

## **Charles Roland Berry**

*Born in Boston, raised in Iron Mountain and Escanaba, Michigan, Mr. Berry studied composition with Paul Creston, Peter Racine Fricker, and Justin Connolly. Published letters include a correspondence with John Cage (David Cope, *New Directions in Music*, University of California, Santa Cruz.) Mr. Berry's recordings include the Cello Concerto composed for Walter Gray, and Symphony No.3, both recorded with Theodore Kuchar and the Janacek Philharmonic Ostrava.*

“My first memories of Classical Music come from when I was seven or eight years old, lying near the family stereo, listening to LP records of Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony, the complete Symphonies of Beethoven with Arturo Toscani and the NBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, with Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. I was in awe. I heard none of the details of composition that I hear now. I was in awe of the beauty, the power, and the dignity of the music. These were examples of Great Art. This did not need to be explained to me. I felt it. I felt the same way when I saw works by Michaelangelo, and drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, and the works of Rodin. These were examples of the greatness humans can achieve. Artists and musicians became my heroes.

I showed no particular talent as a musician. In fact, in 3rd grade, in a fit of frustration, I tore up my cello lessonbook. I wrote my teacher, Mrs. Clara Embs, a short note: “You tried. I quit.” Just the same, I sang in choirs from elementary school through high school, and played cello for five years. In high school, my instrument became the guitar. I wanted to be a folksinger, like Bob Dylan. I was saved from this fate, by my high school choral teacher, Conrad Beck. Being introduced to *a cappella* choral music, from Palestrina and Bach to Hugo Distler and Randall Thompson, my interest in concert music became addictive. From then on, I could not hear enough choral and instrumental music of the Masters. My early experience with choral music created a basis for my musical imagination.”

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