

Philanthropy and the Musical Life of Cleveland

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This matter of philanthropic support for music is a risky business. Throughout our history we have needed to be convinced that music, indeed, is central to our lives as human beings and, hence, really worthy of support for the good of society. Even when so convinced, those who would give aid must combine in a good match with those receiving it. Too often artists are among the least well equipped to wade through guidelines to come up with reasonable written requests. And too often funding sources experience frustration in having to decide between applications.

Funding patterns have changed since the mid-nineteenth century, when it was considered the duty of those better off to help others less well heeled. The general move, of course, has been toward professional entities, such as foundations on the giving end and a higher level of professional management on the receiving side. Now with the debate in Washington, which may sound the death knell for the National Endowment for the Arts, we may again be thrust back into a pattern of more individual giving.

Cleveland has enjoyed its share of patronage for music over the years. In this talk we will look at several examples from among people who have helped shape our musical scenario. First, there have been those who set examples, who showed the way, who, in effect, created a need for important musical expression. The major nineteenth-century conductor Theodore Thomas brought his fine ensemble frequently to Cleveland and helped set standards here. Second, Cleveland's preeminent choral conductor during the latter nineteenth-century, Alfred Arthur, was a major factor in creating a musical scene of excellence through his work with the Cleveland Vocal Society. He followed Thomas's example in Cincinnati as he introduced the notion of May festival performances to Cleveland during the 1880s.

Next we turn to a Cleveland impresario who really made things happen, Adella Prentiss Hughes. During the early 1900s she brought the great names of Western music to Cleveland, from Fritz Kreisler, Richard Strauss and Ignacy Paderewski, to Gustav Mahler, the Ballet Russe and the best American orchestras from Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Wrote Archie Bell in the *Cleveland Leader* in September 1917, "Mrs. Adella Prentiss Hughes has put Cleveland on the musical map of this country." It was she who found Nikolai Sokoloff and brought him to Cleveland as the first conductor of a new ensemble, Cleveland's Symphony Orchestra. This ensemble was launched in a benefit program for St. Ann Roman Catholic Church at Grays' Armory on December 11, 1918, and the steady rise to international preeminence of The Cleveland Orchestra continues to this day.

Having considered briefly an interesting episode in municipal support for symphonic music at the time of World War I, we conclude with a look at two sponsoring organizations for music, The Kulas Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The imminent demise of the National Endowment poses concerns for future music funding. To uphold our civic, let alone national, cultural sanity and international leadership in music we must find our way into a brighter future.