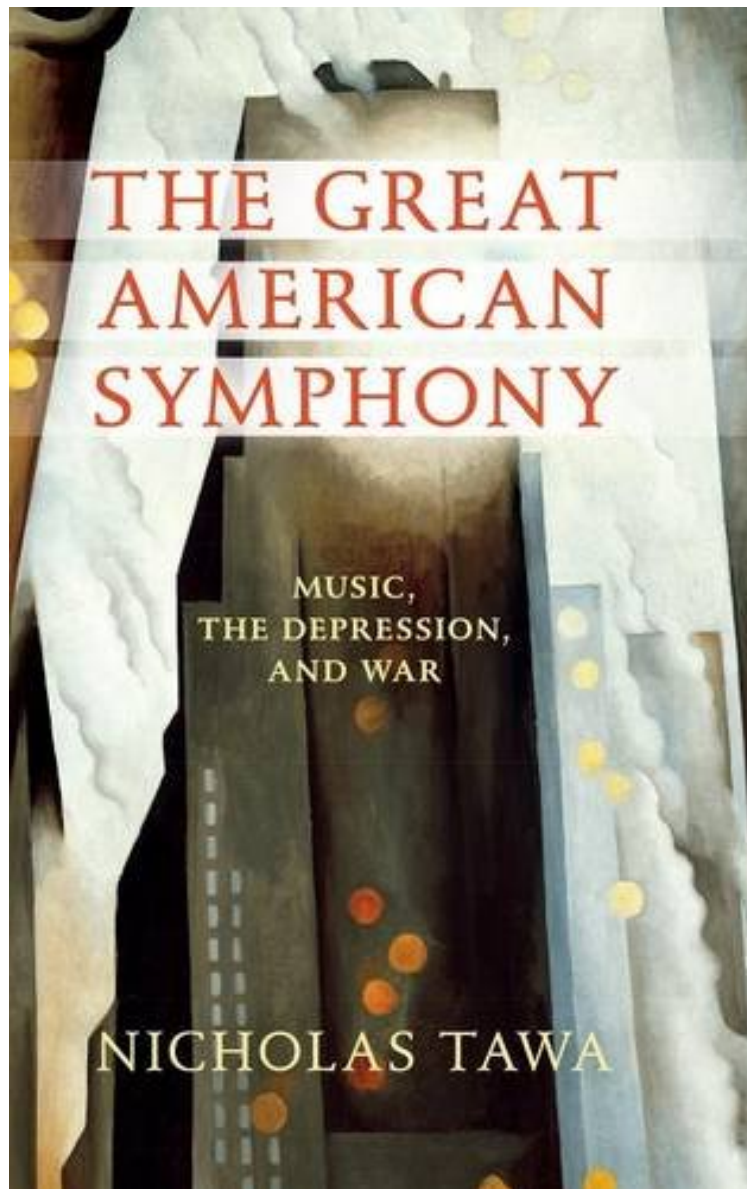


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# The Great American Symphony: Music, the Depression, and War

*Nicholas Tawa*

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**Nicholas Tawa : The Great American Symphony: Music, the Depression, and War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great American Symphony: Music, the Depression, and War:

The years of the Great Depression, World War II, and their aftermath brought a sea change in American music. This period of economic, social, and political adversity can truly be considered a musical golden age. In the realm of classical music, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Howard Hanson, Virgil Thompson, and Leonard Bernstein among others produced symphonic works of great power and lasting beauty during these troubled years. It was during this critical decade and a half that contemporary writers on American culture began to speculate about "the Great American Symphony" and looked to these composers for music that would embody the spirit of the nation. In this volume, Nicholas Tawa concludes that they succeeded, at the very least, in producing music that belongs in the cultural memory of every American. Tawa introduces the symphonists and their major works from the romanticism of Barber and the "all-American" Roy Harris through the theatrics of Bernstein and Marc Blitzstein to the broad-shouldered appeal of Thompson and Copland. Tawa's musical descriptions are vivid and personal, and invite music lovers and trained musicians alike to turn again to the marvelous and lasting music of this time.

A prolific writer, scholar, and advocate for American music, Tawa (emer., Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston) does not argue for a single symphony as the 'great American symphony' but instead nominates a dozen symphonic composers prominent from 1930 to 1950 among whose works a 'great American symphony' might be found. The author's excellent vignettes on these composers encompass factual and anecdotal material along with his own informed evaluation of the oeuvre of each. . . . Highly recommended. October 2009 (Choice) The Great American Symphony is a significant contribution to the history of American art music. February 1, 2010 (Fanfare) At a time when the relationship between composer and audience seems to be at the crux of the health and even survival of the classical music world, Nicholas Tawa's The Great American Symphony offers critical and telling insights into an important epoch in American musical history. (JoAnn Falletta Music Director, Buffalo Philharmonic) Out of tragedy emerges great art. This is the message contained in the well-documented book by Nicholas Tawa. He reminds us of rich treasures, both known and yet to be rediscovered. The work will be a valuable resource for musicians, as well as lovers of perhaps, the most creative time in American music. (Leonard Slatkin Music Director, Detroit Symphony Orchestra) About the Author Nicholas Tawa is co-founder of the Sonneck Society, now the Society for American Music. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts.