

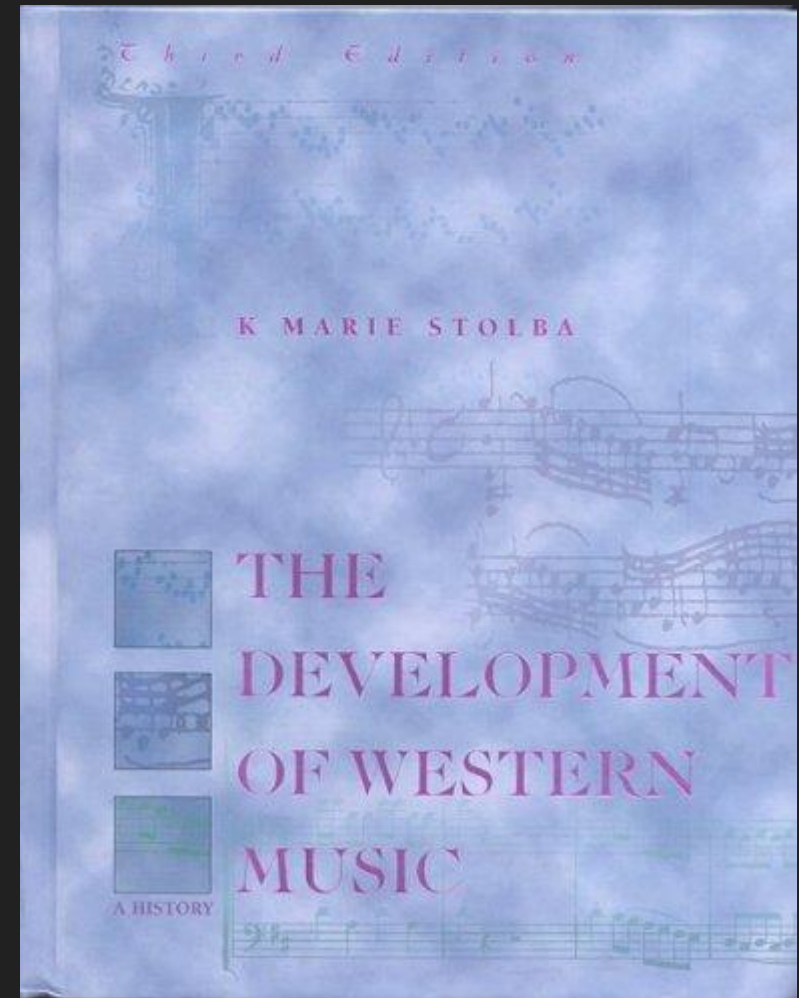
# In Their Own Words

Curry College Faculty Retreat, May 22, 2018

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# How we were taught...

- Music History Surveys
- Drop the needle
- Typical textbooks: *The Development of Western Music: A History* by K. Marie Stolba, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (McGraw Hill: Boston, 1998)
  - “André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741-1813) dominated the field of opéra comique during the last half of the eighteenth century...” (p. 352)
  - “Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643), the leading Italian composer of keyboard music in the first half of the seventeenth century...” (p. 278)
  - “Only recently has Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710) been recognized as the most important Italian composer of keyboard music between Frescobaldi and Domenico Scarlatti.” (p. 279)

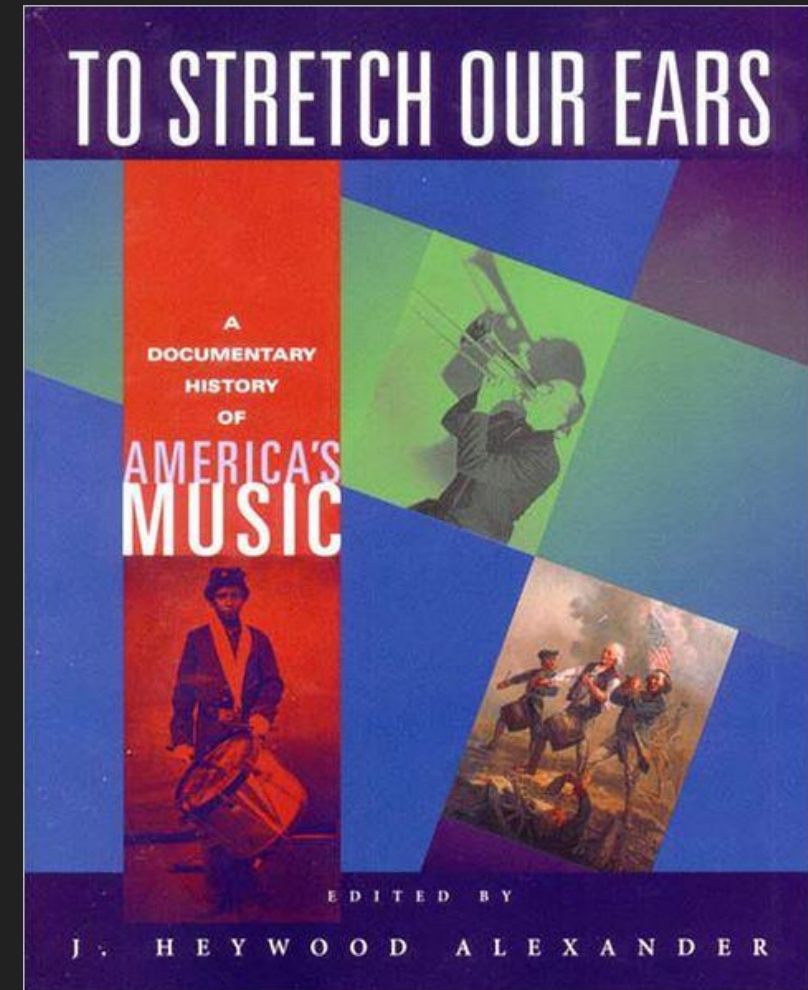


# What are we implying?

- Trust textbooks (and by extension, don't trust...)
- You only need to look in one place for information.
- What happens if the professor (or a future professor) disagrees with the textbook?

# Primary Sources in American Music

- Reading/Writing Enhanced
  - “Critically read a variety of texts in order to analyze rhetorical situations within the discipline, including audience expectations and genre conventions” —Curry College General Education Reading/Writing Enhancement Learning Outcomes
- Pros and Cons of secondary sources
  - *Legends, Icons & Rebels: Music That Changed the World* by Robbie Robertson, Jim Guerinot, et al. (Tundra: 2013)
- Pros and Cons of primary sources
  - *To Stretch Our Ears* by J. Heywood Alexander (Norton: 2002).
    - Composers
    - Performers
    - Music critics
    - Audience members
    - Conductors
    - Educators



# Primary Sources in American Music

- How does music fit into “reading”?
- Is it a primary source?
- What primary sources other than text might be useful?
- EdPuzzle (Panopto?) Quizzes to facilitate “reading” (aka “making meaning from”) music.
  - Copland plays *Cat and Mouse*
  - Babbitt: *Total Serialism*
  - William Grant Still's *Symphony No. 1* (Mvt. 3)

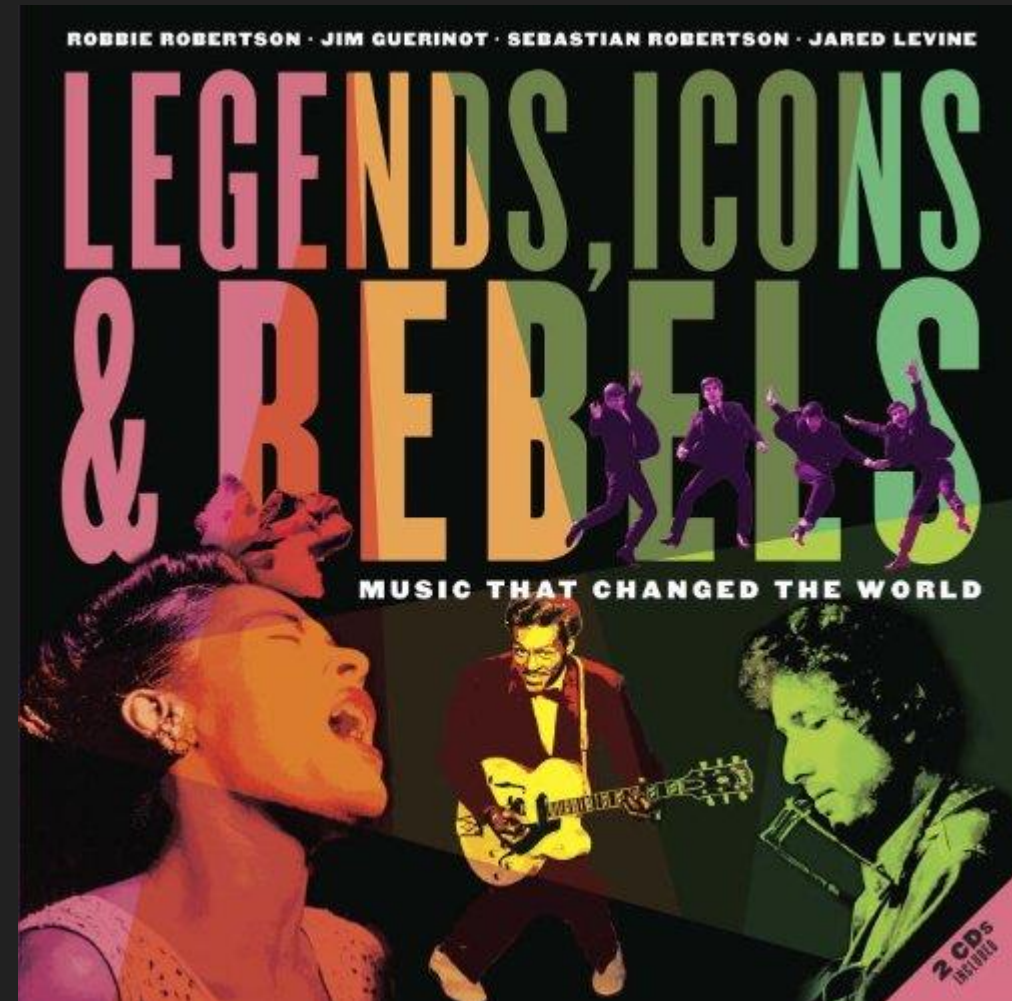
# What are we implying?

- Sources may disagree. Then what?
- Who do you trust? Why?
- What is the bias?
- What if the professor disagrees with the textbook?



# Favorite Discussions

- *Legends, Icons, & Rebels*
  - The article on **Elvis** doesn't mention Sister Rosetta Tharpe, or the Sam Phillips, owner of Sun Recording Studio claiming, "If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars!"
  - There is no discussion of **Little Richard**'s sexuality or intentional use of an effeminate appearance.
  - The only mention of **Marvin Gaye**'s death is, "Sadly, he is no longer with us..."



# Favorite Discussions

- **Milton Babbitt:** *Who Cares if You Listen?*
  - “A popular song is only very partially determined, since it would appear to retain its germane characteristics under considerable alteration of register, rhythmic texture, dynamics, harmonic structure, timbre, and other qualities.”
  - “The time has passed when the normally well-educated man without special preparation could understand the most advanced work in, for example, mathematics, philosophy, and physics. ... Specialized music on the other hand, far from signifying “height” of musical level, has been charged with ‘decadence,’ even as evidence of an insidious ‘conspiracy.’”



Image from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton\\_Babbitt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton_Babbitt)



# Favorite Discussions

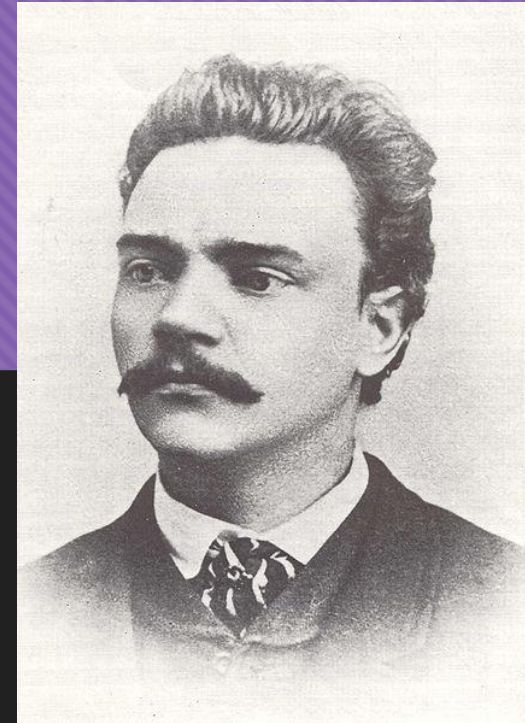
- Alan Lomax: Introduction to *The Folk Songs of North America*
  - “The first function of music, especially of folk music, is to produce a feeling of security for the listener by voicing the particular quality of a land and the life of its people.”
  - “Our best songs and dances are hybrids of hybrids... Folk music, like other arts and sciences, blooms hard by the crossroads.”
  - So what “particular quality” does this music suggest?
    - Rosie
    - Hey Mama

Image from <https://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/alanlomaxbio.html>



# Favorite Discussions

- Antonín Dvořák: *Real Value of Negro Melodies* (1893), *An Interesting Talk about "From the New World Symphony"* (1893), and *Music in America* (1895)
  - "I am now satisfied...that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the negro melodies. ... All of the great musicians have borrowed from the songs of the common people."
  - "Now, I found that the music of the negroes and of the Indians was practically identical."
  - "I have come to the conclusion that this youthful enthusiasm and eagerness to take up everything is the best promise for music in America."
  - Image from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dvorak\\_1868.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dvorak_1868.jpg)
- Amy Beach: *Letter to the Editor of "The Boston Herald"* (1893)
  - "The African population of the United States is far too small for its songs to be considered 'American.' ... The Africans are no more native than the Italians, Swedes or Russians."
  - "Whatever success may accrue by their employment cannot be justly claimed as American, but should be impartially laid at the feet of a people whose sufferings and sorrows gave them birth."
  - Image from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy\\_Beach#/media/File:Amy\\_Beach\\_01.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Beach#/media/File:Amy_Beach_01.jpg)



# Favorite Discussions

- William Grant Still, George Gershwin, and cultural appropriation
- Henry Cowell on Charles Ives: What does one modernist say about another?
- Louis Moreau Gottschalk's diary: Notes from a world-traveling, concert pianist
- Scott Joplin's instructions vs. the soundtrack to *The Sting*
- William Billings as a musical salesman in post-revolutionary America
- Aaron Copland: Creativity in America
- John Cage: What is silence? What is music?
- Thomas Symmes: Based on *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing*, what are the inherent biases and prejudices of music (or text) notation? What about an oral tradition?

# Student Questions

- Daily Hall of Fame Questions collected through EdPuzzle
  - (Thanks to Patty Kean for the idea.)
  - Inspired student-directed conversation.
  - Exposed concepts that needed further explanation.

# Student Feedback

- “Could not pass without reading.”
- “...it encouraged me to think outside the box...”
- “Extremely interesting, thought-provoking class...”
- But you can't win 'em all...
  - “He's wicked smart and has a great taste in music which is to be expected. Personally, I hated this course and every second of it. ... I'm not an art major I'm a science major so nothing really interested me. I only took this course for the GenEd requirement...But, the professor had a nice sense of fashion, so that's a plus.”



# Brainstorming and Discussion

- What primary sources do you use in your classes?
- What primary sources might you include in the future?
- What are the benefits and challenges inherent in including more primary sources?

# Works Mentioned

- Alexander, J. Heywood. *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of America's Music*. New York: Norton, 2002.
- Robertson, Robbie, Jim Guerinot, Sebastian Robertson, and Jared Levine. *Legends, Icons & Rebels: Music That Changed the World*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2016.
- Stolba, K. Marie. *The Development of Western Music: A History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 1998.