Minna Lederman ended her monograph *The Life and Death of a Small Magazine (Modern Music, 1924-1946)* with a valentine of sorts to Gustave Schirmer, president of the publishing firm of G. Schirmer, Inc. Schirmer’s director of publications had arranged a meeting between himself, Lederman and Schirmer on Friday, January 17, 1947, to discuss whether *Modern Music* could be revived under the aegis of G. Schirmer. Lederman wrote to Schirmer the very next day to thank him for his “princely gesture,” but she also reiterated the remarks she had made the day before: that as long as the League of Composers had a controlling interest in *Modern Music*, Lederman could see no way that any other organization or institution could run the journal. She did thank Schirmer, though, for his offer to create an index for *Modern Music*, an agreement Schirmer failed to honor.¹

Schirmer obviously knew something about publishing a journal. *The Musical Quarterly* (which I will often refer to as *MQ*) had been the firm’s house organ since 1915. And quite the instrument it was. Its editor at the time, Paul Henry Lang, recalled the words of an earlier editor, his colleague and friend Carl Engel. “A publishing firm such as ours exists for two reasons: glory and money, but we must be careful to acquire glory in such a manner as will not impair our other, principal aim. One of the least expensive and most efficient agents of glory is the Quarterly which with its few thousand copies balances the

¹ This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, 2 November 2007.

hundreds of thousand copies of music [of] low calibre that we make our money on.” And when Lang — Hungarian émigré, American citizen, and Columbia University professor — stated that MQ was “the voice of America in the international world of musical culture … respected [and] known everywhere,” well, attention must be paid.

Certainly Oliver Strunk paid attention. In his inaugural editorial for the new Journal of the American Musicological Society, he praised Lang’s journal. “In 1915 our esteemed elder contemporary, The Musical Quarterly, opened its first issue with an eloquent and persuasive plea ‘On Behalf of Musicology.’ It should not be necessary to renew it today. Nor would it be appropriate for me, as Editor-in-Chief, to open this first issue with an elaborate attempt to impose a particular view of musicology upon the Journal and thus upon the Society. If a particular view is to take shape as the Journal develops, it should be one imposed from without, and not from within.”

Both Lederman and Strunk were interacting with G. Schirmer: one with its president, the other with the firm’s publication. In both instances, two other men are in the background, one clearly so in Lederman’s letter, both less clearly so in Strunk’s editorial. William Schuman and Paul Henry Lang labored in the late 1940s to shape the direction of American musicology. Neither was completely successful in implementing his vision. But their struggle — with one another and with others — fascinates, for it continues to speak of the struggles we face in our discipline as its shape is imposed from without, from forces we cannot completely control, even as we attempt, in sessions such as this one, to summon that force and to shape our discipline.

By way of reminder, in September of 1944 Schuman had accepted the position of

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director of publications for G. Schirmer, to begin full-time at the end of the school year and at a salary that was twice what he was making at Sarah Lawrence College. Schuman was eager to carve out more time for composing music, and he had worked out an arrangement with Schirmer that would give him ample time to write. He also relished the responsibility that would be his in selecting American works for G. Schirmer. Samuel Barber was one of the first to congratulate Schuman: “Such an appointment,” Barber wrote, “can be of greatest importance to American music.”

But it wasn’t only Schuman’s promise that led Schirmer to hire Schuman. In May of 1929, Carl Engel was appointed president of G. Schirmer. Concurrently he worked as editor of MQ. Fifteen years later, without warning, Engel died. Schirmer reassumed the presidency of his firm and started to look for someone to replace Engel. For the editor of the Quarterly, he turned to another Gustave, Gustave Reese, who had served as associate editor of the Quarterly since 1933. Reese was also director of publications at G. Schirmer from 1940 until Schuman came on board, at which point Reese left the firm to take on the same position at Carl Fischer. According to Schuman, American music’s “great friend Serge Koussevitzky was largely instrumental in [his] being offered this post.” Lang would later confide to Schuman: “I do not wish to belittle Gus Reese’s talents but I knew that he will not last [at Schirmer]; he is too inflexible and emotional and not world-wise enough.” I have more to say about Lang, but let me first recount briefly the history of the Quarterly and American musicology.

It is unlikely that Schuman ever met Oscar Sonneck, that “heroic figure in American musicology … [who] helped to found The Musical Quarterly, the first American journal of

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4 Barber to Schuman, September 27, 1944, in The William Schuman Collection, Additional Material Received, July 1995 (Location: Rose Bldg.), New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, originally not a part of WS–NYPL, Folder “1944.”
5 Schuman to Copland, October 11, 1944, in WS–NYPL, Box 11, Folder 6.
6 Lang to Schuman, August 7, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
musical scholarship,” to quote Rich Crawford. But Schuman did know other early leaders within the American musicological community, such as: Lang; Engel; Reese; Harold Spivacke; Carleton Sprague Smith; Howard Hanson (who, you’ll recall, was a vice-president of the AMS in the 1930s); and Nathan Broder. Schuman was on a first-name basis with many persons of no mean accomplishment who identified themselves as musicologists.

And musicology in the wake of World War II was being redefined tremendously. Charles Seeger had said that much of the Americanness in musicology between the wars lay in its stress on “speculative and experimental methods in close liaison with the vanguard of the living art of music.” But as World War II approached, an “intellectual tidal wave” of European musicologists began washing up on these shores. To quote Curt Efrem Steinzor:

“The emigrants were among the finest minds in the discipline; many were the meticulously trained products of the German tradition which emphasized the methods of scientific historical research. By the end of the Second World War, their stamp on the American tradition was permanent.”

None of this should be news. But the place Lang and Schuman occupied on this shifting terrain may be. After two years of editing MQ, Lang wrote to Schuman: “I don’t mind telling you that after Engel died I was beginning negotiations with the Columbia Press and Norton’s for launching a paper. While the Quarterly was run by Engel there was no need for another paper. He knew about my plans and supported them. But when he died something had to be done. … Then came -- almost providentially -- the Schirmer offer

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8a... the AMS of those days was defining musicology, broadly rather than narrowly, to mean simply [quoting Carroll C. Pratt] ‘what those people do who call themselves musicologists.” Crawford, “American Musicology Comes of Age”: 11.
through your good offices and everything was neatly solved.”

Reese left the scene, Schuman hired Lang, and Lang turned his energies to MQ as the place from which he would project his ideas into the world of American musical letters.

Neither Lang nor Schuman was happy with what was happening in that world. But, to paraphrase Leo Tolstoy, they were unhappy in their own ways. In his April 1945 manifesto, “Musical Scholarship at the Crossroads,” Lang trumpeted what he hoped to accomplish as editor of MQ. “Musical scholarship came to us from Germany, the home of modern musicology, and Germany is now dead. … We have been fortunate in being able to welcome to this country some of the best musicologists the folly of a perverted nation cast adrift. For the most part they are eminent scholars, true humanists who are at home wherever men of good will dwell. … Yet some of our newly won colleagues still do not realize that the times have changed, and that most of all, their surroundings have changed. … many musical scholars, especially those of German training, confound the means — research — with the aim — understanding. … our colleges and universities are opening their doors in increasing numbers to American-trained musicologists, heretofore rare on the American musical scene. It appears that still too many of these ministers of knowledge follow the old musicological party line (and it is to be feared that some will err in the direction of the new “interpretative method”). Their minds are crammed full of minutiae of learning, of technical knowledge, but artistic feeling and creative inspiration cannot be imparted by a school that considers the great works of art so many objects for the conscientious study of the abstract canons of art. … [These new Ph.D.s] merely prolong the Avignon of musical scholarship.”

Lang was calling for a New Musicology before such a notion was popular. While he

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10 Lang to Schuman, August 7, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
worried about “the new ‘interpretative method’,” he expressed greater concern that American musicology’s turn toward Wissenschaft would make the discipline sterile when it needed a riot of fertility. Lang argued for a balance between empiricism and “what we might call intellectual lyricism,” a proper understanding of the humanistic aspects of music. MQ was the beachhead from which he would battle hermetic positivism.

If Lang feared for the future of American musicology, Schuman, for his part, wanted to revive its past. He savored the Seeger-Cowell tradition that wed musicology to “the living art of music,” and in his letters to Lang, he laid out his vision. Their differences began to emerge over a dust-up they had concerning “a project outline prepared by David Hall for the phonograph record and sound transcription archive of the proposed Carnegie Museum of Music.”12 Though he dismissed some of Hall’s summary, Lang took the opportunity to pay Schuman a high compliment. “If you decide[d] to become a musicologist …, in 15-20 years you would overtake me. Unlike most musicians you have an inquisitive mind and you are a voracious reader; these two plus your musical gifts make a top-notch musicologist.”13 Lang went on to say that he himself was a failure at composition and that Kodály encouraged him to take up musicology instead. In short, Lang — a true musician and a brilliant musicologist — held Schuman — a brilliant composer and a true intellectual — as a peer.

Thus it could not have been easy when Schuman leveled his fundamental complaint against Lang. “I am disappointed that the magazine has not changed more since you have taken over … It is no small achievement to have maintained … the high standard for which the Quarterly has long been famous, and it may seem to you carping of me to reiterate my desire for change. Nevertheless, now that the American Musicological Society is turning out its own professional magazine I am convinced more than ever that the Quarterly must stop

12 Schuman’s secretary to Lang, June 26, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
13 Lang to Schuman, July 22, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
being as narrow as it now is and stop being of interest only to scholars. It was founded for the enjoyment and enlightenment of the intelligent consumer of music. I cannot feel that in its present state it is fulfilling these functions. I still have confidence that the Quarterly can be changed and that you are the man to do the job.” Schuman also wanted more coverage of current musical events and contemporary music. The demise of Modern Music hung over both men’s heads, and both men knew that JAMS was not going to pick up where Modern Music left off.

But Lang violently disagreed with Schuman, as he made plain in a five-page defense of his editorship. In the midst of this battle stood Virgil Thomson, who had criticized Lang and MQ. Lang: “Virgil knows that there should be a magazine such as the MQ and condescendingly admitted that we have one, which is OK. Since he does not read it … but knows that it is edited by a ‘historian’, it must be the same as it was under Sonneck and Engel. Modern Music paid quite a bit of attention to him — he is one of Minna’s darlings — and he is genuinely devoted to the cause of modern music, hence his chagrin over the demise of the paper. There has never been anything in Modern Music (apart from an occasional article in the 100 yard dash category) that even faintly compares with the niveau of the MQ. Its mutual admiration tone was disgusting as was its intolerance toward outsiders. We do need a magazine devoted to modern music, need it badly, but it cannot be run by a clique for a clique. As to the other [music magazines], they aren’t worth the nice coated paper they are printed on.”

If Schuman was chastened, he didn’t give any quarter. “If I did not feel that you could eventually enliven the Musical Quarterly, without in any way turning it into a popular...

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14 Schuman to Lang, August 1, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
16 Lang to Schuman, August 7, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
magazine or otherwise detracting from its present qualities, I assure you that I would not enter into this lengthy correspondence. You state that you 'yield to no one in defending and supporting modern music and it is only the inferiority complex of the journalists that always makes them attack the scholar as out of sympathy with the present'. I know this statement of yours to be correct because I know your point-of-view as a result of our friendship. But, frankly, Paul, in your writings I fail to see that you have established yourself in any way as a champion of contemporary music and, after all, it is only in your capacity as author that you can be known to the music world at large. As far as you and the Musical Quarterly are concerned, I do not expect one whit more than perfection itself. So there!”

Thus were the lines drawn between Lang and Schuman and against the larger world in which they found themselves. Lang had expressed to Schuman a three-pronged plan to use his work at Norton, his minting of musicologists at Columbia, and his leadership of MQ to remake the face of musicology in America. He told Schuman it would take years if not decades to make the change. Schuman understood but nevertheless insisted that Lang give more prominence to contemporary music in general and American music in particular. Place Lang’s October 1947 editorial in the light of this skirmish. “We must realize that today the American composer is in the forefront of modern music; it is his work that will go down in the annals of history as the American contribution to the art of music. The widespread belief that jazz is the great American national art is fallacious. Jazz has its own place, but it can never aspire to the artistic standing of symphonic and other art music.” Lang may have been wrong about jazz, but twenty years later, Donald McCorkle asked the members of this Society whether we owed American music more than we had given it by the mid-'60s. For

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17 Schuman to Lang, August 14, 1947, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3. 
19 Donald M. McCorkle, “Finding a Place for American Studies in American Musicology,” JAMS 19, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 73-84. This relatively irenic article comes after
many reasons, neither jazz nor the American composer has been at the forefront of JAMS.

Lang continued to do what he could with the MQ. Two issues later, he announced that the journal would begin “a new department under the heading of Current Chronicle. This may seem to be a new departure … Yet this is not altogether the case. In 1939 … Carl Engel[,] entrusted a department bearing the same title to … Paul Rosenfeld … Far from advancing into an unknown territory, then, we are returning to a precedent that will be well remembered by many readers.”

But who among MQ’s readers in 1948 would remember Rosenfeld’s four offerings from 1939? No doubt some of them thought fondly back to the defunct Modern Music and its Current Chronicle. Certainly Lederman did. She wrote to Schuman: “… Just yesterday I glanced at the bright green Quarterly and saw that you had plunged into the adventure of a Chronicle. In M.M. that feature always gave me the most headaches, for obvious reasons. So I admire your courage and fortitude. I know how much you wanted it and for what good reasons. So here’s good luck to the department and good luck to you.” Carleton Sprague Smith wrote that Lang “opened [the Quarterly’s] pages to contemporary music, notably in

Joseph Kerman’s incendiary address before the Society in December of 1964 and Edward Lowinsky’s blistering response. See Kerman, “A Profile for American Musicology,” JAMS 18, no. 1 (Spring 1965): 61-69, and Lowinsky, “Character and Purposes of American Musicology: A Reply to Joseph Kerman,” JAMS 18, no. 2 (Summer 1965): 222-234. Kerman wrote that “unfortunately, American music has not been interesting enough, artistically, to merit from us that [scholarly] commitment. … It does not appear to me that a characteristically American musicology can be built on native repertory.” Kerman, “A Profile for American Musicology”: 68. Kerman later amended his statement: “I did not mean to imply that the main line of American art-music — Ives, the generation of Sessions and Copland, and beyond — does not deserve the attention of critics. On the contrary, I believe it does. As a matter of fact, I have written several critical articles about it myself.” Joseph Kerman, in “Communications,” JAMS 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1965): 427. He is referring to his articles on the music of Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions, and Aaron Copland that appeared in The Hudson Review in the 1950s.

21 Lederman to Schuman, May 6, 1948: WS–NYPL, Box 24, Folder 3.
the feature called ‘Current Chronicle’,” but if we take Lederman at her word, here again we find Lang bowing to the wishes of his boss in the way that musical letters in America were shaped and in how they attempted to shape American thought about music.

Still, Schuman wasn’t satisfied. In 1949 he restated his concerns. “My terms are simple … [They] include keeping the magazine on a high level of scholarship, but preclude limiting this to articles primarily of musicological or quasi-musicological interest. These terms also insist that the base of the magazine be broadened; that the style of writing be somewhat less deadly and that the subject matter not eschew important issues of our times in music, however controversial these may be. If you can succeed in transforming the magazine along these lines, you will have the thanks of all of us. If you do not begin to do it, I for one will continue to plague you in crescendo as we go along and this thought alone should be enough to cause the change or to send you back to the woods on a year-round hunting expedition.” By the spring of 1951, Schuman unleashed the hounds. “Please do not think for a minute that I do not realize that you have maintained the Quarterly at its former level and that this in itself is no mean feat. My complaint, and we may as well call it that, is that you have not, to my mind, carried out the intention you had of broadening the content of the Magazine.” And Schuman made the not-so-subtle hint that he might recommend to Schirmer a new editor for MQ.

Lang chose to ride out this storm, but he may not have known that Schuman had invited Juilliard colleague Richard Franko Goldman to play the role of rainmaker. In late spring of 1951, Goldman provided two reports that sketched out how he — Goldman — would organize MQ. Here are the opening two paragraphs of Goldman’s second report:

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23 Schuman to Lang, November 11, 1949, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
24 Schuman to Lang, May 22, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
The Musical Quarterly should be placed squarely in the mid-20th century, facing the problems of intelligent discussion of music itself, and the relations of music to the society in which we live. It should maintain and enlarge acquaintance with the past in the sense that the past lives on in the present, but it should avoid treating the past simply as territory for research. This aspect of musical and historical study is now adequately covered by The Journal of the American Musicological Society and other publications. The Musical Quarterly … should attract the intelligent layman, the music student, the former public of “Modern Music”, as well as the teacher, the librarian and the active musician.

The editorial problems of the Musical Quarterly center around a revised approach to the magazine’s historical or musicological content, and a re-definition of policy giving major emphasis to the musical activity of the present day. It is essential that contributors be found who not only “know about” music technically, but who think about music as an art that has a relation to the world, the other arts, and to people. The magazine can remain scholarly and literate without limiting its appeal to “musicographers” and professional musicians with specialized interests. … Analyses and studies should be kept remote from the atmosphere of the classroom or textbook, but can still be so written as to be of permanent reference value. Footnotes should be used sparingly; musical examples should be used with greater pertinence and care than in the past. The writing should be precise, vivid and polished throughout, and entirely free from jargon.25

Given Lang’s stature, it is remarkable that Schuman considered replacing him. But keep in mind that, by this time, Schuman was being asked regularly to speak and write about musicological topics, broadly construed. As Goldman was preparing his reports, Schuman

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25 Goldman to Schuman, June 2, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 18, Folder 4.
received an invitation from the American Council of Learned Societies to prepare a paper entitled “Education of the Professional Musician” for a fall conference on Music in Contemporary American Civilization. He declined the invitation due to his other commitments, or so his letter said. But perhaps he knew better than to appear before the members of ACLS’s Committee on Musicology — Seeger, Edward Waters, Jacques Barzun, Manfred Bukofzer, and Carroll C. Pratt — if he sacked one of their lions as editor of MQ.\footnote{D. H. Daugherty to Schuman, May 31, 1951 and Schuman to Daugherty, June 15, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 12, Folder 1.}

As it happened, it was Schuman, not Lang, who was sacked. Schirmer wrote to him while Schuman was on Martha’s Vineyard for a summer of composition and relaxation. “This letter may be a surprise to you and it may not be, but it is to advise you that we do not wish to continue the arrangement we have with you as Director of Publications beyond the end of this year.” Schirmer groused “such a part-time arrangement, in my estimation, never works out satisfactorily,” conveniently forgetting that it was Schirmer who arranged for Schuman to be a part-time consultant after Schuman became Juilliard’s president. And Schirmer seemed to miss the irony of his pronouncement that, having concluded that the publications department needed full-time direction, he — the sixty-year-old president of the firm — would direct the department himself.\footnote{Schirmer to Schuman, August 24, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 39, Folder 2.} Lang wrote to Schuman that Schirmer’s folly “could be safely inserted on the funniest page in the New Yorker.”\footnote{Lang to Schuman, September 25, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.} But Schuman wasn’t laughing; he decided to resign his position effective October 1.

He also decided that he wanted to start his own journal. If, by coming to MQ, Lang found it unnecessary to go to Columbia and Norton’s to start up his own paper, Schuman found it even more pressing now to begin one in the image that Goldman had laid out for him. First he tried to persuade the Koussevitzky Music Foundation to begin such a paper.
Schuman wrote to Olga Koussevitzky: “There is need in the world of music today for a publication devoted to high level evaluation of the forces — esthetic, philosophical, economic, and, if you will permit, spiritual — that pertain to creative music. I believe that the Foundation should give serious thought to founding such a publication as a living memorial to a great performer whose concern for the music of his time was, to the best of my knowledge, without parallel in the entire history of the art.”

When the Foundation passed on Schuman’s idea, he then turned to his own institution, and with Goldman at the helm, the *Juilliard Review* began publication in the Fall of 1954, a new journal devoted, according to Goldman’s inaugural editorial, “to a serious view of music in our day, as we find it, and in terms of the idea that music is a high art, neither trade, nor entertainment nor commodity.”

The *Review* struggled to find the right tone, Sheila Keats eventually replaced Goldman as managing editor, and the journal ceased publication in 1962, the year after Schuman stepped down as president of Juilliard. His vision for a journal faltered.

Lang’s vision, in contrast, flourished. His twenty-nine years as editor of *MQ* was as productive as it was long. And in 1954 — the same year the *Juilliard Review* was launched — Lang added another arrow to his quiver: he succeeded Thomson at the *Herald-Tribune*. In congratulating Lang, Schuman wrote: “As you know, it has long been my conviction that the musicologist should make himself heard in the arena and not limit his contribution to the cloistered halls of the academy. It also pleases me that you will be obliged to bring your penetrating insights to bear on the contemporary composer and I have no doubt that your enlightened approach will be a great boon to him.”

Lang, in his turn, thanked Schuman for his best wishes. “What I appreciate most in your letter is your expressed desire to see me on the firing line. As a matter of fact, I like all sorts of music this side of musique concrète, the

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29 Schuman to Olga Koussevitzky, December 20, 1951, in WS–NYPL, Box 23, Folder 9.
31 Schuman to Lang, July 26, 1954, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
prepared piano, and Morty Feldman’s space boys, and am prepared to deal with it the way I do with Mozart. The American composer will have as staunch a friend in me as he had in Virgil (but not the French lollypop composers that were so dear to him).”

And what of their intramural warfare over the direction of MQ? Schuman, you will recall, wanted more contemporary music and more American music. It’s easy to imagine him liking MQ’s current statement of purpose:

“Regular sections include 'American Musics', 'Music and Culture', 'The Twentieth Century’, and an 'Institutions, Industries, Technologies' section which examines music and the ways it is created and consumed. In addition, a fifth section entitled 'Primary Sources' features discussions on issues of biography, texts, and manuscripts; reflections on leading figures; personal statements by noted performers and composers; and essays on performances and recordings. Along with discussions of important new books, MQ publishes review essays on a wide variety of significant new music performances and recordings.”

Lang told Schuman that the changes Schuman sought would take time to achieve. Schuman couldn’t achieve them in the short-lived *Juilliard Review*, and even Lang could not fully satisfy Schuman after three decades. Whatever we feel about MQ, it should be clear that its shape and condition owe much not only to its long-serving post-WWII editor, but also to that editor’s hard-charging boss.

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32 Lang to Schuman, August 11, 1954, in WS–NYPL, Box 25, Folder 3.
33 [http://www.oxfordjournals.org/musql/about.html](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/musql/about.html). Irene Zedlacher wrote: “the division into sections originated in discussions Leon Botstein had with the editors he asked to join when he took over. The goal was to cover areas they felt were not or not sufficiently represented in publications. The other was to encourage writings on topics such as issues of production, recording, institutional developments in music, etc.” Personal communication, October 29, 2007.