TRANS-ATLANTIC PASSAGES

Philip Hale on the Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1889-1933

JON CEANDER MITCHELL
Trans-Atlantic Passages
The New Urban Atlantic
Edited by Elizabeth A. Fay

The New Urban Atlantic is a new series of monographs, texts, and essay collections focusing on urban, Atlantic, and hemispheric studies. Distinct from the nation-state mentality, the Atlantic world has been from colonial times a fluid international entity, including multiple Atlantic systems such as the triangle trade and cacao trade that extended globally. The series is distinct in three prime ways: First, it offers a multidisciplinary, multicultural, broadly historical, and urban focus. Second, it extends the geographical boundaries from an Old World/New World binary to the entire Atlantic rim, the arctics, and to exchanges between continents other than Europe and North America. Third, it emphasizes the Atlantic World as distinct from the nation-states that participate in it. Ultimately, The New Urban Atlantic series challenges the conventional boundaries of the field by presenting the Atlantic World as an evolving reality.

Creole Testimonies: Slave Narratives from the
British West Indies, 1709–1838
Nicole N. Aljoe

Stumbling towards the Constitution: The Economic Consequences of
Freedom in the Atlantic World
Jonathan M. Chu

Urban Identity and the Atlantic World
Edited by Elizabeth A. Fay and Leonard von Morzé

The Transatlantic Eco-Romanticism of Gary Snyder
Paige Tovey

Hospitality and the Transatlantic Imagination, 1815–1835
Cynthia Schoolar Williams

Trans-Atlantic Passages: Philip Hale on the Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1889–1933
Jon Ceander Mitchell
Trans-Atlantic Passages

Philip Hale on the Boston Symphony Orchestra 1889–1933

Jon Ceander Mitchell
To Bridget and Barbara
This page intentionally left blank
## Contents

*List of Figures*  ix  
*Acknowledgments*  xi  
*Series Introduction*  xiii  

Introduction  1  

### Part I

1 1854–1889  9  

2 1889–1900  21  

3 1900–1903  63  
Symphony Hall—The Longy Club—Boston Pops—Entr’acte—Reinstatement as Program Annotator—Correspondence in Periodicals Regarding Hale—*Musical World*  

4 1903–1917  81  
*The Boston Herald*—On the Criticism of Music—*Salome*—On Various Conductors—Muck—Fiedler—Mahler—The Tavern Club and the Thursday Evening Club—Boston Opera—Early Recordings  

5 1917–1933  123  
Contents

6 Aftermath and Conclusion: 1933–1936 171
   Retirement—Hale’s Passing—Testimonials

Part II Selected Writings of Philip Hale

Appendix I Essays in the Boston Symphony Orchestra Program Booklets 183
Appendix II Essays from Newspapers 193
Appendix III Concert Reviews and Extracts in Newspapers 213
   A. Composers and Their Works 213
   B. Conductors 238
   C. Soloists 250
Appendix IV Columns on Sundry Topics 255

Notes 263

Bibliography 277

Index 283
Figures

1 Philip Hale’s childhood home, “The Gables,” Round Hill, Northampton, MA. Author’s private collection. 176
2 Walt Whitman’s inscription from *Leaves of Grass* in the cover of *Quarante Mélodies Choises de F. Schubert*, given by him to Philip Hale. Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, MA. 176
3 Philip Hale, n.d. [probably 1890s]. Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, MA. 177
4 “Tanglewild,” Philip Hale’s summer home at Osterville, MA. Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, MA. 177
5 Philip Hale, Bachrach Studios, 1914. Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives, Boston, MA. 178
This page intentionally left blank
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, the author wishes to thank Bridget Carr, Senior Archivist extraordinaire for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and her assistant Barbara Perkel, the dedicatees of this book, who have offered never-ending help, guidance, and humor—not only for the present book, but for past projects as well. Also to be mentioned are Robert Miller and Richard Fletcher, members of the BSO Archives Thursday “crazies,” as well as Brian Bell, for their strong moral support.

The author also wishes to extend his thanks to three people at University of Massachusetts Boston, his home institution: Emily McDermott, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts; Robert Lublin, Chair of the Department of Performing Arts; and Diana Lewis Burgin, Professor of Russian and daughter of Richard Burgin, Boston Symphony Orchestra concertmaster from 1920 to 1962.

Expressions of gratitude also go to Janice Mahinka, herself a Philip Hale scholar, Laura Pruett of Merrimack College, Jane Winton, Curator, Print Department of the Boston Public Library, Diane Ota, Curator of Music at the Boston Public Library, Maria Serpa of Boston University’s Mugar Library, Karen Kukil, Associate Curator of Special Collections at the Neilson Library Mortimer Rare Book Room at Smith College, Andrea Cronin, Dan Hinchen, Betsy Boyle and Sabina Beauchard of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Emily Walhout of Harvard University’s Houghton Library, Richard Vallone of New England Conservatory of Music’s Spaulding Library, as well as to personnel at the New York State Library in Albany, New York and at the Providence, Rhode Island Public Library.

Finally, a big thank you goes to my wife Ester, who has always been there for me during countless conducting and research projects throughout the years.
Series Introduction

“The New Urban Atlantic”

Series Editor: Elizabeth Fay,
University of Massachusetts Boston

Since its inception, the study of the Atlantic World has been premised on the important advances in sixteenth-century technology that made transatlantic voyages possible. Colonization of the North American coast, the establishment of plantations in the Caribbean, European adoption of African slave trade practices, and the subsequent triangle trade network have formed the mainstay of this field. The New Urban Atlantic adds to this set of interests by focusing on the cities (both persistent and failed) that have functioned as important nodal points for Atlantic financial, trade, diplomatic, and cultural networks. Attention to Atlantic cities, the frameworks that identify their similarities and connections both synchronically and diachronically, and their divergences from such norms expand research opportunities by allowing new questions to be asked and new problems to be posed.

Methodologically the books in The New Urban Atlantic will engage the interdisciplinary fields of literature and cultural history, with the historical framed by the longue durée of geophysical realities, the environment, and changes in that environment that have impacted human experience, and the cultural construed as the representational forms and systems that arose out of Atlantic rim interaction. Within this historio-cultural framework, the urban is meant to encompass both coastal and riverine settlements wherever large tributaries provided access to Atlantic commerce in all its senses. Another methodological feature of the series is the attention, wherever possible, to indigenous and Western immigrant cultures in dynamic and multidirectional relations with each other, as well as with preexisting histories of coastal and riverine trade, political, and social networks on all four continents and Caribbean islands, to produce a new cultural arena—the Atlantic World. In consequence of both of these attributes, the historio-cultural framework and attention to multicultural interaction, individual volumes in the series will contribute to its broad purpose of bringing precontact and colonial cultural history in conversation with work on the modern era, and with today’s contemporary mediations of sociocultural, environmental, economic, and technological challenges to the Atlantic World.
In addition to an extended historical perimeter of inquiry, *The New Urban Atlantic* is also framed by hemispheric interactivity in cultural networks, trade networks, and global commerce in goods, ideas, and peoples. Of utmost importance to this conception of Atlanticism, as the series’ second methodological feature underscores, are interactions and exchanges among indigenous and immigrant peoples in both hemispheres, and the mutual histories these engagements produced. Although contributions of British and Dutch colonizing projects continue to inform understandings of Atlantic systems, these must be seen in relation to Spanish and Portuguese imperial projects, as well as other culturally conditioned contacts and engagements. Moreover, if the Atlantic World is an ongoing yet changeable locus of systems, networks, and identities across and between two hemispheres and four continents, it is furthermore constituted as a system within the larger framework of world systems, and is thus always in dialogue with global networks, especially in terms of trade and technological circuits.

Books in *The New Urban Atlantic* will treat the Atlantic World as a still-ongoing reality that distinguishes the Atlantic rim by its shared concerns and maritime-oriented identity. Cities such as Halifax, Montreal, Albany, Boston, New Bedford, New York, Cahokia, Charleston, Mexico City, Santo Domingo, Rio de Janeiro, Dakar, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Liverpool, or Copenhagen may be defined according to many local, regional, and national factors, but are also conditioned by their geographic location on the edge of a great ocean or with riverine access to it. Whatever other economic, social, or cultural patterns of exchange in which they are hubs, such cities are also characterized by particular relationships that are best understood as part of Atlantic systems. In this sense, through a focus on cities *The New Urban Atlantic* can also foreground urban effects on the environment for both land and ocean ecologies. The transplantation of botanical specimens, importation of livestock, changes in agricultural techniques on city perimeters, and fouling of waterways are just some of the ways in which the Old World–New World interactions have had profound and continuing effects on the Atlantic World. These continued effects influence global environmental activity just as the Atlantic World has been and continues to be conditioned by that activity.
Philip Hale was one of the world’s greatest arts critics. A citation accompanying his Scholarship Award from the Sigma Delti Chi professional journalistic society in 1932 identified him as:

…The Most Learned of American Music Critics, whose authoritative critiques and historical commentaries have been for a generation source material for students and writers in his field; a splendid influence alike upon the musical and journalistic world and upon the stage; as a result of his scholarship and the catholicity of his taste, neither of which has been dulled by time.1

Hale considered himself a newspaper man, but he was much more than that. Though he never wrote a book, he was one of the most frequently read American writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His influence was far reaching, affecting people from all walks of life on both sides of the Atlantic. He wrote what he thought, supporting his opinions with research. When it came to making recommendations—from suggesting additional reading material to his clientele, to advising the Harvard University board on prospective music professors, to advocating certain conductors for the Boston Symphony Orchestra—he did not waffle, though over the course of time he occasionally changed his mind.

To say that Hale produced an enormous quantity of work would be short-changing the reality of the situation. The numbers are staggering: 795 program books (more than thirty-three years’ worth) of 2,000 to 4,000 words each for Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts, 1056 weekly Boston Symphony Orchestra concert newspaper reviews (forty-four years’ worth) of approximately 1,200 words each, reviews of similar length of the performances of other professional musical organizations in Boston (such as the Longy Club and the Boston Opera Company), reviews of visiting professional organizations (such as Paul Whiteman’s Concert Orchestra or the New York Philharmonic), weekly musical essays for the Sunday editions of newspapers, theatre reviews, as well as weekly (and, for a while, daily) columns on sundry topics, from humorous discussions about prohibition to the historical use of the napkin. With a journalistic career spanning fifty-five years—sixty, if articles written during his student days at Yale are counted—his eloquent, erudite, and witty style of writing left its mark on millions of readers throughout the English-speaking world.

Yet Hale himself was not confined to English. He was fluent in German and French, and had at least a reading comprehension of Spanish and Italian. In 1882, after four years of employment at the Albany Times (the last two during
which he was simultaneously practicing law), Hale went to Europe and spent the next five years doing advanced musical study there, for opportunities to do so in America were extremely limited at that time. This firsthand exposure to societies with refined artistic culture allowed Hale to import and apply a vast amount of knowledge and experience to his writings. His own trans-Atlantic connections, then, fed the artistic cravings of Americans willing to partake of the literary morsels from his pen.

Hale’s career spanned parts of seven decades and the transformation of society during those years was phenomenal. The world of 1878 was one of relative simplicity; the United States had fewer than 50,000,000 people and only thirty-nine states. Travel was either by horse-and-carriage or by rail; streets were lit by lanterns. There was the telegraph, but telephones and phonographs were extremely rare (having just been invented). There was photography, but no motion pictures. For the most part, the only way that one could find out what was happening in the world was by reading the newspaper. Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner were in their heyday, but Schönberg was only a child, and Bartok, Stravinsky, and Shostakovich had not yet been born.

By the time Hale retired in 1933 the country boasted forty-eight states with 125,000,000 people. Most families owned automobiles, telephones, and phonographs. Electronic recordings, sound motion pictures, and radio broadcasts of symphony concerts (often featuring the works of twentieth-century composers) were now commonplace. The world as a whole, however, was in a difficult state, in the throngs of a deep depression and with the rise of the Nazi party in Germany. Social Security was still a year or two away, though Hale’s late retirement at seventy-nine was due to health issues, not monetary need. His personality drove him to continue working almost until the very end of his life.

Over the course of his long career, Hale was music critic for a number of newspapers on or near the Atlantic seaboard, including the *Albany Times* (1878–1882 and 1887–1889), *Albany Union* (1887–1889), *Boston Home Journal* (1889–1901), *Boston Post* (1890–1891), *Boston Journal* (1891–1903), and finally the *Boston Herald* (1903–1933) where, from 1908, he doubled as drama critic. For a brief period he also edited two music journals, *Musical Record* (1897–1901) and *Musical World* (1901–1902), served as an associate editor for the *Boston Musical Herald* (1891–1893) and provided articles for New York’s *Musical Courier* and the *Looker-on*.

Hale’s longest tenure at writing about music, however, was not as a newspaper critic, but as programme essayist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, briefly in 1891, and then uninterruptedly from 1901 to 1933. Hale reviewed every concert that the orchestra had played since 1889, but his real clout as a critic, both internal and external, stemmed from this literary association with the orchestra.

From his gallery seat Hale observed eight of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s principal conductors during their tenures: Arthur Nikisch, Emil Paur, Wilhelm Gericke, Karl Muck, Max Fiedler, Henri Rabaud, Pierre Monteux, and Serge Koussevitzky. He also saw their first conductor Georg Henschel on at least two return engagements. There were other conductors as well, including Richard Burgin (the orchestra’s concertmaster from 1920 to 1962), Thomas Beecham, Henry Hadley, Gustav Holst, Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter, and Felix
Introduction

In addition, Hale observed some of the world’s finest soloists. This almost endless string included such virtuosi as Bela Bartok, Amy Beach, Nadia Boulanger, Ferrucio Busoni, Teresa Carreño, George Gershwin, Walter Gieseking, Percy Grainger, Lady Halle, Roland Hayes, Ignatz Paderewski, Gregor Piatagorsky, Maud Powell, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Artur Rubinstein, Jesus Maria Sanromá, Xaver Scharwenka, Artur Schnabel, and Lionel Tertis.

Hale actually met many of these musicians, as well as other famous international arts figures from both sides of the Atlantic, at one of the three social clubs to which he belonged. At the turn of the twentieth century the Boston arts scene was dominated by the Boston Brahmins, a close-knit group of upper class families with roots extending back to Colonial days—a type of upscale British diaspora. Membership in their clubs was by invitation only, yet they offered Boston a sense of cultural refinement that the city otherwise may not have had. Though born in Vermont, Hale became a Boston Brahmin via these club associations. As a result, some writers have accused Hale of being a snob, but this was not the case. Olin Downes commented:

The sense of human fellowship and adventure was strong in him. He felt the truth of art from the same source which made him so shrewd an appraiser of books and fellow beings. If a man or woman were real, that was enough and to spare for him. When he talked at the Tavern Club, the choicest spirits paused to listen, but he was fond of recalling his experiences as a police reporter and he liked to get away from his desk and go down to the wharves on Atlantic Avenue and swap yarns with the longshoremen. He knew that Mozart was a man pulsing with all the human weaknesses, impulses and needs, not only the glorious boy who wrote the Jupiter Symphony. His reading ranged all the way from Mark Twain and Artemus Ward, whom he adored, to Verlaine and Mallarmé, with their reveries of the antique world and their strange and haunting overtones of the subconscious existence. The man was even more than the writing. You'd go far to read Philip Hale, and farther still to chat with him on the way to the office on the back end of a street-car.

It is said that, to a point, music critics determine the repertoire. Hale was always advocating its expansion and during his years as an active critic, the repertoire of the Boston Symphony Orchestra metamorphosed from the severely Germanic programming of Nikisch into the more eclectic mix offered by Monteux and Koussevitzky. It was often a challenge for him to find something new to say about works that were frequently performed (e.g., he heard Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony played over thirty times) and, as time went by, he devoted more and more space in his columns either to works receiving their Boston premieres or to particulars concerning the featured soloists’ performances.

Sometimes Hale would change his mind about a composition. On December 6, 1894 a concert was given in memory of the legendary pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein (1829–1894). Mrs Ernest Lent was the featured soloist in a performance of the composer’s Piano Concerto No. 4 in D minor, Op. 70. Hale had the following to say:

There was a peculiar fitness in giving the D minor concerto at a concert in memory of the great Russian, for the concerto is the most sustained, the noblest of his compositions of long breath. Here is no decrescendo of interest, as there is in so many
of his other works. Indeed this concerto for beauty of themes and ingeniousness of treatment stands among the great pieces for piano and orchestra. It is a heroic concerto and it demands a heroic performance.\(^3\)

Fifteen years later, the same concerto was performed by Mme. Olga Samaroff (the stage name of Texas-born Lucy Mary Agnes Hickenlooper):

Mme. Samaroff by her performance made the dry bones of the concerto to live for a night, and by the simplicity of her reading of the second movement almost succeeded in removing the reproach of sentimentalism. The concerto, alas, is now to be numbered with the music that was once thought to be “advanced,” that once gave hearty pleasure. Its themes now seem commonplace, or sugary, or rowdy.\(^4\)

Of interest is the fact that this concerto was performed at Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts no fewer than thirty-eight times before 1922, but has not appeared on any of the orchestra’s programs since. It would be presumptuous to think that Hale had anything to do with this, but such a complete turnaround in appraisal was quite uncommon, especially for him.

From time to time critics have also had a large though indirect say in determining conductors. In his Memoirs Georg Solti addressed the abuse that Claudia Cassidy, chief music critic of the Chicago Tribune, heaped upon Rafael Kubelik, forcing him to resign the conductorship of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra after only three years. Solti himself also felt her wrath; she kept him from being hired by the Chicago Lyric Opera and, when he was approached by members of the Chicago Symphony board about succeeding Fritz Reiner in 1963, he declined at that time, at least partially because of her.\(^5\) The critic’s clout was not to be underestimated. Years later, after Cassidy had given up most of her reviewing, Solti established himself as perhaps the most successful conductor that the Chicago Symphony ever had.

Unlike Cassidy, Hale was not vicious; he was much more supportive. He was very critical, however, about what he considered to be poor choices of repertoire, insincerity on the part of self-promoting second-rate performers, cults, coteries, and the occasional lack of sufficient professional preparation. Hale had his own high standards to maintain, yet he was never abusive; he was not out to get anyone.

Hale’s reviews often made you wish you were there. Occasionally there would be a performing artist, such as Teresa Carreño, who would connect with all around her through a thoroughly visceral and passionate performance. In instances like this, Hale made sure that his readers felt a connection with his own listening experience. He supported the work of women musicians, whether they were performers, composers or both. He also championed American music of all sorts—if it was good—regardless of the medium of expression. The Sousa Band and the Paul Whiteman Concert Orchestra stood just as much a chance of securing a positive review from him as did the Boston Symphony.

Hale was not without his quirks. His general dislike for the music of Brahms, though readily apparent, has been overstated. The same could be said for his Francophile tendencies. Then there were two ideas of his that, while making sense at the time, would not find favor in today’s programming: his advocacy
of placing symphonies first and overtures last in the concert order (so as not to wear out the listener’s ability to focus) and his recommendation of cutting movements from symphonies or concertos in order to shorten the length of concerts. Whatever the case, Hale always stood by his convictions even though these continued to evolve over time.

Hale’s wit was legendary, though the two most famous accounts of it are through secondary sources. According to Nicolas Slonimsky, when Symphony Hall was built in 1900 Hale was credited with suggesting that the new hall’s signs reading “Exit in Case of Fire” be changed to “Exit in Case of Brahms.” And E. R. Warren commented about Hale hearing a pianist who had contributed nothing of importance to a long program. Not wanting to destroy a career on account of a single performance, Hale wrote a paragraph summarizing the program itself, followed by only four words: “She consumed valuable time.” His two general newspaper columns, “Talk of the Day” and “As the World Wags,” often displayed the comedic side of his personality. Letters written to him were regular features in these columns and his responses to them foreshadow the style of any number of late-night radio and television personalities.

Hale continued writing reviews and Boston Symphony Orchestra program notes through the spring of 1933, when his eyesight and the use of his right arm failed him. He passed away due to a cerebral hemorrhage on November 30, 1934 at the age of eighty. Though often seen as a controversial figure, Hale was revered during his own lifetime. Perhaps Mark N. Grant said it best:

To be hailed by Hale into the Boston Symphony Orchestra annals was to be incorporated by other annotators and professional music appreciationists ever after into the composer pantheon.

Thus it could be said that Hale’s writings put Boston on the Trans-Atlantic map in terms of the music world and its circuitry of exchange.

In 1935, shortly after Hale’s death, his programme essayist successor John Nagley Burk assembled many of Hale’s programme notes and newspaper reviews into his highly respected and oft-consulted volume, Philip Hale’s Boston Symphony Program Notes. While capturing many of Hale’s finest chestnuts, very few complete columns are included within it and therefore many of the entries appear out of context. Also, none of the entries are documented, leaving no indication of when or where in the continuum of Hale’s lengthy career they were written.

It was the original intent of the author to write a book that would supplement Burk’s, covering Hale’s notes and reviews of important works that Burk left out, such as Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 or Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto. Also, since 1939, when the second printing came out, other works reviewed by Hale but not included by Burk, such as Gustav Holst’s The Planets or the Moussorgsky-Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition, have gained significantly in reputation and esteem. To simply supplement Burk, however, would have shortchanged Hale both as a person and for his myriad accomplishments; his was truly a creative and productive life. It also would have left out important events in his life—being hired as a music critic, being fired as Boston Symphony programme essayist (only to be rehired a decade later)— as well as significant incidents that impacted it (i.e., the opening of Symphony Hall, the arrest of Boston
Symphony Orchestra conductor Karl Muck, the orchestra strike, and the fiftieth anniversary commissions).

In order to best serve the subject, this book is divided into two parts. The first is a chronological narrative of Hale’s life. It is not so much a biography as an account of his life as it affected—and in turn was affected by—events on both sides of the Atlantic. Effort has been made, even in this first part, to allow Hale to say things in his own words, for his command of the English language was second to none. The second part of the book features a selection of Hale’s critiques and notes on a variety of topics, including composers and their works, conductors, soloists, and non-musical matters. It is through reading these passages and others by him that one can fully appreciate and experience one of the greatest arts critics the world has ever known.
Part I
Though others preceded him, Philip Hale is considered to have been one of the first great American arts critics. He came into the world on March 5, 1854 in Norwich, Vermont, the first-born son of William Bainbridge Hale (1826–1892) and Harriet Amelia Porter Hale (ca. 1826–1872). The family’s roots in this country ran very deep; Philip himself was an eighth-generation descendant of one Thomas Hale, who had landed at Salem, Massachusetts in 1634 and settled in nearby Newbury the following year.

William Bainbridge Hale never went to college, but was a self-educated person, possessing a fine business acumen as well as an exceptional command over the English language. The Springfield Republican said of him, “Mr. Hale was a man of more than ordinary ability, of wide reading, and possessed an extraordinary gift of language, which at times amounted to eloquence.”

Sometime around February 1858, when Philip’s younger brother Edward was born, William became president of the First National Bank of Northampton, Massachusetts and the family relocated there. Northampton, a utopian community of about 6,000, had much to offer. Within a short period of time, William had a home of significant proportions constructed for the family:

In 1860 he hired [Northampton architect William Fenno] Pratt to design a large, ten-gabled, brick home (described by local architect Karl Putnam as a “Gothic Revival in the Tudor Manner” and known locally as “The Gables”). Hale built for his gardener a small Carpenter Gothic cottage, a structure based on one of [Andrew Jackson] Downing’s simplest designs, across the street at 38.

“The Gables,” located on Round Hill Road, was built only a few hundred yards from the then-future site of Smith College. It is still standing.

In a speech given to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1923 titled “Musical and Theatrical Life in a New England Village in the Sixties,” Philip Hale reflected on the religious, social, and artistic life of Northampton:

…It was an industrious, matter-of-fact, temperate, God-fearing community, with parents endeavoring to bring up their children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord; a reasonably intelligent if somewhat poker-backed and narrow community, with a sprinkling of the more liberal and more cultured; an old-fashioned community—would that there were more of them in New England of today!
It was in Northampton that Philip began studying the organ and the piano. This first phase of his music education came to fruition early, for at the age of 14 he began duties as organist of the local Unitarian church.

In the meantime William continued to improve his position in the community. He was instrumental in the founding of Northampton’s public library and in 1871 became president and manager of the Florence Sewing Machine Company. His wealth and status in the world he knew meant that he was able to ensure that Philip's schooling would be of the highest caliber. Indeed, starting in 1870 Philip attended the exclusive Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire for two years. While there he developed an interest in poetry and literature, particularly in the writings of Walt Whitman.

He wrote to the poet:

Exeter N-H.
Sep 14 1871

Dear Sir

I have just got your complete works—Ed 1871 and would like to ask you why you did not reprint the preface to the first edition? I have only read extracts from that preface and should like to have seen the whole reprint. I suppose I can not get the old one now at the stores.

I saw the other day that Mr. Swinburne said he enjoyed your “Song from the Sea” more than any of your other works. Did he mean Sea Shore Memories No. 1 – ? The poem of yours that I read over with the most satisfaction is your Burial Hymn of Lincoln—But as my opinion is not worth anything, being a boy I should not have entrusted it upon you—

If you are pressed with time even then I should like to hear from you—just a word.

Yours most respectfully,
Philip Hale

P.S. Do you know where I could get a 1st Ed with preface?

Thus, even as a teenager, the future program essayist was concerned with having a sense of completeness with the sources that he read and consulted, and Whitman’s extensive 30-page preface to *Leaves of Grass* would serve as a source of inspiration to him for years to come.

Following Exeter, Hale studied law at Yale College (later University). During his years there he was involved in a variety of musical activities, including a stint as pianist for the Yale Glee Club; he also received awards in composition. Away from music, Hale was one of the editors of the nascent *Yale Record*, and he contributed four articles—probably his earliest publications—to *The Yale Literary Magazine*. One of these, “Walt Whitman,” appeared in the November 1874 issue. After writing some introductory comments, Hale penned the following passage, some of it nearly self-prophetic:

Fifty-five years ago Walt Whitman was born. Brought up in out-door life, strong, healthy, now a carpenter, now an editor, always one of the people, he became disgusted with our nature literature, and thought that no poet had come forth to sing the praises of true democracy. With sublime egotism
he said to himself, I will be the poet of this land. To fit himself for the task he travelled much, noting the customs of our States. He studied carefully on politics and government. He read the literature of all lands, giving especial attention to the Greek drama, Homer, and the Bible. In 1855 the fruit of his work appeared, a thin book set in type and published by himself. “Leaves of Grass” was for a time thought to be the ravings of a madman. It was called, at once, gross, yet mystical, superficial and deep, as though a New York fireman had absorbed the transcendentalism of the Dial and had expressed it in his own brawny language.

In the author’s preface to the 1955 edition, he says:

“To speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals. And the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside, is the flawless triumph of art. What I tell, I tell for precisely what it is. Let who may exalt or startle, or fascinate, or soothe; I will have purposes, as health, or heat, or snow has, and be as regardless of observation.” And Nature found her long-lost poet.

The following year, Hale once again wrote to him:

9 South College
New Haven CT
Oct 7th 1875

Dear Sir: –

I send you a copy of Yale Lit for Nov 74 containing an article “WW.” You will see at a glance that it is simply a condensed rehash of Mr. Burrough’s “notes”—a Westminster Review article and your Democratic Vistas.

I have not sent it to you before because somehow or other I have not had the courage. I feared lest you have said in “Calamus”—your cautions to would be pupils of yours—might be true.

I hope that you will not be offended at the imperfect way in which I have tried to express my faith in you. I first became acquainted with your books some four or five years ago and from them I have not only learned faith and courage but have become desirous of seeing you yourself. This last pleasure has been denied me; but one of the pleasantest memories of my life is the recollection of an hour passed with your mother in the summer of ’72.

The passage marked ) is disjointed—for the false delicacy of the Ed’s of Lit kept out some remarks upon the physical degeneracy of our women.

Very respectfully,
Philip Hale

To
Walt Whitman
Camden
N.J.

Early the following summer Hale ordered copies of new editions of Whitman’s books.
The author wrote to him:

431 Stevens St.
Camden, N Jersey
July 11 [1876?]

My dear Philip Hale,

I have rec’d your PO order for $10 for my books—for which hearty thanks. I send by same mail with this, One Vol. Leaves of Grass—the other Vol. Two Rivulets

I will send soon as some copies of a new batch are ready (the old ones being all exhausted).

Please inform me (by postal card will do) if this Vol. comes safe.

Walt Whitman

Throughout his life Hale would maintain an appreciation of Whitman’s writings, often quoting him in concert reviews. Among the items that he kept until his death was another of Whitman’s self-published pamphlets, After All, Not to Create Only, a speech given by the poet on September 7, 1871. Whitman also respected Hale’s writings. The following inscription in Whitman’s hand appears in the cover of what was undoubtedly a gift copy of Quarante Mélodies Choises de F. Schubert:

Phil: Hale

“All music is what awakens from you when you are reminded by the instruments.”

Walt Whitman

Following his graduation from Yale (A. B., 1876), Hale turned his attention toward New York City, contributing articles to New York World while receiving private lessons from then well-known composer Dudley Buck (1839–1909), organist at Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn. Shortly thereafter Hale moved to Albany, New York, where he served as an apprentice in the law office of his uncle, Robert L. Hale. This was fortuitous; it culminated in his being admitted to the New York Bar in 1880. As a result, Hale practiced law in Albany for two years.

Located about eighty miles west of Northampton, Albany had about 90,000 residents during Hale’s first period of residency there. This population figure is somewhat misleading, for the city was (and remains) the state capitol and the center of the tri-city metropolitan area consisting of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy. There was already a significant tradition of music making in Albany. At mid-century, Ferdinand Ingersoll Ilsley, owner of F. I. Ilsley & Co., an Albany firm which made square concert pianos for over a decade, conducted performances of Haydn’s oratorios The Creation and The Seasons. The latter was presented by the Harmonia Society, a singing organization founded in 1849. Within two decades a number of other Albany singing societies were established. Among them were The Union Musical Association (1858), The Singing Society Caecilia (1866), The Albany Music Association (1867), and the Gesang-Verein Eintracht Singing Society (1868), which, as its name suggests, cultivated German music, both instrumental and vocal. Sometimes orchestras accompanied these singing societies in their concerts, although, in order to ensure a sufficient caliber
of performance, professional musicians—both vocal and instrumental—had to be brought in from New York or Boston. The Germania Orchestra of Boston, for example, was imported for the 1881 performance of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. Chamber music was also starting to gain a foothold in the city at this time. Among such groups was The Mozart Society (1875).17

Performance venues were relatively few and therefore in high demand. Tweddle Hall, located at 81 State Street, was built in 1860. This four-story structure was the principal location for oratorio performances before it burned down in 1883.18 The building also housed the McCammon Music Store. Nearby was the Perry Building, which also had a performance hall. Also downtown was the Leland Opera House, at 43 S. Pearl St., which opened its doors on November 24, 1873. It was later converted into a venue for vaudeville and movies before its demise in the mid-twentieth century.

Hale, of course, was drawn to Albany’s musical offerings. He studied piano and organ there with John Kautz (1850–1918) and from 1879 to 1882 served as organist at St. Peter’s (Episcopal) Church on State Street. One year earlier, starting in 1878, Hale began serving as music critic for the *Albany Times*.19 This marked the beginning of his work in what would become his true profession, even though Hale’s position with that paper often entailed writing about non-musical events, doing telegraph copy editing, or chasing down police reports. Though nearly all of his articles for the *Albany Times* were published anonymously, the identity of the author isn’t much in doubt, for stylistic mannerisms associated with his later work did surface. The following anonymous anecdote bears Hale’s sense of style and humor:

### An Operatic Row

At an operatic rehearsal in Rome the other day, the rehearsal being the last before the presentation of his new work, the composer made a neat little speech to the members of the chorus before they began their work, expressing his gratification at the manner in which they had performed their part, and announcing his intention of treating them to sixty litres of wine (something over thirteen gallons). All went well till after the second act, when the gentlemen of the chorus clamored for part of the wine; the composer urged the advantage of having it all after the rehearsal was over; an angry altercation took place, ending with a partial surrender on the composer’s part. Some of the semi-treated chorus returned a little worse for the wine, and the third act suffered accordingly in execution, and when it was over a demand was made for more wine or there would be no chorus. Half the chorus were drunk by this time; the composer scolded them with Italian vehemence; the members of the chorus responded with a torrent of abuse; the *prima donna* indignantly reminded them that the composer had mounted the opera for nothing, and that she had given her services gratuitously, simply to enable the musicians, chorus-singers and other artists to have a chance to earn something during the dull season; the chorus-singers called her all the names in their vocabulary; she fainted, and her husband bounded on the stage and challenged everybody to fight; the orchestra sided with the composer and upbraided the chorus-singers, and a frightful squabble began, which lasted till 3 a.m.20
It did not take long before Hale jettisoned his law career for one in music criticism and performance. In order to take up such a career change, Hale did what every serious nineteenth-century American musician had to do—study in Europe.

Starting in 1882, Hale spent five years on the other side of the Atlantic. The first country visited was Germany. He made the most of his time in Berlin, studying organ with Carl August Haupt (1810–1891), director of the Royal Institute for Church Music, and with Albert Heintz (1822–1911), organist at St. Peter’s. In addition, he took lessons from the Russian-born concert pianist Xaver Scharwenka (1850–1924). He also studied at that city’s prestigious Hochschule für Musik—keyboard technique with the famous piano pedagogue Oscar Raif (1847–1899) and composition with two musicians of stature: violinist Heinrich Urban (1837–1901) and Clara Schumann’s half-brother, Woldemar Bargiel (1828–1897). The latter helped him with counterpoint and in acquiring a significant amount of score-reading expertise.

It was during this Berlin stay, on June 10, 1884, that Hale wed the Syracuse-born pianist and composer Irene Baumgras. She was the daughter of two artists: German-American portrait painter Peter Baumgras (1827–1903) and American floral painter Mary Brainerd Thomson Baumgras (1840–1928). Irene was a pianist of significant repute; she had studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and received the Springer Gold Medal there in 1881. She had continued her studies in Europe, with Raif and with Moritz Moszkowski (1854–1925). Irene later wrote music under the pseudonym of Victor Rene and is best known as a composer for her Morceaux de Genre, Op. 15, and the four-movement Pensees Poetiques, Op. 16.

Following their wedding, Philip Hale became somewhat of an itinerant scholar, studying composition with Josef Rheinberger (1839–1901) from July through December 1884 in Munich, and organ with Immanuel Gottlob Friedrich Faisst (1823–1894) from January through October 1885 in Stuttgart.

Hale ended his European stay not in Germany, but in France, studying organ and composition in Paris with Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911) for the next two years. He may also have studied with Théodore Salomé (1834–1895), organist at Sainte-Trinité. The second of Salomé’s Dix Pièces pour Orgue, Vol. III, Op. 48, “Prière,” bears the dedication “à Monsieur Philip Hale.”

Hale’s time spent in Paris, though shorter than that in Germany, had a more lasting effect on him. In Paris there was a certain joie de vivre in the musical scene that offset the rather severe academic approach toward music common in Germany at that time. Many of France’s best-known composers had joined the Société Nationale de Musique. The society was founded in 1871 by Romain Bussine and Camille Saint-Saëns in order to counteract two prevailing perceptions: (1) the favoring of France’s vocal music over its instrumental music and (2) the dominance of German musical tradition. The society’s aims were manifested in a number of concert series. The gifted conductor Charles Lamoureux (1834–1899) was presenting his weekly Société des Nouveaux-Concerts at Theatre Château d’Eau. These were very successful and often cited by Hale in his later writings. Lamoureux was not alone; a rival, Eduard Colonne (1838–1910), conducted L’Association Artistique du Châtelet at the Theatre du Châtelet, and Jules Pasdeloup (1819–1887) was attempting to restart his Concerts Pasdeloup through a César Franck Festival. All of this French musical nationalism was hard
to escape and Hale was taken in by it to the extent that he essentially became a Francophile in his music criticism, generally favoring the Franco-Russian timbre-oriented approaches to orchestral composition over the more Germanic logical development of themes.

After being exposed to the cutting edge of late-nineteenth-century musical activity in France, it must have been with some reluctance that Hale returned to Albany in 1887, even though the musical scene in that city had improved slightly during his absence. Two new choral societies had been founded in 1884: the Apollo Singing Society (an offshoot from the Gesang-Verein Eintract) and the New Harmonia Singing Society. During the autumn of that same year, the Albany Philharmonic Society was founded under the auspices of George Hornell Thacher, Jr. It originally featured only chamber music but by the following year had an orchestra of twenty-nine members. Although amateur based, this was the first orchestra in Albany to have any sense of permanence.

New opportunities awaited Hale, though on the surface they appear to have been on much the same plane as what had been available to him before his European sojourn. He assumed the conductorship of the Schubert Club male chorus, and became organist/choir director at St. John’s Episcopal Church in nearby Troy. He supplemented the income gained from these sources by giving organ lessons and teaching theory. In addition, he became music and drama critic for the *Albany Express* and the *Albany Union*, where he also wrote editorials and edited telegraph copy. Meager though these opportunities might have been, Hale made the best of them. His own column, “Amusement,” in the *Albany Evening Union*, afforded him ample opportunity to further nurture his own writing style. The column covered everything imaginable, from animal shows to serious opera.

**AMUSEMENT.**

The Campanini Opera Concert at the Leland

The feature of the concert of the Campanini concert of last evening was the singing of Signorina de Vere. She fully deserved the high praises given her last week by such New York critics as Henderson and Krebsiel. Her voice is of agreeable quality and good compass; and careful study has given her great execution. Her intonation, phrasing and comprehension of the composer’s ideas are all alike admirable. Let it be added that she has a very pleasing face and handsome figure. It is seldom that we have a chance to hear such an artist; and what a relief to hear her after the caterwaulings of so many German prima donnas.

Campanini’s voice was heard to best advantage in the great romance from Hallevy’s “Jewess,” where the broken hearted and fanatical Jew Eleazer has decided to send his adopted daughter to the horrible death of boiling oil rather than save her by telling the truth of her birth; for Rachel was really the natural child of the cardinal. It is a haunting melody, full of pathos; and Campanini sang it with full appreciation of its wondrous somber beauty. It was a noble interpretation of one of the most heartrending scenes in the operatic repertoire.

Del Puente did not do justice to the lament of Hoel over the body of Dinorah. His mannerisms seemed exaggerated, particularly his abuse of the tremolo; his phrasing lacked breadth and dignity. In the Toreador’s song, which he has made peculiarly his own, and in Valentine’s song from Faust, he did better work.
The other members of the company ranged only from “fair to middling.” The buffo and the bass had agreeable and well trained voices, but Mlle. Fabbri and Sig. Stehle were of a lower order and provoked feelings of surprise and pain. The latter has a singularly nasal quality of tone. Miss Groebel, to whom nature has given a rich voice, sang with sublime indifference and sluggishness.

The program, which was much too long, included for its final number the garden scene from “Faust.” It is the purpose of Sig. Campanini in each concert to give one act from some opera. This is a doubtful experiment. No matter how well the scenes may be sung, in the absence of an orchestra and chorus and fitting scenery there is a total lack of what the French call the dramatic perspective; and the performance inevitably suggests the appearance of “barn-stormers” in a country town. Of course it is a great and unmixed pleasure to hear such a tenor and soprano together, no matter how unfavorable the surroundings may be; but last night the quartet was top heavy, for Sig. Bologna, who was a most estimable little Mephistopheles, was heard with difficulty and the alto, Miss Groebel, sang and acted like an “English Miss.”

The company as a whole does not compare with other artists who surrounded Sig. Campanini last year. But who can replace the loss of Scalchi, Nanneti, Galassi and Toricelli?

Sig. Ferrari, who had a most thankless task, went through it well, hampered as he was in the act from Faust with a most wretched piano.

The audience was large and enthusiastic. They insisted on many recalls from a desire, no doubt, to “get their money’s worth.”

There were several features of last night’s performance which call for more extended comment, but as there is a press upon the columns of this evening’s UNION this comment must be put off until Saturday night.

NOTES.

Next week Edwin A. Arden will appear at Jacob’s and Proctor’s theatre in a new drama “Barred Out.”

This evening the engagement of Mr. Arthur Rehan’s company begins at the Leland with the comedy “7–20–8,” which will be repeated at the Saturday matinee.27

The above column of 595 words, about half the length of most of his future Boston Symphony Orchestra reviews, shows that Hale had arrived at a “first maturity” in his critiquing during this second period of residency in Albany. A number of his stylistic characteristics are now apparent: giving credit to his peers, placing the positive reviews of the performers before the negative ones, and commenting on such nonmusical items as program length, performance conditions (in this case dealing with the “wretched” piano), audience deportment, and deadline constraints. With Hale’s commentary, one received a review of all aspects of a performance, not just a superficial account confined to the immediate action of what was happening on stage.

Indeed, there was a reasonable amount of musical activity happening in the Albany–Schenectady–Troy area, but the quality was not sufficient enough to prevent Hale from having higher aspirations. After all, he had experienced the musical life of Dresden, Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart, and Paris, and was now having difficulty in finding personal satisfaction within the musical life of upstate New York. So, Hale began seeking personal fulfillment elsewhere.

On January 28, 1889, possibly as part of an interview process, he performed an organ recital at the First Religious Society (Unitarian) Church in Roxbury, on the south side of Boston. The recital paid homage to Bach as well as to