

# In Memoriam: Carleton Sprague Smith (1905–1994)

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SIX WEEKS AFTER celebrating his 89th birthday,<sup>1</sup> Carleton Sprague Smith, distinguished scholar-musician and lifetime spokesman for Inter-American cultural relations, died September 19, 1994, at Waldingfield Farm, his family estate in Washington, Connecticut, where he and his beloved wife Elisabeth had settled upon retirement. While struggling with the effects of Parkinson's disease, he had during the previous decade managed to attend various board meetings and concerts in New York—being chauffeured from Waldingfield Farm located about seventy-five miles northeast of the city. Until the end of 1993, utilizing whatever strength he could muster, he had continued to work simultaneously on several of his unfinished projects.

Carleton's life was exemplary and his professional accomplishments were extraordinary. Apart from his manifold contributions to the musical and cultural life of New York City, his lifelong interest in foreign cultural relations brought him recognition on an international scale. Among his special research

areas, he was particularly devoted to the musics of Latin America and of Colonial America.

Second son of the leading New York attorney, Clarence Bishop Smith, and Catharine Cook Smith (address in 1907, 21 State Street, New York City), Carleton Sprague was born in New York City August 8, 1905. Reared in an extremely privileged household he was from early childhood exposed to critically acclaimed theater, literature, and music.<sup>2</sup> At the age of twelve he began flute lessons with Georges Barrère (1876–1944) at the Institute of Musical Art. From 1920–1922, he attended the Hackley School for Boys, in Tarrytown, New York, where Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884–1920), had taught from 1907 to 1920.

Upon graduating from Hackley, Carleton spent a year in Paris, studying French at the École Yersin and flute with Louis François Fleury. Upon returning home the following year (1924), he entered Harvard College where he majored in history and comparative literature. Earning his B.A. (cum laude)

<sup>1</sup> It was the last time my wife and I, along with a mutual friend, Judd Wells, who lived close by, visited Carleton. Although he could hardly utter a word, his eyes, communicating his usual enthusiastic manner of conversation, expressed the pleasure of our company. Lying in his bed as he had been for weeks, under the care of full-time nurses, he commanded a favorite view, overlooking two oak trees on his spacious estate. We learned later that his ashes were scattered around that very same area, which gave significance to the precious memories enjoyed there with his family.

<sup>2</sup> Carleton's early life in the city and Waldingfield Farm, purchased by his father in 1919, is vividly described in *Catharine Cook Smith [1879–1961] Remembrances . . . Written between 1962 and 1977 by her family and friends* (Wilton, Conn., The Press House, 1977), a privately printed book, to which Carleton, the second of her four children, contributed. Page 111 of this volume contains an authorized summary of Carleton's own career (reprinted in *Inter-American Music Review*, III/1 [Fall 1980], page 2). Carleton's grandfather Cornelius B. Smith, a paramount Episcopal clergyman, served as rector of St. James church, New York City, 1867–1895.



in 1927, and his M.A. in 1928, he emerged as both a John Harvard (1928) and Woodbury Lowery Fellow (1929). During the Harvard years, he also enrolled in various music courses, sang with the Harvard Glee Club, advanced his flute technique under the guidance of Georges Laurent, principal flautist of the Boston Symphony, and in 1927–1928 served as an assistant music critic for the *Boston Transcript*.<sup>3</sup>

Already fluent in both French and German, he chose to spend the fall semester of 1926 in Spain. At Madrid, he attended lectures given by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Américo Castro, Manuel Gómez Moreno, and Tomás Navarro Tomás; and at Barcelona, he met Higinio Anglés.

Heeding the advice of Anglés, of Charles Homer Askins (his Harvard mentor), and of Alfred Francis Pribram (who was then serving as Exchange Professor), Carleton continued his graduate studies at the University of Vienna—there resuming his studies in diplomatic history under Pribram and Heinrich von Srbik, but also attending the musicological seminars of Rudolf von Ficker (1886–1954). Benefiting from his linguistic skills, he undertook at Vienna and elsewhere “a geo-political-cultural investigation of Austro-Spanish relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (i.e., the struggle between the Habsburgs [Casa de Austria] and the other European powers)” (Harvard University, *25th Anniversary Report*, p. 899). During the attendant research, he became acquainted with the major libraries of Vienna, as well as those of Munich, Prague, Paris, London, Cambridge, and Spain.<sup>4</sup> In Spain he also

<sup>3</sup> Throughout life an avid flautist, Carleton played chamber music at one time or another with the Berkshire, Juilliard, Lener, Lenox, Roth, and Stradivarius String Quartets.

<sup>4</sup> At the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid) he happened upon the correspondence [Fondo Barbieri (14.010<sup>1-7</sup>); dating April 1, 1875 to February 16, 1877] between Julius Joseph Maier and Francisco Asenjo Barbieri concerning the *Cancionero [musical] de la Sablonara*, the original copy of which was housed in the Hof- und Staatsbibliothek (sig. M. Ms 200) at Munich. Interestingly, this encounter resulted in his first scholarly article, “Documentos referentes al «Cancionero» de Claudio de la Sablonara,” published in the *Revista de Filología Española* (Madrid, 1929), 168–173. Carleton suggested the cataloging and study of the Barbieri papers preserved at the Biblioteca Nacional. Six decades later he was pleasantly surprised by the publication of the bulk of the Fondo Barbieri, issued as *Francisco Asenjo Barbieri. Biografías y documentos sobre música y músicos españoles* and *Documentos sobre música española y epistolario (Legado Barbieri)* (Madrid: Fundación Banco Exterior, two

examined important manuscripts at the Archivo General del Reino (Simancas) and the Archivo General de Indias (Seville). After successful defense in June 1930, of his dissertation: *Die Beziehungen zwischen Spanien und Österreich am Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts*, the University of Vienna awarded him the coveted Ph.D. degree.

Now ready at age 25 for a professional career combining scholarship, music, and public service, he was invited by the U.S. Department of State while still abroad to serve as Vice-Chairman of a Committee dealing with Inter-American Relations in the Field of Music. From 1931 to 1933, he taught history at Columbia University, in the division of General Studies, and Spanish Civilization at the Casa de las Españas—now Casa Hispánica—which was then directed by Federico de Onís. In the same year that he was appointed an instructor at Columbia University, he was named Chief of the Music Division of the New York Public Library (NYPL), a position that he held for almost three decades (1931–1959).

His prior exposure to European libraries, where he befriended music librarians and had witnessed their network of cooperation, nurtured in him a desire to create something similar in the United States. Thus, in his newly installed position, he took advantage of the American Library Association’s meeting at Yale University in June of 1931, to conjure interest in a society for music librarians. His initiative resulted in the founding of the Music Library Association,<sup>5</sup> which organization he served as its President from 1936 to 1938.

On June 30, 1934, at St. Pierre, Geneva, Switzerland, Carleton married Elisabeth Cowles Sperry (b. 1911; educated at Vassar College).<sup>6</sup> In the spring of 1936, he again visited Spain, this time as the United States delegate to the congresses held at Barcelona of the International Musicological Society (IMS) and

volumes, edited by Emilio Casares, 1986, 1988). For the Maier-Barbieri correspondence see Volume II, pages 718–720.

<sup>5</sup> Carleton planted the idea in a letter [dated May 27, 1931] to Eva Judd O’Meara, Music Librarian at Yale University and founding editor of *Notes*, asking if her institution “would play host to a few people interested in music libraries, if they should show up” at the June meeting. Her affirmative reply resulted in the June 13, 1931, founding meeting.

<sup>6</sup> Their only child, Damaris Sayre Sprague Smith was born on July 17, 1939. Damaris married John Horan, a lawyer, and they reared four children.



International Society for Contemporary Music. While there he presented to the city's municipality, on behalf of American cellists, a bust of Pablo Casals.<sup>7</sup> During this and other sojourns abroad he also purchased books for the NYPL.

Shortly after establishment of the American Musicological Society (AMS) in New York on September 15, 1934, he was elected to serve on its Executive Board as a member-at-large. His office at the NYPL became thereafter a virtual clearing-house of information and also served as a focal point for the Society—many of its meetings and lectures being held at NYPL, particularly from 1946 through 1965. Elected third president of the AMS (1939–1940), he was preceded by Otto Kinkeldey (presiding from 1934–1936) and Carl Engel (1937–1938). Under Carleton, the AMS collaborated with the IMS to hold its international congress in New York from September 10–16, 1939—the first such musicological gathering in the Western Hemisphere. The foreign delegates included Higinio Anglés (Spain), Edward J. Dent (Great Britain), Otto Gombosi (Hungary), Knud Jeppesen (Denmark), Francisco Curt Lange (Uruguay), Fernando Liuzzi (Italy), Dragan Plamenac (Yugoslavia), and Albert Smijers (Netherlands).

Ten days prior to the congress, Nazi Germany and Austria invaded Poland, marking the official outbreak of the War. Although several of the invited European scholars had already written to Carleton about the conditions in their respective homelands that prevented their participation, he avoided exacerbating his welcoming remarks at the opening luncheon meeting, but did read their communications.

In 1938, he lectured at Stanford University and, from 1939 to 1943, at New York University (NYU). In 1940, he traveled to eight Latin American countries, under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies and the U.S. Department of State.<sup>8</sup> In Mexico, during the summer of 1941, he

planned educational exchange programs for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). In that and the following year he served as commentator on "Music of the Americas" for CBS's Radio School of the Air.

In 1943, he undertook a second trip to Latin America under the joint sponsorship of the Carnegie Foundation and the Office of Inter-American Affairs. Several of his resultant lectures, delivered in Portuguese at the Sociedade Filipe de Oliveira, were repeated in French at the Institut Français. From 1944 to 1946, while U.S. Foreign Service Cultural Attaché in São Paulo, he lectured throughout the country and gave courses at the Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política, the Universidade de São Paulo, and at Sedes Sapientiae. Upon his return to the United States he resumed his duties at the NYPL.

In 1947 he visited Europe as a delegate to the IMS Congress at Prague, and in 1948 as a delegate to the UNESCO Conference in Paris. In the latter year, he was invited to deliver the Patten Lectures at Indiana University on "Music and Politics." During the summer sessions of 1950 and 1951 Raymond Kendall invited him to teach at the University of Southern California. Later in 1951 and the following year, he was in Germany conducting a study of Bi- and Multi-National Cultural Centers for the Department of State. In 1961, as Co-Chairman of the Informal Working Committee in the Arts and Humanities for the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs for the U.S. Department of State, he visited eleven European countries.<sup>9</sup> His 54-page report, "A Survey of Multi-National Cooperation," dealt with "the problem of establishing intellectual and psychological ties among the peoples of the free world."<sup>10</sup>

While at NYPL, he encouraged the following advances: 1) the Americana collection became the most extensive in the United States, 2) several hundred scores were copied as part of the WPA

<sup>7</sup>The bust fashioned by the American sculptor Brenda Putnam, was never placed in the public square for which it was intended.

<sup>8</sup>Francisco Curt Lange, who spoke on "Americanismo musical ('Musical Americanism')," at the IMS Congress in New York, played an important part in fomenting Carleton's first Latin American trip, following which he submitted a report to the Department of State. A manuscript copy, entitled *A Musical Tour through South America, June–October, 1940* (xxiv, 290 [+ 33] pp.), was deposited at the Music Division of the NYPL.

<sup>9</sup>From June 24 to September 2, he visited Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, and England.

<sup>10</sup>In the mid-1940's Carleton began his attempts to create bi-national centers in Brazil with a series of lectures entitled, "Les relations culturelles entre la France et les États-Unis." The multi-national approach flourished at the Meridian House International in Washington, D.C., under the guidance of one of Carleton's foreign service associates, Joseph John Jova, who served as its President 1978–1989.



project, 3) the Dance collection, now preeminent in the world, was established, and 4) the Toscanini Microfilm Archive, comprising a vast collection of composers' autographs and manuscripts which enabled musicians to consult the primary sources of the great masters, was gradually taking shape. Among outstanding scholars, he invited Curt Sachs, Joseph Braunstein, Hans David, John Tasker Howard, and Joseph Muller, to join his staff. As a capstone, his determination toward realizing a Library-Museum of the Performing Arts in New York City—an idea which he conceived during his second year at the library—began being seriously considered in 1957.<sup>11</sup> His idea involved bringing the circulating, reference, and archival collections of all the performing arts (music, theater, dance, and the recorded sound archives) under one roof—each maintaining its own research facility, and collectively linked to a Museum for the Performing Arts.

He resigned his post at the NYPL in 1959 in order to become Director of New York University's newly established Brazilian Institute, formed by him and Ernesto da Cal to encourage Brazilian studies on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Institute also offered courses for employees of American concerns in Brazil and sponsored exchange programs.

In the summer of 1960, he accompanied Adlai Stevenson through Latin America in the capacity of adviser and translator. On November 4, 1961, he was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to serve on the Advisory Commission for the proposed National Cultural Center in Washington, D.C.—to which commission he submitted the report, "What Goes into the National Culture Center?"

In 1966 he resigned from the History Department of NYU to become Director of the Spanish Institute of New York, on whose board he had served since 1964. In 1970, he was named Vice-Chairman, continuing in that position until 1982.<sup>12</sup> His achievements there included the expansion of the Institute's

cultural programs, greater coordination with Spain, and the inauguration of the Hastings Art Gallery. In 1967, he gave a series of lectures on "Music in America" at Rutgers University.

On October 21, 1985, more than two months past his eightieth birthday, the trustees of the NYPL commemorated his anniversary with a gala reception in his honor at the Vincent Astor Gallery of the Performing Arts Research Library at Lincoln Center. Plans were underway to prepare a *Festschrift* for the occasion, but difficulties in coordination interfered. However, the homage volume was ultimately published in 1991 and formally presented to Carleton at the Spanish Institute on April 30, 1992.<sup>13</sup>

From 1982, upon his resignation from the Spanish Institute, Carleton's activities at Waldingfield Farm centered around several of his unfinished projects. His last two published studies dealt primarily with Colonial American music.<sup>13</sup> In 1981 he was awarded the George Peabody Medal, at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore) for his "outstanding contributions to music in America." His fourth honorary doctorate was presented to him at Syracuse University in 1983,<sup>14</sup> and, in 1988, he received an *Encomienda de número*, *Orden de Isabel la Católica* from the Spanish Government.

From his first trip to Latin America Carleton endeared himself to Inter-American causes, devoting a goodly part of his life toward fostering cultural relations between the Americas. Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo, Julián Carrillo, Egydio Castro e Silva, Oscar Lorenzo Fernández, Alberto Ginastera, Mozart Camargo Guarnieri, Francisco Curt Lange, Mercedes Reis Pequeno, Andrés Sas, and Heitor Villa-Lobos numbered among those who benefited

ultimately grew to some 5,000 titles. Submitted to the Scarecrow Press (Metuchen, New Jersey), the manuscript remains still unpublished.

<sup>13</sup> "Broad-sides and Their Music in Colonial America," in Barbara Lambert, ed., *Music in Colonial Massachusetts 1630-1820* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980), Vol. 1, pp. 157-367, and "A Tune for Benjamin Franklin's Drinking song *Fair Venus Calls*," *Inter-American Music Review*, 10(2) (1989). 147-55.

<sup>14</sup> Former honorary doctorates (*honoris causæ*) were awarded him at the Universities of Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, 1958) and Bahia (Salvador, Brazil, 1959), and at Hamilton College (Clinton, New York, 1976).

<sup>11</sup> His preliminary eighteen-page report, *The Lincoln Center Library-Museum of the Performing Arts*, was submitted to the Library and Museum Committee in December of 1957. But not until November of 1965 was Lincoln Center formally inaugurated.

<sup>12</sup> During his years at the Institute, Carleton began preparing *A Selected Annotated Bibliography of Spain, 1898-1975*, which



from his friendship. Attesting to his deep respect for Inter-American music, musicians, and institutions, and related subject matter, he left the following legacy among his numerous publications:

- Musical Tour through South America, June-October, 1940*, Manuscript. New York: The New York Public Library, 1940. xxxiv, 290 [+ 33] pp.
- "What Not to Expect of South America," *Musical America*, 61(3) (New York, Feb. 10, 1941), 217, 220.
- "The Song Makers," *Survey Graphic*, 30(3) (New York, Mar., 1941), 179-83. ["To understand Latin America, learn to know its arts—its music, murals, billboards, its radio wits, journalists, dancers, actors, and poets."]
- "Music Libraries in South America," *MLA Notes*, 1st series, no. 11 (New Haven, Aug., 1941), 19-31. [Caracas (Venezuela); Recife, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo (Brazil); Montevideo (Uruguay); Buenos Aires (Argentina); Santiago (Chile); Lima (Peru); Quito (Ecuador); and Bogotá (Colombia)]
- "The Music of Latin America," *Progressive Education*, 18(6) (New York, Oct., 1941), 307-309. [Mainly bibliographical.]
- "The Composers of Chile," *Modern Music*, 19(1) (New York, Nov.-Dec., 1941), 26-31. [Divides the modern Chilean school into three groups: 1) Enrique Soro; 2) Humberto Allende; 3) Domingo Santa Cruz and Alfonso Leng.]
- "Musicology as a Means of Inter-Cultural Understanding," *Music Teachers National Association, Proceedings*, 35 (Hartford, Conn., 1941), pp. 54-57.
- "Relações musicais entre o Brasil e os Estados Unidos de Norte America," *Boletín Latino-Americano de Música*, iv, Primera parte (Rio de Janeiro, Apr., 1946), 141-48.
- "Music Publications in Brazil," *MLA Notes*, 4(4) (Sept., 1947), 425-30. [Paper read at the Music Library Association Meeting, New York Public Library on Jan. 11, 1947.]
- "Brazil's Big Four (Heitor Villa-Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri, Oscar Lorenzo Fernández, and Francisco Mignone)," *The Musical Digest*, 29 (New York, Nov., 1947), 22-25.
- "New Music Frontiers," *Musical Journal*, 5(6) (Nov.-Dec., 1947), 14, 55.
- "Discs and Cultural Exchange," *Music Journal*, 6(1) (New York, Jan., 1948), 7, 43-45.
- "Impressions of Manuel Ponce," *The Guitar Review*, no. 7 (New York, 1948), 10.
- "Brasilien Moderne," *Stimmen*, 1(5) (Berlin, 1948), 142-44.
- "Music of the New World," *Music Today* [Journal of the International Society for Contemporary Music], 1 (London, 1949), 46-54 (with French summary, 54-56).
- "Brazil in Songs," *Brazil*, 23(3) (New York, Mar., 1949), 3-6, 17-18. [Discusses the song characteristics of the various regions: The Amazon, Northeast, Baianos, the Carioca composers, Mineiros, and Paulistas.]
- "Carlos Chávez," *The Pan American*, 10(5) (New York, Oct., 1949), 3-6.
- "Song of Brazil," *Américas*, 2(10) (Pan American Union) (Washington, D.C., Oct., 1950), 14-16, 43-44. [Concerns Heitor Villa-Lobos.]
- "Montparnasse of the Hemisphere," *United Nations World*, 4(10) (Oct., 1950), 52-53.
- "Villa-Lobos, músico rebelde," *Américas*, 2(11) (Nov., 1950), 14-16, 43, 47.
- "William James in Brazil," in *Four Papers Presented in the Institute for Brazilian Studies* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1951), pp. 95-138.
- "Contemporary Music in Chile," *Conference on Latin-American Fine Arts, June 14-17, 1951. Proceedings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951), pp. 115-23. (Latin-American Studies, no. 13.)
- "Musical Settings of Caribbean Poetry," in A[iva] Curtis Wilgus, ed., *The Caribbean: Its Economy* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1954), pp. 240-58 (School of Inter-American Studies Series 1, iv.).
- "Factors of Intercultural Influences," in Ángel del Río, ed., *Responsible Freedom in the Americas* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 480-93. (Columbia University Bicentennial Conference Series.)
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- "Heitor Villa Lobos (1889-1959)," *Compositores de América. Datos biográficos y catálogos de sus obras*, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, Music Section, 1957), pp. 1-9. Bilingual Spanish and English columns. [Reprinted in *Inter-American Music Bulletin*, no. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, Jan., 1960), 1-4, and "as a tribute to this great Brazilian musician who died in Rio de Janeiro on 17 November 1959." Also in *Boletín Interamericano de Música*, no. 15 (Washington, D.C.: División de Publicaciones, Unión Panamericana, Jan., 1960), 3-6.]
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"Alberto Ginastera's *Duo for Flute and Oboe*," *Latin American Music Review*, 6(1) (Spring–Summer, 1985), 85–93.

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