NCW-sponsored event in 1962 that the government's "objective was propaganda—but the product has been a subsidy of music, the ballet, the

[76] The strategy of using musicians abroad to "play for cheap" was common knowledge: Martin Mayer, "Recordings: The Spread of American Music," *Esquire*, November 1960, 55, clipping in LC/Strickland b7 f11. The American Federation of Musicians tried to end this practice: see William Bergsma, letter to Avery Claflin, July 24, 1958, LC/Strickland b3 f15. Roger Goeb outlined recording costs in a letter to Oliver Daniel, February 9, 1959, NYPL/CRI b2 f1. For lists of the forty-nine American works Strickland recorded for CRI (a fraction of the subsidized recordings), see Fosler-Lussier, Appendices 2.1, 2.3, and 2.5 to *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy,* https://musicdiplomacy.org.

[77] Angelo Eagon, Cooper's successor as USIA Music Advisor, confirmed in a letter to Spofford that "for several years we have been using nearly all of the CRI recordings in our programs." Eagon, letter to Spofford, November 21, 1961, NYPL/NCW b12 f14, fiche 445.

[78] Minutes, Board of Directors, Composers Recordings Inc., October 1, 1956, p. 2, and "CRI Sales from March 1956 to 1/10/57," both in NYPL/CRI b27 f 8.

[79] Cf. Robert L. Hubbell, "Concealed Subsidies in the Federal Budget," *National Tax Journal* 10, no. 3 (1957): 216, https://doi.org/10.1086/NTJ41790690.

[80] Some economists of the time would have called these resource flows "subsidies"; some would not. Carl Kaysen defined subsidy of an enterprise as "an increase in the demand for its output, or a decrease in the costs which it must bear to produce its output, which are not the result of market forces": this definition aptly describes CRI's situation. Kaysen, "On Defining a Subsidy," in C.J. Friedrich and J.K. Galbraith, eds., *Public Policy: A Yearbook of the Graduate School of Public Administration, Harvard University*, 4 (1953): 5, 9. A report of the Congressional Joint Economic Committee declined to call effects of government purchasing "subsidies," but acknowledged that "it is in many cases impossible to determine the incidence of these subsidy and subsidy-like programs." "Subsidy and Subsidylike Programs of the U.S. Government" (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 8, 17, 18.

theatre and the graphic arts."[81] Federation leaders could see it, too. When the Federation's Ohio chairman of International Music Relations explained to state convention-goers that the State Department was spending more than $6 million per year on music diplomacy, she added a word of caution to skeptics: "Whether or not we as individuals are in favor of the Government's subsidizing of music in many phases including exchange programs, the N.F.M.C. [the Federation] believes in this cultural project."[82]

Diplomatic historians have described a "state-private network," which they typically define as covert government infiltration into a citizen organization to promote the government's aims. According to the historian Helen Laville, President Truman's Psychological Strategy Board suggested as early as 1951 that the government could profitably assign to private veterans', youth, and women's groups projects that aligned with those groups' missions, but also advanced the government's purposes.[83] Most of the private groups that worked with the government in this way tried hard to maintain the appearance of autonomy: their cooperation with the government remained known only to a few leaders.[84] Music organizations, by contrast, saw government projects as a way to capture scarce resources. They participated avidly and openly in the USIA's and the State Department's work.

Making a market for new music

The feedback loops among the various constituencies described here have a peculiar quality, as does the special record project itself. As Daniel Boorstin once put it, when a project is brought into existence primarily to be mediated, its relation to reality is "ambiguous."[85] Hull and Spofford's special record project sits oddly in the chain of causes and effects. In a circular process, the USIA and the State Department incentivized rapid growth in new music recordings through hidden subsidies—and USIA used those growing numbers of recordings to brag about US audiences' increasing interest in new music. The special record project contained real music by real composers, made for real purposes; yet it represents a sort of "self-fulfilling prophecy" in which reality was made to conform to a desired effect.[86] The record did not document the robust public interest in contemporary classical music that USIA touted. It documented the belief of government personnel and advisory committees that this music would make effective propaganda; it documented the substantial investment of citizens and voluntary organizations in that propaganda project; and it documented the commitment of a small group of women to causes that were

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[81] Spofford was among the co-sponsors of this workshop. "The Artist in Our Society," *Bulletin of the National Council of Women of the United States* 9, no. 4 (1962): 3, Smith/Spofford, box 18, folder "National Council of Women." Macy was General Manager of ANTA, the American National Theatre and Academy, which ran selection panels for State Department arts programs. On ANTA's role see Emily Abrams Ansari, "Masters of the President's Music: Cold War Composers and the United States Government" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2009), 53–54, 82–88; Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy,* 10.

[82] Mrs. Charles F. Miller, "International Music Relations Report," April 3, 1962, p. 1, Ohio History Connection, MSS 598, Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Records, 1926–1968, box 1, folder "Minutes and Convention Reports, 1961–1962."

[83] Laville, *Cold War Women,* 47.

[84] Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas, "Enduring Freedom: Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Policy," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 313–15, https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2005.0029; Scott Lucas, "Total Culture' and the State-Private Network: A Commentary," in Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher, eds., *Culture and International History* (Berghahn Books, 2003), 206–14, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781782387978-015; Laville, "The Importance of Being (in) Earnest," 58–63; Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy and the Private Sector," in Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford, eds., *The U.S. Government, Citizen Groups, and the Cold War: The State-Private Network* (Routledge, 2006), 214–19.

[85] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (Vintage Books, 1992 [1961]), 11.

[86] Boorstin referred to "a new art: the art of making things true by saying they are so" and the ability to "force . . . facts into being." Boorstin, *The Image,* 216.

distinct from, but aligned with, that propaganda project. This was not a conspiracy, exactly: with the exception of Howe's suppressions of fact, each party was playing its assigned role openly. Rather, the record project's ambiguous relationship to reality is a system effect: it emerges from the situation as a whole.[87] There were many motivations at play; but the recording was conceived and developed only because the framing and financial support of music as diplomacy had made such recordings relevant.[88] Whereas "new music" was often said to be valued for its own sake, this record was the most instrumentalized item imaginable.

The record project also demonstrates a historical continuity. In some regards, the official government propaganda system that subsidized new music for export and the unofficial system of women-led voluntary organizations that supported musical work used similar strategies and had similar goals. Quite a few of the Federation's early projects created events and works specifically so that they could be mediated. Ruth Ottaway, who would later dismiss Spofford's efforts at organizing the record project, remarked in 1926 that "We cannot manufacture culture. We must band together to make it grow."[89] This formulation highlights the paradox: in order to establish in the eyes of the world that American music already existed, it would have to be made to exist. So, for decades, the Federation meticulously looked after the supply side and the demand side. On the supply side, they supported the music education system that produced performers and composers, and they organized clubs, competitions, and award programs to encourage musicians' participation. On the demand side, they promoted newly created works by US composers to club members, music teachers, and the wider public. In a 1945 speech, Federation president Anne Macomber Gannett made explicit the Federation's strategy of creating a market for American compositions: she explained that the Federation would focus on promoting published music of US composers in hopes of increasing sales. By recommending compositions for schools, libraries, and club members to buy, she said, "we hope greatly to increase the purchase of new American works and to prove to the publishers that so-called prestige music need not involve a monetary loss."[90] This strategy was already in place when the US government added new resources that aligned with the Federation's cause. Seen in this light, the Federation's enthusiastic participation in creating propaganda is not surprising: the nation-state's new focus on music diplomacy served their long-standing aims and harmonized with their methods. The labor of Hull, Spofford, and clubwomen across the country was another hidden subsidy: a resource provided at no monetary cost that was foundational to the enterprise of classical music in the United States.[91]

Although the Eisenhower administration regarded volunteers as willing assistants who could be recruited and led, the opposite was also true. The Federation and musicians throughout the ecosystem recruited government resources to advance their purposes. The record project thus illuminates both the extent of the US government's patronage of American music, and how the work of women's voluntary

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[87] Boorstin, *The Image,* 36.
[88] Boorstin, *The Image,* 11–12, 36; Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy,* 205–22.
[89] Ruth Haller Ottaway, "Extension Department: Prospectus of the National Federation of Music Clubs," *Official Bulletin,* National Federation of Music Clubs 5, no. 4 (1926): 14.
[90] "Speech given by Mrs. Gannett on Post-War Planning at Chautauqua in Late July" (typescript within a scrapbook), p. 4. Pennsylvania State Archives (Harrisburg), MG-361, Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs Collection, Historical Records (scrapbooks), 1929–1963, GM-2363 flat box 3, 1944–1945 (volume 9). My thanks to Semontee Mitra for her paid research assistance in Harrisburg.
[91] Melanie Oppenheimer, "'We All Did Voluntary Work of Some Kind': Voluntary Work and Labour History," *Labour History* no. 81 (2001): 1–11; cf. Wendee Kubik, "Farm Women: The Hidden Subsidy in Our Food," *Canadian Woman Studies / Les Cahiers de la Femme* 24, no. 4 (2005): 85–90.

organizations benefited from and contributed to that patronage. The government's expanding appetite for the arts suited the women's purpose of promoting US composers and gaining respect for US music internationally. The government had come around to the Federation's project—and when it did, they were ready.

The Special Record Project in the State-Private Network

Soon after the special record project was published, CRI told Hull that her record was selling better than most of the label's new releases typically did.[92] USIA had purchased its maximum number of copies for its libraries abroad (numbering at least 255), and the extensive network of women's organizations had put some extra buying power behind the project. In addition to at least 50 copies distributed by the NCW leadership, the Federation and the NCW encouraged members of their organizations to purchase the record at a discount.[93] The NCW's music committee asked its members to publicize the record within their social networks, and Hull planned to promote it at the Federation's convention.[94] One year after its release, the record had earned $700 in royalties, which were divided between NCW and the Federation after other expenses were paid.[95] Precise sales numbers have not come to light, but it seems that the record sold between 350 and 400 copies in its first year: better than most CRI records, but still a modest number.

In addition to promoting sales, the NCW and the Federation used their institutional connections to ensure that the record would be heard. Spofford arranged to play the recording on a special hour-long program over WNYC.[96] Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, president of the NCW, sent copies with personal notes to conductors Eugene Ormandy and Leopold Stokowski. Jacobs also sent a copy to Nina Popova, the chair of the Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), whom the NCW had hosted during her visit to New York the previous year.[97] The NCW received gratifying responses from its sister councils around the world, several of which described plans for circulating or broadcasting the record. Their correspondent in Southern Rhodesia wrote: "We are thrilled with the record and plan to hold a series of afternoon tea-parties, at which we will invite music lovers, Council members, and other women of the town. . . . I will invite the press to the first tea."[98] Their Australian correspondent wrote: "I am letting it be as widely heard as I can here in Brisbane first and have arranged to send it round later to the various states in turn ending up in Perth West Australia for our Australian National Council of Women

[92] Hull, letter to Spofford, November 18, 1961, NYPL/NCW b12 f14, fiche 445.
[93] USIA purchase data are from [Eagon], "Contents of Packets of Phonograph Recordings Sent to the Field in F.Y. 1962," NA/USIA; Historical Collection; Entry A1-1066, Subject Files, 1953–2000; Music, 1948–2000; box 197, folder "Music, 1961." NCW discount shown on record order form, Smith/Spofford, b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee Recordings of American Women Composers."
[94] Hull, letter to Spofford, November 18, 1961, NYPL/NCW b12 f14, fiche 445.
[95] Spofford, "Report of NCW Music Committee for Biennial Meeting," October 10, 1962, Smith/Spofford b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes." NCW's contract with CRI stipulated that the NCW and Federation would receive 65% of sales revenue after taxes and a reserve fund for re-pressing had been withheld. These were standard CRI contract terms for externally funded records. Memorandum of Agreement between Composers Recordings, Inc., National Council of Women of the United States, and the National Federation of Music Clubs, NYPL/NCW b12 f13, fiche 444.
[96] "It's Music to Our Ears!" *Bulletin of the National Council of Women of the United States* vol. 9, no. 4 (1962): 4. Smith/Spofford b18, folder "National Council of Women."
[97] Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, letter to Hull, September 25, 1961, LC/Hull b4 f20; Jacobs to Mabel Daniels, September 25, 1961, NYPL/NCW b12 f14, fiche 445.
[98] "Comments from National Councils Abroad on Recording of American Women Composers," NYPL/NCW b12 f13, fiche 445.

Conference there in August this year."[99] That correspondent also reported that she was in touch with the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Director of Music in hopes of getting the record played on the air.

Spofford and Hull were gratified that in the wake of their project, more recordings of women's compositions came in from Austria, Belgium, Greece, the Philippines, and Australia. The NCW's Music Committee arranged to play the Australians' music on WNYC radio, since the Australians "had cooperated so well in presenting our American women's record."[100] In 1963 Hull and Spofford worked together on financing a new record of US women's chamber music, and almost went so far as to solicit scores from composers for consideration.[101] But Theodate Johnson, publisher of *Musical America* magazine and a member of the NCW's Music Committee, noted that given the $3000 cost, "the recording would not arouse sufficient interest to make the project worthwhile."[102] For the short term, Hull and Spofford had struck a dead end with the NCW.

In the decades that followed, though, Federation volunteers continued to work on getting women's compositions recorded, and they continued to support the circulation of the special record project and other recordings of US contemporary music. In 1971, Federation president Merle Montgomery (1904–1986) and composer Julia Smith (1905–1989) devised a plan to get more women's music on the radio. The Federation approached 200 radio stations that broadcast "serious music" and offered to send them recordings free of charge, enough to produce thirteen radio shows, with verbal scripts and timings already prepared.[103] They sent each of the seventy participating stations a package of twenty-five records of contemporary US music, including the special record project. Though much of the collection consisted of CRI recordings, it also included Desto Records 7107, "The Black Composer in America," and Desto 7117, "Four American Composers," featuring music of Talma, Daniels, Miriam Gideon, and Smith herself.[104] The funding for this initiative was provided by the Federation and ASCAP—the American Society of Composers and Publishers, a music licensing agency—with the labor provided by the Federation. CRI and Desto Records agreed to sell the records to the Federation for $1 apiece: for CRI, this sale of 1,050 records represented an unusually large order. Montgomery urged the Federation's national and state officers to get their club members to listen to the radio programs when they aired, and then to write thank-you notes to the radio stations in hopes that they would play the records again.[105] This

[99] "Comments from National Councils Abroad on Recording of American Women Composers," NYPL/NCW b12 f13, fiche 445.
[100] The Australian recordings included Margaret Sutherland's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra and Miriam Hyde's Kelso Overture. "National Council of Women of the United States Report of the Committee on Music for Triennial Meeting, Washington 1963," typescript, pp. 6–7; and Minutes, Music Committee, NCW, October 1, 1963, both in Smith/Spofford b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes."
[101] Spofford, handwritten draft letter to composers, Smith/Spofford b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee Recordings of American Women Composers."
[102] Minutes, Music Committee, NCW, April 6, 1964. Smith/Spofford b18, folder "N.C.W. Music Committee—Reports and Minutes."
[103] Montgomery had served on the NCW's Music Committee under Spofford. Merle Montgomery, letter to "Concert Music Program Directors," July 9, 1971, Library of Congress, Music Division, Merle Montgomery Papers [**hereafter LC/Montgomery**] b6 f7, "Business Papers, Natl Federation of Music Clubs, American Women Composers, 1971–1980 (1 of 5)"; Julia Smith to Mr. Howard Klein, Associate Director, Arts and Humanities, The Rockefeller Foundation, October 30, 1971, ibid.
[104] "American Women Composers Series" (Programs), LC/Montgomery, b6 f7. The making of Desto 7117 was supported by the Federation and the Ford Foundation: see Minutes, Pre-Convention Executive Committee Meeting, April 17, 1971, NFMC, series Proceedings/Minutes/Reports/Programs, folder "1971 Biennial Convention—Reports—New Orleans, Louisiana."
[105] Merle Montgomery, letter to Federation members, n.d.; Julia Smith, Chairman, American Women Composers, National Federation of Music Clubs, letter to Carter Harman, CRI, December 3, 1971; Mrs. William B. [Lucy] Millard, letter to Federation members, February 1972; all in LC/Montgomery, b6 f7.

radio project was not state-supported, except insofar as government money indirectly assisted the record labels: Montgomery and Smith applied to the National Endowment for the Arts but were turned down. This project suggests that, long after CRI 145 was issued, the commitment of volunteer women continued to support the market for this record and for new music more generally. Getting this music heard in public was work, and the hidden subsidy of women's voluntary labor contributed to the cause.

When Merle Montgomery returned from the Federation's 1970 national board meeting in Detroit, she wrote to a colleague: "As always . . . I am struck with the resemblance of Federation to a submarine. All a person sees ordinarily is the periscope or tiny little bit on top; the big part, the important part, is not seen." She added, "I always find it sort-of breath-taking."[106] From Montgomery's position in the network, she could see the remarkable investments of time, labor, money, and enthusiasm that lay under the surface of American musical life. If we attend closely to those investments, we too might find them breath-taking—not least because they so vividly reveal the complexity of the enterprise.

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[106] Merle Montgomery, "Report for August 1970," LC/Montgomery b4 f4.

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