



## Gilbert Chase (1906–1992)

Gilbert Chase, to whom homage was paid in this journal on his 75th birthday (*Inter-American Music Review*, III/2 [Spring–Summer 1981], 119) was also honored on his 80th birthday with a special issue of *Latin American Music Review* edited by his distinguished pupil Gerard Béhague. Born at Havana, Cuba, September 4, 1906, Chase married the Danish writer Kathleen [van] Barentzen who was his lifetime aide, December 27, 1929. At his death February 22, 1992, of pneumonia in North Carolina Memorial Hospital at Chapel Hill he was also survived by their three sons Paul of San Rafael, California, Peter of Columbia, South Carolina, and John of Chapel Hill.

Himself the son of Gilbert P. Chase, a naval Lieutenant Commander born in Virginia, and Edelmira Culmell Chase, born in Cuba (her father was a Danish immigrant, her mother French), Gilbert *filis* on his mother's side was related to Joaquín Nin-Culmell, the renowned composer who taught at Williams College and the University of California at Berkeley. However, in his own autobiographical paragraph concluding his entry in *Who's Who in America*, 41st edition (1980–1981), page 599, Chase wrote as follows (after having obtained his B.A. from the University of North Carolina in 1950 and an honorary D.Litt. from the University of Miami in 1955): "My lack of specialized training (my academic study ended with a B.A.) has been both a handicap and an advantage. A handicap because I was not qualified for any of the prestigious professional careers, an advantage because I was receptive to any kind of job that offered a challenge and an opportunity for advancement. I always wanted to be a writer, and my books helped me achieve an aca-

demie career, beginning as full professor at age 50. I gave all that I had to every job and learned from each."

The full professorship "beginning at age 50" to which he alluded in the last sentence above, began at the University of Oklahoma where he was appointed director of the School of Music in 1955–56 and acting dean of the College of Fine Arts 1956–57. His other academic appointments included a professorship of Latin American Studies at Tulane University 1960–66, that of Ziegele visiting professor of music at the State University of New York at Buffalo 1973–74, and of visiting professor of comparative studies, history, and music at the University of Texas at Austin 1975–79. He was a cultural attaché at the USA embassies in Lima, Peru, 1951–53, Buenos Aires, 1953–55, and Brussels, 1958–60.

According to Allan Kozinn's obituary "Gilbert Chase, 85, Critic and Author of Music Studies" published in *The New York Times*, Metro Section, February 27, 1992, B 6:6, Chase moved to Paris in 1927. Two years later he published privately in France his first book, *Cities and Souls: Poems of Spain*. From 1929 to 1935 he remained in Paris as music critic for the *Continental Daily Mail*. (During the lean Parisian years his father rallied to his financial cause—as later his father was to do again during his first New York years.)

While in Paris his language skills (Spanish and French) made him the ideal transmitter of information in Felipe Pedrell's studies, in Rafael Mitjana's books, articles, and section in the Lavignac *Encyclopédie*, in Higinio Anglés's earliest publications, and in Adolfo Salazar's criticisms. As a result, Chase's



*The Music of Spain* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941; 2d ed. Dover, 1959) still remains a classic. Chase's annotated bibliography of Latin American music prepared in 1940–43 while he was a Latin American specialist in the Music Division of the Library of Congress and published in 1945 (2d enlarged edition, Library of Congress and Organization of American States, 1962) will be improved upon only when a third edition is published by his paramount protégé, Gerard Béhague (who took his Ph.D. at Tulane under Chase's auspices in 1966). From 1963–67 Chase served as music section contributor to the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*. Broadening his field to include the visual arts he published in 1970 *Contemporary Art in Latin America*. Thereafter he concentrated on the formidable task of again revising what Kozinn rated as Chase's "most frequently cited work," *America's Music from the Pilgrims to the Present* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1955, 2d edition, 1966).

Although announced in 1980, the third edition occupied him another seven years (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987 [xxiv + 712 pages]). Including a laudatory foreword by Richard Crawford and a discographical essay by William Brooks, the third edition was reviewed in *American Music*, vi/4 (1988), 462–464; *Music & Letters*, 69/4 (1988), 542–545; *American Music Teacher*, 38/5 (April–May 1989), 39; *Canadian University Music Review*, 9/2 (1989), 142–143; *Ethnomusicology*, 33/2 (1989), 325–330; *Popular Music*, 8/1 (1989), 124–127; and *Notes of the Music Library Association*, 47/2 (1990), 381–383.

Always a sought-after reviewer, Chase contributed a lengthy appraisal of Charles Hamm's *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* to the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, xxxiv/1 (1981), 156–163. His last articles included "American Music and American Musicology," *Journal of Musicology*, 1/1 (1982), 59–62, and "Remembering Alberto Ginastera," *Latin American Music Review*, vi/1 (1985), 80–84. In cooperation with Andrew Budwig he published in 1986 *Manuel de Falla: A Bibliography and Research Guide* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 145 pp.).

Just as he showed his generosity to the budding scholar Budwig by consenting to unite their names on the title page of the Garland 1986 manual, so also throughout his entire career Chase encouraged young authors with unforgettable gestures. The author of this necrology gratefully remembers Chase's extreme kindness in an *Americas* review of *Music in Mexico A Historical Survey*, in prefatory statements to the sections on Mexico and Peru included in the 1962 augmented version of the Latin American bibliography published cooperatively by the Library of Congress and the OAS, in the altogether valuable help given him in obtaining a Peruvian Fulbright in 1959, and in the urgent invitation to join him in teaching at Tulane University where Chase initiated the *Yearbook for Inter-American Music Research* in 1964, and where he brought forward such later-to-be illustrious Americanists as Gerard Béhague, Charles Boilès, and Harry Eskew.