

String Quartets Nos. 4-5. By George Whitefield Chadwick. Edited by Marianne Betz. Recent Researches in American Music, Vol. 60. Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, 2007. xx + 162pp. ISBN 978-0895796066. \$140.00. Quartet no. 4 parts \$28.00. Quartet no. 5 parts \$29.00.

Reviewed by Mark A. Zobel

As E. Douglas Bomberger recently noted in his review of two new Chadwick recordings (JSAM, 1/3, 2007), the music of the American Romanticists has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years. Marianne Betz's new critical edition of Chadwick's fourth and fifth string quartets contributes to the increasing accessibility of this repertory. These two quartets are significant in Chadwick's oeuvre, because they were his last in the genre, and thus show the extent to which his style in that medium had matured. They also came at a time when the question of "American-ness" in music had been brought to the fore by virtue of Dvořák's visit to America (1892–1895), his composition of *Symphony No. 9 in E Minor "From the New World"* and *String Quartet No. 12 in F Major "American,"* and his controversial comments on the use of native idioms in musical composition. In the introductory material Betz cautions that, while there is no direct evidence linking Dvořák's writings with the impetus for these quartets, the initial reviews do suggest that Chadwick may have had American themes in mind when composing them. Indeed, one witnesses some similarities in Dvořák's thinking and these two quartets, most notably in Chadwick's use of pentatonic scales and hymn-like gestures in some of the themes. Regardless of the extent to which Dvořák's ideas may or may not have influenced Chadwick, the quartets themselves are marvelous examples of the genre in turn-of-the-century America, and it is good to have authoritative editions of them at this time as interest in the recording of Chadwick's music increases.

Consisting of three main sections, the edition includes a thorough historical outline that contextualizes the quartets by locating them within Chadwick's overall body of work as well as within the American chamber music repertory at the turn of the century. Betz discusses the musical origins of these quartets along with the initial critical responses to their premiere performances. Of particular interest in this section is a discussion of Chadwick's turn away from chamber music after the fifth quartet and the musical and economic conditions that may have influenced that decision. Betz outlines the state of chamber music composition in America and the problems composers faced with respect to performance and publication.

The second and third sections contain the editions themselves and a critical report detailing the sources consulted, the editorial procedures, and exhaustive notes indicating every editorial change. As with all high-quality critical editions, one is able to reconstruct the original sources given the critical notes. Betz has taken great pains to document all changes and the reasoning behind them. The result is an edition that represents the best of what is currently known about the composer's intentions, while quietly eliminating certain redundancies in Chadwick's use of accidentals and modernizing aspects of the notation.

Nearly twenty years have passed since the Portland String Quartet recorded these two quartets (Northeastern, NR 234-CD). Still widely available, this recording represents one of the best modern performances of these works. While it remains to be seen how Betz's edition will influence future performances and recordings, her work clearly assists performers, musicologists,

and American music enthusiasts seeking to revitalize the music of this significant American composer.