

ICAMus Profile

2002-2012

The International Center for American Music is a Non-Profit Organization, founded in Florence, Italy by American-music scholar Aloma Bardi in 2003, after the incorporation of the Organization in the United States (Ann Arbor, MI) in 2002. Aloma Bardi has been active in the field for decades; she has produced publications on Ives, the Gershwins and other American music topics, along with the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Directory of Events, and taught “History of music in the United States of America” at the University of Florence (2007-2011).

ICAMus is led by an international Board of Directors and an Advisory Board of specialists in the field. Among the Directors: Evan Rothstein, Deputy Head of Strings at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London and Chairman of the ECMTA, European Chamber Music Teachers’ Association, American music expert and Ives scholar; Dorothea Gail, executive editor of the “MUSA - Music of the United States of America” project at the University of Michigan; and Roberta Prada, president of Vocal Images, Inc., and Vox Mentor, LLC; along with committed younger American-music scholars and post-Ph.D. researchers. Among the Advisors to ICAMus, H. Wiley Hitchcock (1923-2007), Barbara Heyman, Richard Crawford, Gianfranco Vinay, and Marcello Piras. Aloma Bardi has directed the Center since its foundation; she serves as ICAMus President, coordinator of its projects, and editor of its Web site www.icamus.org.

The Center’s commitment to the study, performance and teaching of American music and America’s musical life has taken shape in a diversity of projects. ICAMus has worked internationally in close collaboration with performers, scholars, schools, conservatories, universities and various cultural institutions.

ICAMus has an experience of numerous productions over the years. Among the concerts:

--- Events devoted to Charles E. Ives with pianist Gregorio Nardi: world première of the critical edition of the Songs, with projected texts, images, and light design (2003); performance of all unpublished mss. of the *Concord Sonata* and première of its first version, 1920--John Kirkpatrick premiered it, but he always drew from his own edition in the making, too (4 concerts, 2004).

--- Recitals of American Songs: Concert of Emily Dickinson Songs, presenting the Copland cycle *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* and a rare selection of composers—some of them contemporary—never before performed in Europe (Arthur Farwell, Ernst Bacon, Leo Smit, Lee Hoiby, Lori Laitman), with soprano Antonia Brown and pianist Gregorio Nardi (2004); Concert of Walt Whitman Songs by different

composers, with world première of Marc Blitzstein's song cycle *Nine Walt Whitman Songs* and the unfinished cantata *a word out of the sea* setting Whitman texts (2006).

--- Première of the complete George Gershwin *Song-Book of 1932*, according to the entire printed version of 1932 (piano & voices) and with integration of the composer's unpublished recorded sources (4 concerts, 2005).

The Organization is expanding its educational scope, and has carried out affiliation projects with universities and music schools. Since the academic year 2006-2007, a course of "History of music in the United States of America"—a very rare subject at a European university—was established at the University of Florence; it continued until 2011.

Among the performances with music schools, presenting novelty in repertoire and premières: Scuola di Musica di Fiesole (Gershwin *Song-Book*, 2005; Marc Blitzstein Whitman settings, 2006; Gottschalk Songs for voice and piano, and Foster Songs arranged with guitar accompaniment, 2008; Gershwin Songs on unpublished lyrics, 2010; new orchestrations of the Gershwins' *Strike Up the Band*, 2011), The University of Michigan School of Music (Gershwin *Song-Book*, 2005), MusicArea, Florence (Anthony Philip Heinrich's flute pieces, 2008), Scuola Comunale di Musica "Giuseppe Verdi", Prato (historically informed performance of Foster Songs, with different vocal and instrumental arrangements by the composer; 2 concerts, 2011).

Thanks to the ICAMus consistent advisory work on theses, dissertations, and research, a new generation of scholars of international stature is emerging in Europe in the field of American music.

Other activities of the Center include conferences, seminars, radio programs, articles, and publications. Landmarks in conferences have been a conference on Gershwin and *Porgy and Bess* (2005), the seminar *La musica americana e le sue Storie* (2006) and the doctoral seminar *Com'era nuovo il Nuovo Mondo* (2010). Series of radio programs have been produced on Ives, Gershwin, American Art Song, the American sources of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, and other topics.

ICAMus has collaborated with numerous institutions, such as Syracuse University and New York University in Florence, École Normale Supérieure and Paris 8, the United States Consulate in Florence, and GAMO - Gruppo Aperto Musica Oggi. The Center has offered events at the University of Florence - DAMS, at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence, Teatro Metastasio in Prato, Salle des Actes, ENS, in Paris, as well as in churches and concert halls internationally.

The Organization's initiatives have received consistent press coverage, and the Center has provided publication of scholarly articles in coincidence with ICAMus events, in particular for "Il Giornale della musica". "Rivista Musica" selected the Center's Web site in 2004 for its prominent and original contents.

The Center has built over the years an archive and a library of American music and studies on it, both in print and in digital format, that are unique in Europe.

ICAMus devotes close attention to the most updated contents and debates in the field of American music, within the new trends of the international learned community, like post-modernism, post-colonialism, Mediterranean studies, etc., shedding on American music the light of new perspectives, and integrating them with the historical approach, towards a more comprehensive narrative of America's musical life. The Center's projects, scope and source analysis are constantly updated to the newest academic and artistic debates.

Currently under study at ICAMus are the première of Louis Moreau Gottschalk's Songs, of Stephen Collins Foster's Songs for voice and guitar, and of Anthony Philip Heinrich's printed and manuscript collections. Research is being made on the American flute music and the history of this instrument in North America. More public performances at universities and music schools are scheduled to be offered as a result of such study. Another project focuses on composer Marc Blitzstein's writings (articles and reviews, 1926-1962). A historically informed Foster performance project at the Scuola di Musica di Prato, Italy, has been initiated in November 2010; the first seminar and concerts successfully took place in 2011.

In the years 2008-2012 several ICAMus initiatives have taken place with Barbara Boganini on the American inspiration and original sources of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, with discovery and publication of previously unpublished holograph manuscripts of correspondence by the composer.

The ongoing ICAMus research on Earlier American Music (composed before the Civil War 1861-1865) carried out in the main source repositories, focuses on the continuity and consistency of American musical traditions, to reach a more balanced knowledge of the eras of music making and musical life in the United States of America, and to better understand the long tradition underlying modern American experimentation that has inspired music renewal internationally.