

ONLINE PREVIEW

I'LL SING ON

MY FIRST 96 YEARS

CARLTON R. "SAM" YOUNG

Edited by

BARBARA DAY MILLER

Foreword by

DON SALIERS



GIA Publications, Inc.

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Chicago

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Foreword

Any of us who have known and worked with Sam (Carlton R. Young) over many years, are always being surprised. These are surprises born of love, respect, and unbounded wit. If one only considered his musical compositions and arrangements alone, one would be amazed. If we began to explore his adventures from small Ohio to Europe to the Far East—filled with collaboration, editing, and joyful exploration—we would begin to understand him as a truly global musician. If we only considered his unique role as having edited two denominational hymnals for Methodists, dayenu, that would be enough. But this would leave out his teaching and his remarkable musical compositions and active presence in several seminaries—principally in Dallas at SMU and in Atlanta at Candler. Still, we would have to remember the vast and multiple range of his friendships and associations over nearly nine decades. We could certainly not forget his life-partner, Marj, and their 75 years of marriage, a love stretching from World War II to the era of COVID, with deep resiliency and joy.



In entering these pages, dear reader, you traverse a most remarkable life in a remarkable time in the story of American church music. Follow the life of a stringed bass jazz player who embraces the richness of choral and instrumental music both within and outside the church—and all with a Methodist passion for justice. But these pages are also a narrative of encounter with cultures by a creative and restless soul who knows the depth of lament and praise. Here is a musician always on the boundary of wit and theological honesty. He gives us a kaleidoscope of images born of unstinting musical creativity and a keen eye. As I like to say with the psalmist, Sam is “still green, still full of sap.”

I, for one, give thanks to God for what Sam Young has given to church and world. I suppose we can rightly claim that “the world is his musical parish.”

Don Saliers

Editor's Preface

Sam Young is many things: jazz musician, composer, conductor, editor, writer, pastor, teacher, mentor, spouse, father, and friend. He is also a great storyteller!

One of the true pleasures of editing this book has been spending time absorbed in the stories, in the company of generations of Sam's friends and colleagues and family (many of whom may be known by the reader personally or as influential figures of the twentieth century) as they come alive through the details of conversations remembered. With honesty and transparency and genuine affection, Sam recounts narratives and dialogues with near-audible nuance and inflection and turns of phrase, capturing personalities and foibles, poignant moments and hilarious gaffes, the full range of human interaction and encounter.

Places and events—from a small town in Ohio to a village in Malaysia, from military bases to the Great Wall of China, from the Publishing House to the Rathaus, civil rights struggles and denominational difficulties, the mundane and extraordinary—all emerge with attentive description and focused detail, told by one who embraces and lives in a big world. The sights and smells of markets in Mutare, Rio de Janeiro, Beijing, and Tainan and the sounds of combos, orchestras, and choirs in concert halls, clubs, and churches become sensory experiences for the reader. And everywhere and always the songs of faith echo in multiple languages and styles.

Woven throughout are tender glimpses of family and home—children and pets, joy and grief, disappointment and celebration—the 75-year story of Sam and Marj together.

These musings and memoirs are the song of a remarkable life. Sing on Sam!

Barbara Day Miller



Publisher's Introduction

Church musicians have the privileged task of putting words in people's mouths through their ministry of leading a congregation's song. They enable God's people to voice their praise, thanks, love, joy, sorrow, lament, trust, and faith. Even more privileged are hymnal editors who lead a team entrusted with shaping a denomination's or nation's sung prayer. Among the group of people who have served in such a capacity, few have done it as well—or as long—as Sam Young. Sam is also a skilled composer and has a keen ear for the matching of words and music. Every good text, no matter the era or source, needs a good tune; Sam finds or provides them.

Sam has long been an innovator in giving God's people something to sing, and something to sing about. He embraced ecumenism and social justice before the profound ecclesial changes of the 1960's. With publications like *Songbook for Saints and Sinners*, he challenged congregations to use the songs of the street in the sanctuary. His affinity for global repertoire and various musical styles gave some congregations the first chance to hear music other than their own. Most recently, he has edited collections of music centered on death, memorial, and the promise of eternal life.

Many of the names, sites and institutions mentioned within this book will be well known to the reader. What a delight to know that one shares a connection with Sam to these people and places. Others will be unknown; who better than Sam to introduce them to us?

GIA Publications is honored to publish the texts and tunes of the very best authors and composers writing for the church. It's a privilege for us to be Sam's publisher. Here's to our ongoing relationship.

Michael Silhavy
Senior Project Editor
GIA Publications, Inc.

Welcome

Compiling these glimpses of my life from childhood to the present day was prompted by three randoms: my reflections whist compiling my collection of songs of remembrance and hope, *Today I Live*, especially relating my future to my past; answering requests by our daughter, Carol, and her son, Kirby, to recall and send them reflections on various periods of my life, e. g. "What was it like to be a young person during WW2;" and GIA's senior project editor, Michael Silhavy's invitation to add my book to their distinguished list of biographies.



Photo by Mike DuBose, *UM News*

Just as I started writing in early 2020, Covid-19 prevented access to my archives and papers held in Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, SMU, Dallas, TX. So, I became totally dependent on my memory. To my great surprise I had serial recall in long-term memory of persons and their voices, places, sounds, images in their context. Consequently, the bulk of this book from childhood to the late 1980s is based on my memory, supported by records, diaries and commentary stored in my computer. Later coverage is supported by our annual Christmas letters included in the Appendix, emails, and personal, institutional, and publishing correspondence.

In addition, I want to acknowledge the support of other members of my family, including Marj, my understanding and creative/creating spouse for 75 years, and colleagues who have verified, amplified, and contextualized my glimpses. In addition, I express my gratitude and thanks to the creative, unflappable, resourceful general editor, Barbara Day Miller, Don Saliers, years-long friend and colleague for the eloquent foreword, to Eileen Guenther and Sister Delores Dufner for their reviews, and Michael Silhavy, energetic, imaginative music and liturgical editor extraordinary.

I take full responsibility for errors of fact or intent and apologize to persons that I may have offended or slighted, and for circumstances, events, and places that I may have misrepresented.

With gratitude to abiding spiritual support and medical expertise since I have thus far outlived several actuary charts and 35 years beyond life expectation of 55.5 at birth in 1926.

Feast of St. Mark, and my 96th birthday
April 25, 2022