

COMMENTS ON MUSICAL COMPOSITION CANDIDATES

First of all, I was most pleased to see this particular group of scores, because before there has been such a great deal of material which clearly showed that the authors didn't know how to go about doing things. These showed talent, and also they gave evidence that the composers are making constructive efforts to do something worthwhile.

Of the two, I would prefer Fax above Fields. My reasons are that he (Fax) has good technical equipment and that he knows counterpoint and orchestration. His orchestral works, obviously written while under a teacher, don't show a great deal of melodic inventiveness, and yet it was apparent from some of his other works (evidently written some years before) that he actually has a melodic sense. It is, of course, possible for a person's melodic sense to be hampered while he is studying and concentrating on other, more technical aspects of music. In my opinion, Fax has talent and is worthy of help.

This should not be construed as being derogatory to Fields, for the latter has ability, but I do not see in his works the same qualities I see in those of Fax.

I find Fields using a certain intellectual, cacophonous style of writing at times. Fax also utilizes the same style, but when Fax uses it, he makes it serve his own ends. In other words, he has a reason for doing whatever he does.

I am glad to see that these men are working and studying, for that's a commendable thing - in such contrast to the people who hoped to win success without expending any effort whatsoever.

Excerpt of letter from Edward E. Lewinsky of Black Mountain College,
Black Mountain, North Carolina, to Fred G. Wales:

"I am happy to tell you that I was fortunate enough to contact what seems to be an excellent musician through Howard University. The candidate in question is Mr. Mark Oakland Fax of Rochester, New York. Mr. Fax received his Bachelor's degree in music from Syracuse University in 1933. He was Director of Music at Paine College from 1934 to 1942. Then he went to the Eastman School of Music at Rochester, where he received last year his Master's degree in composition. He is thirty-five years of age and has a wife and two-year-old son. His wife is secretary at the YWCA in Rochester and studies sociology at the University there. Mr. Fax' record is brilliant. He seems to be also a gifted pianist. The Board of Fellows offered him yesterday a Visiting Lectureship for the rest of the Spring Quarter. He has a piano recital in Rochester on April eleventh and a choral concert on April fourteenth. He told me over the phone that he is very eager to join us immediately after this last concert. We hope that he will come here with his family. At least we urged him to do so because we felt in the case of Percy Baker very sorry that he had to separate from his family in order to be here."

FISK

UNIVERSITY

MUSIC JURY RATINGS

WILLIAM HENERY BODKIN

A baritone voice of good quality. Technical equipment generally satisfactory, but additional work is very strongly urged. Voice has a slight flutter and fast vibrato, which mars singing of sustained passages. Sings intelligently and with good musicianship. Has a fair sense of style, and interpretative ability. Is a serious singer, but needs more flair and showmanship. Should make an excellent teacher.

LOUISE BURGE

A contralto voice that is really quite exceptional. A voice that has a rich, melodious and earthy quality that is distinctive. Has style and interpretive talent, plus good sound musicianship. At the present time she seems to be working hard on her vocal technique, which obviously needs much more work, although she shows that she is working correctly and along the right lines to overcome certain difficulties. With these corrections made, it is my opinion that Miss Burge should go very far as an outstanding singer.

CHARLES HOLLAND

A tenor voice of exceptional and outstanding quality. Apparently has everything a singer needs for success. This includes voice, a great singing sense, dramatic temperament, intelligence, musicianship, personality, appearance, plus fine training. His chances for success are great, and at the present time, he needs only to be properly guided in caring for his voice and for launching him into a career from a commercial standpoint.

ENOLA ESTELLE LAWS

A soprano voice of lovely quality. Is not an exceptionally large voice, but adequate. Sings very artistically and intelligently. Shows excellent musicianship, fine style and good interpretative ability. Has a pleasing personality and makes a good appearance. Her great need at this time is, in my opinion, to have an opportunity to get out and sing - to have the advantage of audience contact, which would aid her in getting away from a certain pedantic attitude, if I may call it that.

AUBREY PANKEY

A good baritone voice, but not outstanding so far as native quality is concerned. Sings technically very well. Has fine musicianship, a good sense of style and is a good all around singer. Has probably reached the peak of his vocal development and his powers of interpretive growth. He is a good singer, but not distinctive.

RUTH CAMPBELL STEWART

A fine soprano voice of fundamentally good quality. At present the upper voice is brilliant and well-produced, while the lower voice is very throaty and tends to make the range rather uneven. This throatiness mars the clarity of her diction. She sings musically and with intelligence. Her

great need at the present time would seem to be the necessity of getting away from an academic atmosphere and to come into contact with professional musicians and a professional atmosphere. Her languages and repertoire are in dire need of expansion and development. If this were done, Miss Stewart might well become very outstanding.

KATHRYN ANTOINETTE WARD

A soprano voice of some potentiality. At present time she shows a great lack of adequate training, both vocally and musically. Is a person of pleasant appearance and seems intelligent. With further specialized training, she might do very well as a singer.

In conclusion, the singers that, in my opinion, have the best chances for successful singing careers are as follows:

1. Charles Holland
2. Enola Estelle Laws ?
3. Louise Burge 2
4. Ruth Campbell Stewart

James