1770 and with a cover created by his good friend Paul Revere, this songbook included more than 120 compositions and was the first collection of music written in its entirety by an American. *Chester, A March* is one of a very few marches to be composed for any ensemble based on a Revolutionary War song. The adaptation of this song during the Revolutionary War marked the beginning of a new musical movement toward the military song, making “Chester” particularly appropriate for a work written to honor those brave men and women who have served in the military throughout our nation’s history.

Dix credits his grandmother for instilling his love of music, which was furthered by her giving the family a Magnus Chord Organ in the 1960s. As a young boy Dix learned to play some of his grandmother’s favorite American folk songs, tunes that she and countless other immigrants had learned on their journeys to America. The themes featured in *Ellis Island* are some of the most recognizable of musical Americana. The work, he says, is dedicated to the vital role of music in the day-to-day lives of American immigrants from the early 20th century. The creating and sharing of music were an integral part of daily life in my family of Italian immigrants, in particular from our Nonna (Italian for “Grandmother”), who encouraged our family to sing — and to sing and play and dance if we wished. Music was part of the cohesion of our family life.

A sequence of popular selections brings to the fore compositions that scored big with mass audiences of increasingly distant decades. John Sturges’s 1960 film, *The Magnificent Seven*, was conceived as a remake of Akira Kurosawa’s *Seven Samurai* in the style of an American Western. Seven American gunslingers (including Yul Brynner, Steve McQueen, and Charles Bronson) are hired to protect a Mexican border town from marauding bandits (headed by Eli Wallach). “They were seven … THEY FOUGHT LIKE SEVEN HUNDRED!” shouted the publicity. The film’s popularity has

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**Theme from *The Magnificent Seven***

**Elmer Bernstein**

*Born:* April 4, 1922, in New York City

*Died:* August 18, 2004, in Ojai, California

*Work composed and premiered:* 1960

*New York Philharmonic premiere and most recent performance:* April 12, 2005, Leonard Slatkin, conductor

*Estimated duration:* ca. 6 minutes

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*Steve McQueen and Yul Brynner in *The Magnificent Seven*
grown since its initial release, and in 2013 it won a place on the National Film Registry of the National Film Preservation Board. It had been only a moderate success in 1960, and received one Academy Award nomination for its score, composed by Elmer Bernstein. A protégé of Copland and pupil of Stefan Wolpe and Roger Sessions, Bernstein (who pronounced his surname Bern-steen and was not related to Leonard) had earned previous acclaim for his jazz-inflected music for The Man with the Golden Arm (1955). The Magnificent Seven did not win the Oscar for Best Music, which that year went to Ernest Gold for Exodus, but it was one of 13 Oscar nominations Bernstein received over the course of his career; he won in 1968 for Thoroughly Modern Millie. The title track of The Magnificent Seven gained wider fame when it was adopted as the music for Marlboro cigarette commercials. In that capacity, the “Marlboro Man” theme was drilled into America’s consciousness from 1962 until television cigarette advertising was banned in 1971.

Now turn back the clock to 1925, when vaudeville was at its apex, radio was just staking a place in the American home, and talking pictures were still a few years in the offing. The parlor piano had recently ceded its place to the Victrola, and the record industry was churning out new product as quickly as it could be pressed. The xylophone had proved popular from the earliest days of commercial recording, around the turn of the century. While the tone of most instruments could be captured only approximately by early audio technology, the xylophone’s acoustics proved ideal for the new medium and its clear, cheerful timbre became a favorite of record enthusiasts. Among the most successful exponents of the instrument were the brothers Joe and George Green. They produced a mountain of records under a succession of ensemble names, including Joe Green’s Novelty Orchestra, Joe Green’s International Novelty Orchestra, The Blue and White Marimba Band, and Klein’s Serenading Shoemakers. The elder of the two was Joseph Green. An acclaimed all-round percussionist, Joe Green studied timpani for three years with Joseph Zettelmann of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and became a percussionist with Sousa’s Band. As a xylophone soloist, he recorded 119 solo discs for the Victor Talking Machine Company from 1920 to 1930. One of

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**Xylophonia**

**Joe Green**

*Born:* February 9, 1892, in Omaha, Nebraska

* Died: * October 16, 1939, in New York City

*Work composed and premiered:* published in 1925; recorded in 1927

*New York Philharmonic premiere:* these concerts

*Estimated duration:* ca. 2 minutes

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*Joe Green, on xylophone, with musicians at the NBC Studios, 1928*