

## Book Reviews

*Indiana Ragtime: A Documentary Album.* Produced by John Edward Hasse and Frank J. Gillis. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1981. 4 sides, 33 selections, stereo, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm. Booklet included: Pp. 27. Illustrations, map, bibliographies. Paperbound. \$14.00.)

*Indiana Ragtime: A Documentary Album* is a collection of thirty-three rags composed between 1908 and 1929 by Indiana natives or residents. The music has been chosen both to document Indiana's contributions to the ragtime era and to illustrate the variety of ways that ragtime reached the American public. The collection consists of four parts: eight solos (either banjo or piano), nine piano rolls, eight pieces performed by the Indiana University Ragtime Orchestra, and eight band arrangements. The solo renditions range from performances of the published score to improvisational versions, including a stride performance of "Mr. Crump Rag." The band performances show both the influence of ragtime on other American music and the influence of popular music, especially jazz, on ragtime renderings. This microcosmic view of Indiana ragtime, therefore, contributes to cultural history far beyond the banks of the Wabash.

The set would be valuable for the music alone, but it is made invaluable by a companion booklet comprised of three sections. The first part sets Indiana ragtime within the context of "The Ragtime Era" (1897-1920). It describes the sociocultural trends that combined to promote ragtime's popularity at the turn of the century, including white acceptance of blacks performing popular music; coon shows and vaudeville; municipal bands; dance contests, especially the ragtime-related cakewalk; the parlor pianos of an expanding middle class; player pianos, phonograph records, and gramophone cylinders; and a "golden age of local and regional music publishing" (p. 5). The second section describes the composers, providing short biographical sketches of the fifteen men and three women whose work is represented in this album. For the most part Indiana's ragtime composers were "ordinary people" with conventional musical training and unconventional interests. Only Hoagy Carmichael and J. Russel Robinson are widely known, even among students of American popular music; but all of Indiana's ragtimers composed first-rate music. The third and largest section of the booklet is therefore devoted to a description and analysis of the music itself. Details of composition and publication, a description of musical strains, and (in the solo and band sections) a sketch of the performers are given for each piece. All three

sections are illustrated with turn-of-the-century photographs and color reproductions of sheet music covers. The booklet concludes with short but judicious bibliographies of the ragtime era, ragtime and jazz, Indiana ragtime, and music folios. The result is a booklet that serves as an introductory theme, arousing interest in both the music and the history of Indiana ragtime.

The collection is so good that one wishes Hasse and Gillis had been even more ambitious in using Indiana ragtime as an independent case study of American ragtime. For example, as the dates of publication suggest, Indiana ragtimers were not pioneers but began to write only as rags gained wider public acceptance. Would it be possible, therefore, to use Indiana as a test case for the "domestication" of a black musical form? Could this expand knowledge of race relations during the ragtime era? The authors note that "ironically, at the very time when blacks were prevented from moving into the mainstream of society, ragtime represented the full emergence into American society of a vital Afro-American tradition" (p. 7). They do not, however, explore the irony, as Brooke Baldwin does for "The Cake Walk: A Study in Stereotype and Reality" in a recent *Journal of Social History* (Winter, 1981) article. This omission should not detract unduly from an impressive achievement: a collection, description, and analysis of Indiana ragtime that will be useful to cultural historians and attractive to the general public. One only hopes that other state and local historical societies will follow the Indiana Historical Society in similar ventures.

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*Transportation and the Early Nation: Papers Presented at an Indiana American Revolution Bicentennial Symposium.* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1982. Pp. vii, 156. Notes, illustrations, tables, maps. Paperbound, \$3.50.)

This volume consists of six papers originally prepared for a 1981 Indiana Bicentennial Symposium. The essays are concerned with transportation in the Old Northwest before the Civil War, and they provide both descriptive and interpretive accounts of canals, steamboats, and railroads.

Harry N. Scheiber's lead essay offers the most innovative approach as he attempts to unravel the significant legal and political issues surrounding the building of a national transportation system. He observes that the major issues, such as the