

Noah Greenberg Is Dead at 46; Founded New York Pro Musica

Group Spurred a Revival of Pre-Classic Music—Mother Dies on Hearing News

Noah Greenberg, founder and director of the New York Pro Musica, died yesterday at University Hospital, apparently of a heart attack. He was 46 years old.

Mr. Greenberg was taken to the hospital after having been stricken at his home, 865 West End Avenue.

Later in the day Mr. Greenberg's mother, Mrs. Lillie Greenberg, 66, died in Shrub Oak, N. Y., upon being informed of her son's death.

Mr. Greenberg was a leading scholar and performer of medieval, Renaissance and baroque music. He is best known for reassembling and staging two forgotten medieval music dramas, "The Play of Daniel" and "The Play of Herod." He also lectured widely on early music.

"He comes as close as anyone his age to being irreplaceable in the arts," W. McNeil Lowry, vice president of the Ford Foundation, said yesterday.

Studied With Brown

Born in New York, Mr. Greenberg attended public schools here and studied music privately with Arnold Zernachson and Harold Brown. To the latter he ascribed his interest in early music.

Mr. Greenberg continued his studies as best he could while serving in the Merchant Marine from 1944 to 1949. After leaving the service he organized choruses for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union here and formed a small private chorus among friends who shared his enthusiasm for pre-classic music.

On the request of Esoteric Records for an ensemble to record Renaissance works, Mr. Greenberg founded the New York Pro Musica Antiqua (the "Antiqua" was later dropped) in 1952. Their first record — Adriano Bianchieri's "Il Festino" with Russell Oberlin, counter-tenor—led to public concerts at the New School for Social Research and the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association.

Collaborated With Auden

The Y.M.H.A. concerts established the Pro Musica as a significant factor in the city's musical life and contributed to the growing popularity of early music in the United States during the 1950's. One of the group's memorable collaborations was with W. H. Auden, the poet. Mr. Auden read Elizabethan verse to the accompaniment of the Pro Musica's rebecs and vielles at Kaufmann Hall to



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great acclaim. Later they recorded a program for Columbia Records.

But it was "The Play of Daniel," first performed by Mr. Greenberg's group in January, 1958, at The Cloisters, that gave the Pro Musica its greatest fame. Working from an ambiguous 13th-century manuscript, Mr. Greenberg and his consultants re-created a liturgical drama and ended up with a hit. "The Play of Daniel" has been given annually in New York since then, and this Christmas season it was shown on television.

A sequel, "The Play of Herod," was given in 1963 and has met with equal success.

Made European Tour

Mr. Greenberg and the Pro Musica, sponsored by the American National Theater and Academy, brought "The Play of Daniel" to Europe in 1960. In 1963 they toured the Netherlands, Spain, Israel and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Greenberg was a member of the American Musicological Society and the Hispanic Society. In 1955 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. He was granted Ford Foundation fellowships in 1960 and 1962.

His publications include "The Play of Daniel" and "An Elizabethan Song Book," both in collaboration with Mr. Auden, and "An English Song Book." He was general editor of the Pro Musica Choral Series, published by Associate Music Publishers.

Survivors include his widow, Toni; two daughters, Anne and Jane, and his father, Harry Greenberg of Shrub Oak.

A funeral service for Mr. Greenberg will be held at 11:30 A.M. today at The Riverside, Amsterdam Avenue and 76th Street. His mother will be buried Tuesday in Shrub Oak.