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DAVID NICHOLLS is Professor of Music at the University of Southampton. He is the author of *American Experimental Music, 1890–1940* (Cambridge, 1990) and contributing editor of *The Whole World of Music: A Henry Cowell Symposium* (1997), and *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage* (2002). He is also editor of the journal *American Music*.

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If there is a single feature which both characterizes and defines American music, it is diversity. Indeed, commentators and historians have increasingly recognized that, in America, almost uniquely among the world's nations, the many manifestations of music – from simple to complex, popular to *recherché*, concrete to abstract – are interdependent rather than independent, inclusive rather than exclusive. It is this interrelated diversity of musical experience which the *Cambridge History of American Music* (henceforth *CHAM*) seeks principally to celebrate.

CHAM has two other aims. The first – which has been achieved through a precise series of editorial checks and balances – is to represent the realities of America's music history as faithfully as possible. Thus (to employ H. Wiley Hitchcock's terms) the cultivated tradition is afforded significantly less prominence here than the various vernacular traditions. Also implicit throughout *CHAM* is the understanding that music in America has resulted not from the activities of a single culturally dominant group, but rather from the actions and interactions of a wide array of Native, European, African, Asian, and other peoples.

CHAM's second aim is to reflect the diversity of American music by studying it from a multiplicity of viewpoints. Thus no fewer than nineteen authors – all experts in their various fields – have contributed *CHAM*'s twenty chapters. Differing approaches have been adopted, different writing styles utilized, and diverging views expressed; the overall effect, I believe, is one of considerable freshness. One consequence of this multi-author approach is that each chapter is to some extent self-contained, telling its own story from its own perspective, and having its own bibliography and references. However, each chapter is also an integral part of the whole volume: where appropriate, readers are directed to other chapters, and the bibliography should be understood as a single, multi-section research tool rather than an assemblage of unrelated lists. Furthermore, one of my principal roles as *CHAM*'s editor has been to coordinate coverage

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by eliminating unnecessary overlaps and omissions between chapters, as far as possible. Of course, given the nature and scope of the volume, both inevitably occur to some extent: indeed, overlapping has been encouraged where a given topic seemed likely to benefit by being viewed from two or more perspectives. In the case of potential omissions, there have been numerous occasions during *CHAM*'s gestation when I have woken in a sweat, thinking "What about the Moravians?" (see chapter 4), "What about barbershop?" (see chapter 11), "What about the blues?" (see chapters 5, 11, and 14) and so on. The train-spotting fraternity will no doubt point to overlaps, omissions, and particular emphases with which they disagree; but overall, I believe that *CHAM* has achieved its goals. Readers may confidently consult individual chapters, groups of related chapters, or the whole volume, for a wealth of contemporary, informed, detailed, and in many cases provocative scholarship.

CHAM is arranged largely topically, with topics ordered mainly chronologically. One exception to this lies in the pair of themed overview chapters, 2 and 10, each of which looks forward as well as backward. A few general points: where they appear, octave-specific pitches are referred to via the Helmholtz system (i.e. C_1 – B_1 , C–B, c–b, c^1 – b^1 , etc., where c^1 = middle C). Octave-unspecific pitches simply use upper case (i.e. C, E \flat , F \sharp). Tonalties use upper case for major (i.e. D major, D \flat) and lower case for minor (i.e. b minor, c \sharp). References for quotations are via the author–date system; other bibliographical and discographic information (including published scores) has also been included where deemed appropriate by individual authors. Given the increasing availability and accessibility of scores, transcriptions, and especially recordings, relatively few actual music examples appear in *CHAM*, except where they are integral to the discussion. However, the text includes copious reference to the full range of musical experiences, from the individual to the collective, the fixed to the improvised, the recorded to the live, the planned to the spontaneous, and the enduring to the ephemeral.

Many of my coauthors would no doubt wish to express their thanks to those who have assisted them in their assignments; unfortunately, space prevents such a list appearing here. However, there are a number of individuals without whom the volume as a whole would have suffered. At the contracting stage, Richard Crawford, H. Wiley Hitchcock, and Judith McCullough all provided invaluable advice regarding possible authors. The soundness of their judgment is demonstrated in the chapters that follow. At CUP, Victoria Cooper (whose idea *CHAM* was) has been a con-

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stant (in both senses of that word) friend and adviser, while her assistant, Teresa Sheppard, has responded with infinite patience to a plethora of requests, both trivial and vital. During production, copy-editor Alan Finch, indexer Margaret Christie, and production controller Caroline Murray were all efficient and thorough. My wife, Tamar, and our children, Benjamin and Daisy, have given unquestioning support throughout *CHAM*'s gestation, as have our respective families. The same could be said of a fourth family – my former colleagues at Keele – who were also remarkably tolerant of requests for research support, financial and otherwise. Finally, especial thanks go to my coauthors, with whom it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work, and from whose contributions to this volume I have learned so much.

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