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Gavin James Campbell. *Music and the Making of a New South.* Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. 240 pp. $65.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8078-2846-5.

Reviewed by Peter Murray

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Besides "music," the most important word in the title of this book is the article "a" because Gavin James Campbell readily acknowledges that this is an exploration of one particular "New South" focused on Atlanta, Georgia, in the early twentieth century. This limitation to "a" instead of "the" New South is not a denial of the importance of the city. Quite the contrary, Atlanta is the embodiment of much of the New South, but the New South is too broad for any city to encapsulate. Instead, here is a study of three annual musical events held between 1909 and 1925 in Atlanta: visits by the New York Metropolitan Opera, the Colored Music Festival, and the Georgia Old Time Fiddlers' Convention. These were cultural events that tell more than just the aesthetic tastes of the times. Through subtle analysis, these events reveal the values of and tensions among Atlanta's residents, especially across lines of race, gender, and class. However, this study does go beyond one particular locale. The interplay between Atlanta, the New South, and the United States is carefully tuned and the results will be pleasing to most readers. There is much in this book that is not new regarding the rigid racial separation of the New South, for example, the taut gender lines, and the tensions between classes. What is new, innovative, and exciting is the linkage between these elements and music. For southern historians, cultural historians, and specialists in the early twentieth century, this makes for profitable reading. Undergraduate students will find the book rich in examples of how music is integral to social life, including all the divisions within American society.

Atlanta and opera may not be linked in the minds of many historians of the early twentieth century, but the New York Metropolitan Opera annually visited Atlanta for a week of "grand opera." This cultural festival, interrupted only briefly during WWI, became for highbrow, white residents the showcase event of the capital of the New South, or, at least, their claim to that title. Yet the event brought with it tensions along the fault lines of gender, class, and race. Women, according to Campbell, saw the opera as a way to broaden the horizons of businessmen and their narrow definition of success. Music was one avenue within traditional gender roles that women could use

to tame boorish men. They were more enthusiastic than men in attending the opera, yet men monopolized the board that orchestrated the music festival. Men embraced opera, not for the music, but for the prestige it brought Atlanta and the chance to revel in their worldly profits. There was even a sentiment held by some that having the "Yankee" opera company come to the New South promoted the reconciliation of North and South. Attendance was restricted to white southerners and a request by African Americans for segregated seating in the spirit of the 1895 Atlanta Compromise was rebuffed. Overall, opera in Atlanta did not challenge prevailing mores because organizers, newspaper reporters, and audiences heard exactly what they wanted to hear and not a note more.

The interpretation by Campbell of highbrow culture in the New South is well argued and reveals much about city leaders' inflated views of progress, including the claim that Atlanta had become the music capital of the world. Not every argument offered by Campbell will convince; however, even the skeptical reader will be impressed by his skillful use of secondary research, especially on gender relations, as well as the wealth of quotations by Atlanta residents regarding what the Metropolitan Opera's visit meant to them and their city.

African-American civic leaders organized the Colored Music Festival starting in 1910. It showcased the classical musical achievements of the African-American community and the progress they had made since emancipation. This musical event did not directly challenge the New South segregation, but it did upset some white sensibilities. Many whites hoped that African Americans would focus their musical achievements upon spirituals and songs rooted in the experience of slavery. For these patronizing white southerners, African Americans lost something distinctly theirs by imitating European musical models. Ironically, this nostalgia even produced southern white minstrels performing "African" music, sometimes in concerts with African-American musical groups. Spirituals presented an enigma to African Americans as well as white Americans. Some African-American leaders wanted to forget them as a relic of the degraded past, but others such as James Weldon Johnson embraced spirituals as the essence of African-American creativity and genius. If slaves could create these beautiful spirituals, how much more could African Americans achieve if granted true equality. Even the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, in his "From the New World" symphony, added ammunition to this argument by prominently using spirituals in his composition.

In 1910, Jack Johnson defeated Jim Jeffries in a heavyweight boxing match that heightened racial tensions across America, including Atlanta where the city council quickly voted to prohibit the public showing of films of the fight. Organizers of the first Colored Music Festival capitalized on white fears of African Americans losing respect for white America's privilege and culture. Here was an opportunity to display the accomplishments of the better African Americans in a segregated setting. African-American and white audiences heard both European concert music and spirituals. Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor, pastor of the First Congregational Church, proved the leading force behind the Colored Music Festival, but he encountered local African-American opposition due to the belief that he used the event to highlight his church and his own accomplishments. When he left Atlanta for a new pastorate in 1919, the Colored Music Festival, already suspended the year before due to the war (as was the Atlanta Music Festival), never revived. For all the notoriety the Colored Music Festival had brought, it did not challenge the Jim Crow system. While the book's analysis of the controversy regarding spirituals is excellent, there is not a corresponding discussion of gender and class in this section. Probably because of the difficulty of finding sources, Atlanta's African Americans are not pre-

sented with the same complexity as white residents of the city.

Probably the most popular musical event for white Georgians from 1913 to its demise during the Great Depression was the Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention held in Atlanta. Although it appealed to lower-class workers, it also had the enthusiastic support of the industrial and financial leaders of Atlanta. The music united white Atlanta residents divided by labor and capital because the music was sprightly and the tickets cheap. On a deeper level it was seen as music that was distinctly white, particularly identified with Appalachia. In the early twentieth century, folklorists combed Appalachia for evidence of pristine British ballads and fiddle tunes, while people like William Goodell Frost, president of Berea College, and writer Horace Kephart extolled the purity and virtue of backwoods culture and life. Appalachia preserved both racial purity and a manly existence, including domination of wives. The fears of racial suicide and foreign-born immigrants had no better counter-example than in Appalachia, so the region of backwardness and isolation enjoyed a new glow. Cultural stereotypes of fiddlers as backwoods simpletons forced even more sophisticated performers to dumb down their performance. Fiddlers also made fun of opera and the pretensions of New South leaders, but many city leaders acted as musical judges at the contests, suggesting a faith that this music transcended class. However, race was again a line of demarcation because fiddling was interpreted as a bulwark against jazz and "Negro" music. Campbell also paints a picture of men embracing fiddling while women tended to prefer opera.

There are very few places to question Campbell's treatment of the themes of the book. The demise of each of these forms of music festival receives only short treatment, with the Colored Music Festival end being best explained. Given the importance of each, it is surprising that the demise of the two longer-running events did not get more attention. Campbell alludes to the structure of each festival, but the book stays clear of being an institutional history of the organizers of these three events. In a few places, the interpretation of gender seems quite rigid. For example, a discussion of the rise of women's music clubs states, "they [women] joined music clubs by the thousands to register their dissatisfaction with the modern trend 'to isolate women in the home'" (p. 23). It is difficult to establish motivation for such a diverse group as women who joined music clubs. Campbell cites several sources and includes some representative quotations, but other explanations are also plausible. These women could have liked music, they might have wanted to show off their homes, and they might have wanted less isolation while at the same time still embracing the separation of spheres. Likewise, Campbell seems to present men as a group to be incapable of gaining an appreciation of opera because of the beauty of the music and the excellence of the performances.

Overall, the strength of the book is the sophistication with which Campbell gives meaning to music. His background reading of the New South, gender and racial studies are skillfully used and his reading in all these areas is prodigious. There are numerous examples in the book of analysis that is insightful and well argued. If anything, Campbell understates the power of music in reflecting culture. Many students will have an entirely new relationship with their iPods after reading this book. They will tap their toes to the music, but they will also think more about what the music they listen to says about their values and those of modern America society.

Campbell has written a book of intricate melodies. It is up tempo and in tune. Historians of the New South and American culture can look forward to his next composition.

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