



# Henry Cowell: A Man Made of Music

*Joel Sachs*

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## **Henry Cowell: A Man Made of Music** Joel Sachs

Joel Sachs offers the first complete biography of one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century American music. Henry Cowell, a major musical innovator of the first half of the century, left a rich body of compositions spanning a wide range of styles. But as Sachs shows, Cowell's legacy extends far beyond his music. He worked tirelessly to create organizations such as the highly influential *New Music Quarterly*, New Music Recordings, and the Pan-American Association of Composers, through which great talents like Ruth Crawford Seeger and Charles Ives first became known in the US and abroad. As one of the first Western advocates for World Music, he used lectures, articles, and recordings to bring other musical cultures to myriad listeners and students including John Cage and Lou Harrison, who attributed their life work to Cowell's influence. Finally, Sachs describes the tragedy of Cowell's life, being sentenced to fifteen years in San Quentin -- of which he served four -- after pleading guilty to a morals charge that even the prosecutor felt was trivial. Providing a wealth of insight into Cowell's ideas and philosophy, Joel Sachs lays out a much-needed perspective on one of the giants of twentieth-century American music.

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