

H-Looney-Chesley-20050311133003

To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

Date: 03/11/2005

From: Chesley H. Looney

Comment:

I've had an experience with an orphaned work that may be of interest having to do with a musical work (Cinema 76) used in a Continental Insurance pavilion. The following digest of several email conversations gives the picture;

: 12181 (C) S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 09:51:50
Sb: Compliments and Query
Fm: Ches Looney 73016, 1336
To: boychoirs.org

My compliments on your BoyChoir webpage. I'm the father of 4 boys and a girl and most of them have benefited by membership in children and youth choirs during their formative years. My wife, Ruth, and I are enjoying adult choir participation in our "mature" years.

Your web page is very interesting and inclusion of performance recordings makes it even richer.

I have a puzzlement however, The Continental Soldier was the centerpiece for Continental Insurance's 1964-5 World's Fair exhibit some eight years before the TBC's first performance. Did Continental charter the initial Ray Charles work? Were your words "... commissioned by the Texas Boy's Choir ..." intended to show appropriate compensation to the author? Or did the TBC commission the work before '64? Seems puzzling that neither Continental nor TBC comments on the other party.

Thanks for helping me understand.

Ches

: 12183 S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 13:31:12
Sb: Compliments and Query
Fm: "Larry Ford" > INTERNET:
To: Ches Looney [73016, 1336]

Hi Ches,

Thank you for your compliments about my website. Also, it's great to hear your children benefited from membership in children's and youth choirs. I had the good fortune to have been able to sing my Junior and Senior High School years in the school's boys choir and the 'a cappella' mixed choir.

The history of "The Continental Soldier Suite" is an interesting one. You are correct in that the work was originally written by Ray Charles for the Continental Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. The original title was simply "Cinema 76" and was used as background music for historic dioramas at the Continental pavilion.

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In 1964 George Bragg met Ray Charles and it was Mr. Charles suggestion that the Texas Boys Choir perform "The Continental Soldier Suite" as a costumed performance in the years leading up to the Bi-Centennial in 1976. Mr. Bragg agreed and work was begun on rescoring the work for boys voices. Buryl Red was retained to orchestrate the work and the finished result is what you hear on my website. It is the rescored and orchestrated work (essentially a new work) that was commissioned for the Texas Boys Choir. I have in my archives a complete copy of the part sheets, written in Mr. Charles hand, that were used by the choirboys in learning this work.

I hope this explanation has been of help to you. Please continue to visit the site as I am constantly updating with new material. I also change out some of the audio material in the form of 'concerts' and such.

Please extend my warm regards to your wife and family.

Best wishes,

Larry Ford

Webmaster

Boychoir - Past, Present and Future

<http://boychoirs.org>

"A boy sings ... a beautiful thing." from the Texas Boys Choir documentary
A Time of Waking"

: 12184 (C) S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 17:57:27

Sb: Compliments and Query

Fm: Ches Looney 73016, 1336

To: "Larry Ford" > INTERNET:

Larry,

Thanks for the explanation; I suspected it might have been something like that. Our (adult) choir director's wife directs children's choirs and I've passed along the website url to them. I'll also pass along the interesting history of the Continental Soldier. Today's post 9/11 environment probably enhances the pleasure of that suite.

Regards,

Ches.

: 12189 (C) S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 19:03:29

Sb: Compliments and Query

Fm: Ches Looney 73016, 1336

To: "Larry Ford" > INTERNET:

Hi Larry,

In talking with one of my sons, the question came up on which Ray Charles wrote The Continental Soldier. I know of at least two Ray Charles musicians: the very popular pianist/singer and I think I've run across one who is a black gospel singer and writer. Neither one of these seems likely as the author of the Soldier. Son Richard thinks he's heard that the Soldier was written by a Ray Charles active in composing music for commercials. Is that the one or is it yet another one?

Thanks,

Ches.

: 12190 S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 19:39:09
Sb: Compliments and Query
Fm: "Larry Ford" > INTERNET:
To: Ches Looney [73016, 1336]

Hi Ches,

The Ray Charles who composed the "Cinema 76" and "The Continental Soldier Suite" is the one who had an orchestra and, I believe, was part of the Perry Como show. He also provided the accompaniment for several popular singers during the 40s and 50s. So it's possible this is the same Ray Charles your son is referring to.

The other Ray Charles I know of is a blind, black pianist/singer whose music I also enjoy.

So I guess now the question is "how many Ray Charles' are there?"

All the best,
Larry

: 12180 (C) S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
19-Oct-03 09:37:04
Sb: Unusual Query
Fm: Ches Looney 73016, 1336
To: Paul a

Paul a,

I have an unusual (I suspect) query. In 1964-5, Continental Insurance had an exhibit building at the New York World's Fair which showcased Cinema 76. This was a slide show of animations featuring Revolutionary War heroes and heroines, some well known, some not. The slides were accompanied by music written by Ray Charles celebrating the Continental Soldier. Records (the old 33 1/3 rpm "LP" phonograph disks) were sold for the now-remarkable price of \$1.68 plus 0.32 shipping charge! I have one of these prize records and now the query. Is CNA the present day firm that was Continental Insurance in 1964? If so, is there any way the slide show could be obtained? In the post 9/11 era, the Continental Soldier story would be a likely popular seller on a DVD.

Thanks for your time,

Ches.

From: Gray, Paul a
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2003 8:55 AM
To: Soehngen, Michael J.
Cc: 'CLooney
Subject: FW: Unusual Query

Mike,

Thought I would forward this to you. Don't who might have info about this, but I know it is not the Property underwriting dept.

Thanks.

Paul a K. Gray

Assistant to Dan Rockwell
CNA Property
<http://www.cna.com>

: 12193 SO/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
20-Oct-03 14:22:25
Sb: Unusual Query
Fm: "Soehngen, Michael J." > INTERNET:
To: Ches Looney [73016, 1336]

Thanks, for asking, Ches. No, we are not the Continental who had a sentry/soldier -- that was Continental (NY) which we Continental (Chicago) bought in the mid-late nineties. Memorabilia such as the slide show would not have been retained if in fact it was even in the former Continental archives.

: 12221 SO/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
22-Oct-03 20:18:18
Sb: Ray Charles query
Fm: "Charles G. Hill" > INTERNET:
To: Ches Looney [73016, 1336]

>>I saw your website giving information on Charles Raymond Offenberg (another Ray Charles). Is this man the composer of the Continental Soldier Suite first heard at the New York World's Fair as Cinema' 76 and later re-orchestrated for treble voices and a full orchestra as "The Continental Soldier Suite" for the Texas Boy's Choir?<<

I believe it is.

Eric at Renaissance Man's Potpourri (<http://yankeesfan.blogspot.com/>) reports as follows:
<text inserted>

</text inserted>

Since Offenberg did, in fact, bill himself as "The Other Ray Charles" during much of his career, including the period in question, I am persuaded that he is, in fact, the composer.

Hope this is satisfactory. There is a World's Fair site at <http://www.nywf64.com> which may lead to further corroboration, though I didn't catch any on the most obvious pages....cgh

=====
Charles G. Hill |
If we don't change direction soon, we'll end up where we're going.
=====

#: 12222 (C) SO/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
22-Oct-03 21:48:19
Sb: Ray Charles query
Fm: Ches Looney 73016, 1336
To: "Charles G. Hill" > INTERNET:

Charles,

Thanks for the added info. I also contacted the TBC webmaster and received a similar response to that received by Eric; however, I suspect Eric got to the TBC webmaster first because he was aware of the World's Fair version when he responded to me. Interestingly, the TBC version omits the song about Alan McLane. Since the WF version was titled "Cinema '76", the TBC version was titled "The Continental Soldier Suite", the orchestration of the two was quite different, and both had the same composer, I suppose "commissioning" is acceptable and copyright issues are unlikely to arise. I contacted Continental (CNA) and learned the Continental Insurance that sponsored the WF version was Continental (NY) which had been purchased by Continental (Chicago) in the 90s and no records exist giving info on either the music or the slide show according to a CNA spokesman.

I agree with your opinion based on what you've learned. It does appear that the music selections in question were both composed by "The Other Ray Charles".

Thanks for your response.

Ches.