

*The Musical Leader*  
30 January 1913

### MAUD POWELL PLAYS FOR STEERAGE PASSENGERS

Maud Powell, who is having sensational success on the Pacific Coast went to Honolulu to spend the holidays and to rest between her appearances in California and those in the Northwest. On the steamer returning from Honolulu, on the line Wilhelmina, the violinist would not even talk music with her fellow passengers in the first-class cabin, but after dinner the last night out she told Captain Johnson that she would like to play. Five minutes later all the cabin passengers were gathered in the dining salon.

“Let the music begin,” they said.

“Bring the rest of the audience,” said Maud Powell.

By the rest, she explained, when somebody protested that all were present, she meant everybody on the ship—steerage passengers and as many of the crew as could be spared from their work. She had her way, and then, instead of playing a few pieces, she gave them a full concert.

What Miss Powell accomplished in Portland, Oregon, has only been done upon rare occasions. She appeared under the auspices of the Portland Musical Association of which Mrs. Warren E. Thomas is the president and the audience was so large that many had to be turned away. In order to accommodate this public, Miss Powell gave another concert a few days later when the audience was almost as large as the first. Miss Powell reports the very greatest success with the new violin tone picture “Up the Ocklawaha,” written for her by Marion Bauer. Notwithstanding the extremely modern idiom in which it is written Miss Powell says that she feels that the audience gets the message.

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education*

*Musical Courier*  
4 April 1918

### MAUD POWELL'S GOOD NATURE AND DEMOCRACY

Maud Powell, the violinist, demonstrated her good nature and democracy on a recent Western tour. The following excerpt from the Portland Oregonian tells how the violinist played an old Irish favorite for a policeman:

#### VIOLINIST GRANTS POLICEMAN'S WISH MAUD POWELL OPENS STAGE DOOR SO SERGEANT BURKE CAN HEAR OLD IRISH FAVORITE

Maud Powell, who played a return concert at the Heilig Theatre last night, did two unusual things. She opened the stage door to play a request number for a patrolling policeman who couldn't come in off his beat but wanted to hear her, and later she felt called upon to rebuke a couple of "cut ups" in the audience.

In addition, she gave an enjoyable return concert for a large audience.

Police Sergeant Burke was walking past the theatre and saw the sign: "Maud Powell. Violin Recital Tonight."

Now, the Heilig Theatre is on Sergeant Burke's beat, and he told Manager Pangle how proud he was of that fact.

"Sure, if I could only hear Miss Powell play Grainger's tune, 'Molly on the Shore,' I'd be happier," remarked the sergeant.

"Leave it to me," said Mr. Pangle, but an unexpected obstacle loomed up when the sergeant announced that, being on police duty, he could not step inside the theatre to hear Miss Powell play.

To ease the sergeant's conscience, he was persuaded to step near the stage door, which opens on the sidewalk, while Mr. Pangle got busy inside. He told H. Godfrey Turner, husband of Miss Powell, of the police sergeant's request, and Mr. Turner 'fixed it' with his wife.

Of course, "Molly on the shore" was not on Miss Powell's program, but the selection in question was dug up from her stock of music.

Miss Powell told the audience that "Molly" was asked for, and she played it joyously, with real "Hooray for Ould Ireland" in it.

“What do you think of that?” Sergeant Burke was asked, when “Molly” had been played.

“It’s great,” said the sergeant, fervently, “Much obliged.”

So Maud Powell showed her good nature and democracy.

The other incident caused the large audience of music patrons to rejoice. Miss Powell quietly, and unostentatiously, but none the less firmly, rebuked the ill mannered listeners.

Miss Powell’s music program was of satisfying, artistic excellence. Her biggest and most ambitious selection was the famous Arensky concerto in A minor, and it was rendered with brilliant effect. Her Strauss, Sibelius and Bazzini numbers were all favorites. The Rimsky-Korsakoff “Song of India” lived again in beautiful melody, and the American airs at the close awoke patriotic emotions.

Miss Powell was again kindly, almost affectionately, received by her large audience, and was often recalled. Her extra numbers were: Prelude in E major (Bach), “Serenade” (Jensen-Powell), “Humoresque” (Dvorak), and “Gypsy Dance” (Sarasate).

Arthur Loesser, pianist, deepened the favorable impression he received of his playing on his last visit. He played, in splendid style, numbers by Scriabin, Chopin, Liszt and other composers—also recall numbers.

— *The Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, March 10, 1918

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education*

*The Dayton (Ohio) Journal*  
*Editorial Appreciation*  
Wednesday, November 11, 1914

**MAUD POWELL**

A slender woman standing before a gaping or innocuous multitude! Of course, we know that we are talking about our neighbors; as for that, we are talking about ourselves and all of our kind, big and little.

But a bit of Almighty God stood there clothed in flowing modest draperies – in her hand was the wand of Merlin, and in her soul a power that Merlin never knew.

The art critics sneer at us, and they have the right to sneer – most of us are bumpkins or worse; very few of us know a fugue from a furbelow, and fewer still of us know a breath of divinity from a call to arms, or the rate on the stock market.

And yet we shouldn't scold, for practically all audiences are made up of people who are essentially ignorant of even the basic elements of art in any one of its manifold expressions.

So Maud Powell stood there, the other night, at the Victoria in Dayton – just as she has stood before the most exquisitely sensitive appreciation of the old world, and of the high souls of our own world, and she played, played with a hand that was in touch with her spirit and her brain; played as only Maud Powell can play; played as no one has played since the master of magic minstrelsy, the great Norwegian [Ole Bull], went forth to live in the infinite, a part of its inscrutable and wondrous mystery.

Just a woman! Of course she is a woman, a woman charged and filled with all those finer and higher responses to which mankind, represented in terms of common manhood, is blind and deaf and dumb. – A tall, slender, swaying creature, whose bow called angels, genii, spirits, fairies, gods and goddesses; and they came gladly.

We used to know her; and Time has touched her, but he has touched her, as he touches all of mortal fibre, gently. He has not robbed her of the gift which God placed in her hands so many years ago. That gift she has made to grow and multiply, even as the man, who employed his talent of gold rightly made it to grow and multiply. And can a spirit like hers ever grow old? No, and no again. She is of the beginning and of the present and of the ending, if there is an ending. Talent like hers can never die. She is one of the joy givers, one of those free spirits whose mission it is to give to the dull dwellers of earth a glimpse of the incomparable sweetness and glory of the ineffable lands – But what's the use?

One of the most distinguished among the New York critical journals said of Maud Powell last week:

“In all of the Powell readings, as exemplified last week, there speak a fine authority, a large sense of confident musicianship, a perfect artistic understanding, and a complete mastery of all the formal and mechanical bases which form the foundation of all musical performance. Maud Powell’s wide culture and exceptional intelligence were reflected in every measure of her playing, and the connoisseur appreciates at once that she has studied her violin not only with her fingers but also with her brain.”

And she speaks to the neophyte as well as to the initiated priest in the inner halls of the temple. We don’t know a tone from a tunnel; an impeccable musical mechanism from a moral monstrosity; but we do know that Maud Powell can play as only the angels in heaven can play; and that is a knowledge something worth while.

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education*

*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*  
November 21, 1909

**FAMOUS WOMAN VIOLINIST IS A MOTOR BOAT FIEND**

**Maud Powell Gets Recreation From Yacht and Motor Boat.**

**She Operates Her Own Launch  
Which is Aptly Christened "Fiddle-Dee-Dee."**

Maud Powell, the world's premier woman violinist, who is to appear here in the Symphony orchestra concert today, is a motor boat enthusiast. She, like other great artists, finds absolute need of mental relaxation and recreation in outdoor exercise.

No other woman has held the world so entranced with the faultless execution and sympathetic interpretation of her violin music. She has won the praise of royalty in Europe, as well as of the best known musical celebrities of the world.

Madame Powell's favorite recreation is yachting and whenever time and location permit she is to be found in her yacht, "Cremona," or in her trim launch, aptly named "Fiddle-Dee-Dee."

She keenly enjoys running this launch herself and it is a pleasure to see her at this pastime. The same grace and firmness, which are a part of her charm as a musician, characterize her operation of the motor boat.

The "Fiddle-Dee-Dee" seems peculiarly suited to Maud Powell. It is handsomely designed and moves gracefully through the water. It is equipped with a three-horse-power Ferra motor.

H. Godfrey Turner, manager for the great artist, says:

"The launch has never been the least trouble, in spite of the fact that Madame Powell runs the boat alone and was, previous to owning it, absolutely unfamiliar with any sort of motor."

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education.*

**Daily Tribune  
Bismarck, North Dakota  
17 April 1919**

**MAUD POWELL SCORES GENUINE TRIUMPH  
IN BISMARCK CONCERT**

Serene in the triumph of her magnetic art, and graciously chatting with her huge audience regarding the number she played. Maud Powell last evening redeemed Bismarck from its disgrace of a few years ago when it greeted this great violinist with a mere baker's dozen. The capacity house which received madam Powell last evening was not only a tribute to her genius but a triumph for the Thursday Musical club, which had the courage to dare the impossible.

The difference between a house which legend says contained just \$35 and a house which must have gone \$1,200 or better is the change which the Thursday Musical club has wrought in the artistic atmosphere of the capital city and its countryside.

Someone had forgotten the programs last evening. It was a fortunate omission, for it gave Madam Powell more opportunity to visit with her audience. If fate had not cast Maud Powell for a great violinist, she no doubt would have become another Ellen Terry [England's leading Shakespearean actress] or a Henrietta Crosman [American stage and film actress]. She has a wonderful stage presence; her wit is spontaneous and effervescent, her perceptions keen and sympathetic to a superlative degree.

Madam Powell opened her program with a crisp, tingling movement from Mozart's concerto in A major, after explaining that Mozart existed before Prussianism became a world bane and that the world had no war with art, no matter what its nationality. She noted the fact that the orchestra Symphonique of Paris in its first concert after the [World War I] armistice was signed [11 November 1918] opened with Mozart's concerto in A major.

Then there were two movements from a sonata in G major done by Lekeu, a young Belgian composer, who had given the world work of great promise before he died at the age of 22. Including a Walloon folk song, and something of the dignity and majesty which we have come to associate with this noble people, the audience found Lekeu's sonata especially interesting. There seemed to wail from the violin's quavering strings the agony and the passion and the triumph which have since August, 1914, set Belgium apart from and above all the other nations of the world.

The scherzo, "To Marguerite," by Grasse, who Madam Powell referred to as a "blind fiddler of New York," was especially enjoyed after Madam Powell had told its origin. She told of Grasse's wonderful sense of sound; of ears which were sight and hearing in one, and how "Marguerite" was developed from the tinkling little laugh of one of his favorite pupils "Marguerite," these four ascending notes being linked with the tones of her name.

The charming “May Night,” composed by Palmgren, a Finnish musician, for the piano, and arranged by Madam Powell for the violin, had, she explained, been rejected by a publishing house to which she mailed post-haste an arrangement which she completed in a frenzy of enthusiasm. And the audience, when the number was completed, could not but feel sorry for the music publishers who had rejected an opportunity to give the world something surprisingly beautiful for the violin.

Sarasate’s Spanish dance, in whose rhythm, lilt and weird melody the soul of that warm Latin land seems to be poured out, was splendidly handled by Madam Powell, whose major notes have a tonal quality attained by few violinists, wonderful in this depth and color.

Axel Skjerne, a fine-looking young Dane, almost boyish in his timid modesty, had three splendid numbers on the program—the Danse Negre of Cyril Scott; Mason’s Crystal Spring and the Punchinello of Rachmaninoff. These were followed by two encores—Grieg’s “Butterfly” and “Dwarfs.”

Madam Powell’s formal program was concluded with a “Song of India” by Rimsky-Korsakoff, the arrangement being Madam Powell’s own, and Bazzini’s racing, rollicking Dance of the Imps.

But the audience was not satisfied, and the artiste was recalled time and again. Among her encore numbers were the ever popular “Souvenir,” which has been played by every violinist great and small of modern times, and an American fantasia of negro folk songs, in which Madam Powell demonstrated the artistry of simplicity. As a finale she gave her audience the Humoresque, done only as a Maud Powell could do it.

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education.*

*Bohemian*  
New York  
September 1907

### MUSIC HATH THE POWER

Was it not of Beethoven that they used to tell the story, how he came one night into the room where a little girl lay sick and, sitting in the dusk, composed for her his wonderful “Moonlight Sonata”? And the marvelous effect it all had upon the young girl! There have been other examples of the power of music from the time that Orpheus smote his lyre to such good effect. Some incidents told by Miss Maud Powell, probably the world’s greatest woman violinist, will prove an interesting sidelight.

A few years ago, when she had just returned from a triumphal tour abroad, she was asked if she would not as a special favor play to a dear old lady, who, being a hundred years old, could not attend her concert. As the old lady seemed so interest and such a keen enthusiast, Miss Powell graciously consented. To the centenarian’s home she went, was cordially introduced, took her violin from the box and played, choosing a selection which she thought would appeal to one who understood music. She played well and she felt the thrill of satisfaction which always comes when one knows that one has done one’s best. It was, therefore, with unusual interest that she waited until she heard her ...nt hostess murmur to her companion: “Fine, fine, but—but what’s it all about?”

Upon another occasion a little colored girl stood near the door listening while Miss Powell played. The artist asked her if she was fond of music and if she could play any instrument.

“Can’t play nothin’,” she said, “but—“ she faltered.

“Well?” urged Miss Powell. “I kin dance,” was the triumphant rejoinder.

“That’s very nice,” said Miss Powell, “and would you dance for me?”

The little ragamuffin grew diffident, but at length “ ’lowed” she would if Miss Powell would play for her. Without a moment’s hesitation up went the violin to the chin, and here was a world-famous violinist playing a jig to which a tiny black creature danced. She danced well, too, and when it was over Miss Powell congratulated her.

“ ’Taint as good as I kin do, Missy,” said the child. You ought to see me dance when my mammy plays. And she *can* play. She is the best player in all the world.”

“And what instrument does your mammy play?” asked Miss Powell.

“The melodeon,” was the answer.

For a pure study in sardonic satire, however, the following is probably the best. Passing a cottage in a village of New York, Miss Powell once heard the tones of a violin. The player seemed above the average, and being curious to know who he was, she made an excuse of asking for a glass of water. After a little chat Miss Powell explained who she was, and asked to be allowed to play his fiddle. When he had heard her, the youth was enthusiastic and declared that her playing was so beautiful that he would never dare play again, that he would give up the violin then and there. Much impressed by the compliment, Miss Powell departed. The next day, however, she happened to pass the house again. As she approached she remembered the incident of the previous afternoon and felt rather sorry for the poor youth. A wave of compassion came over her, a flood of sympathy, and then, just then the notes of a violin came to her. Her devoted admirer, who was *never* again going to play, was sawing away—at the current popular song!

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education.*

*The Boston Herald*  
Friday, October 4, 1907

**Mme. Powell Pleases Large Audience with Admirable Performance.**

**By Philip Hale**

Worcester, Oct. 2, 1907. The second concert of the 50<sup>th</sup> festival of the Worcester County Musical Association was given this afternoon in Mechanics' Hall. The programme was as follows: "The Steppe," Moskowski; concerto in G minor, op. 26, for violin, Bruch, Maud Powell; air from Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor" Miss Mignon Aurelle; symphony No. 6, "Pathetic," Tschaikowsky. Mr. Kneisel conducted the orchestra, made up of Boston symphony men, with Mr. Roth as concert master.

The feature of this concert was the masterly performance of Bruch's concerto by Mme. Powell. Last spring her interpretation of the violin concerto by Jean Sibelius, a genius who is also, alas a slave to alcohol, shone with uncommon lustre in a brilliant Boston season. In that concerto she was called upon to suggest legendary deeds of derring-do, to remind one of old myths of a primitive race, to be elementally tragic, fearsome of cruel gods, gay with barbaric joviality. This afternoon she played the concerto by Bruch with its pleasing sentiment of a household order, its approved and orthodox bravura; and in this concerto, which appeals at once to an audience of every-day nature, she won the praise and the sincere admiration of the amateur and of the professional musician.

There are few violinists, men or women — I do not include infant phenomena, for they are fortunately in a class by themselves — who display so bountifully and so authoritatively the most admirable qualities, commanding virility and true tenderness, who play both from the mind and from the heart, and this with a mechanical proficiency that is so in the hand and in the bow that its security and its ease escape the notice of the seeker after the sensational. Recalled, she played the familiar prelude of Bach without accompaniment.

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education.*

*The Evening World*  
 New York City  
 November 1, 1911  
*Excerpt*

**MAUD POWELL'S RECITAL  
 ACCENTUATED BY A SPEECH**

Maud Powell, the distinguished American violinist, was giving a recital at the Lyceum Theatre yesterday afternoon, when she astonished her large audience by making a little speech that was as effective as her playing. It was before the third part of her programme. She came forward carrying an open letter. "The programme announces that I shall play Debussy's Golliwog's Cakewalk," said she. "But I hold in my hand a letter that says I shall be fined if I do. It isn't called a fine, but a copyright tax. Now, I put this trifle of Debussy's on my programme because I thought it might amuse you; but it isn't worth the fine, I assure you, and I shan't play it. Instead I will substitute two Hungarian dances by Brahms." The unrestrained laughter that followed was as marked as the applause. . . . .

*The Globe*  
 November 1, 1911  
*Excerpt*

**Mme. Powell's Recital**

. . . . .

Before the next group of pieces Mme. Powell appeared with a paper in her hand and informed the audience that she would take it into her confidence. Then in a little speech (we did not know that Mme. Powell was an orator, but this speech in its way was a triumph of composition and delivery!) She told her hearers that the paper in her hand was a letter just received from the French Society of Authors, Composers, and Publishers of Music, informing her that she would be "fined," (that was not the word used, she admitted, but the fact) if she played "The Golliwog's Cake Walk" from Debussy's "Children's Corner." The piece Mme. Powell characterized as a charming bit of musical pleasantry. "But the fine," she said, "is altogether out of proportion to the importance of the composition, and with your leave we will dispense with the joke." She then added that to preserve the balance of the programme, she would play two of Brahm's Hungarian Dances.

The cordial applause showed that Mme. Powell had her audience with her, and she at once proceeded to play the group, consisting of her own arrangement, of a Coleridge-Taylor negro melody, "Deep River"; a scherzo by Harry Gilbert, and "Wellenspiel," by Edwin Grasse, and the two Brahms dances as arranged by Joachim—all in their several ways delightful compositions and all played admirably. . . .

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education.*

**KAS Note:** Excerpt from Karen A. Shaffer, “Pioneering the Violin Recital,” *Maud Powell Favorites* (Brevard, NC: The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education, 2009).

### Missing Transcriptions

Maud Powell undoubtedly made numerous transcriptions that have not been found. Two with interesting histories are her transcriptions of Claude Debussy’s “Golliwogg’s Cake-Walk” and Arthur Farwell’s “American Indian Melodies.”

In 1908 Debussy completed his Children’s Corner Suite for piano, which included “Golliwogg’s Cake-Walk.” Maud Powell transcribed this piece for violin and piano and performed it as early as March 4, 1910, in Aberdeen, Washington. She dedicated her transcription to her husband, H. Godfrey Turner, who possessed a charming sense of humor. She delighted her Los Angeles audiences with this “quaintly roguish” and “ingeniously humorous” piece.

In her program note for her recital in Santa Barbara, California, on March 28, 1910, Powell announced that she had just received permission from Debussy’s Paris publisher Durand & Cie to transcribe “Golliwogg’s Cake-Walk” for violin and piano. She recorded her transcription of the piece for the Victor Company on May 25, 1910, with pianist George Falkenstein, but for unknown reasons, the recording was never published.

Strangely enough, later in 1910, a violin-piano transcription of “Golliwogg’s Cake-Walk” was copyrighted in the United States by Gaston Choisnel, a partner in Durand & Cie. Maud Powell’s transcription was never published and no manuscript has been found.

Apparently Powell was content to perform the Choisnel version and planned to include it in her New York recital on October 31, 1911. But just before she came on stage, the French Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers presented her with a royalty claim of \$25 for her proposed performance. Powell addressed the audience: “The music is just a bit of harmless drollery. As the fine is out of all proportion to the importance of the piece, I think we will do without Mr. Debussy’s little joke.” [“MUSIC AND MUSICIANS,” *NEW YORK EVENING SUN*, 2 NOVEMBER 1911.]

She substituted two Brahms-Joachim Hungarian dances, which so delighted the audience that she was compelled to add a third.

This incident took place at a time when the question of imposed performance royalties was the subject of sometimes heated debate, so Powell’s manner of dealing with the demand received a good deal of attention in the press. After the recital, one expert remarked as he was leaving the hall: “If Maud Powell plays a piece, the music stores will sell on the same day at least fifty copies of it.” [“MUSIC AND DRAMA, MAUD POWELL AT HER BEST,” *NEW YORK EVENING POST*, 1 NOVEMBER 1911.]

Powell never again performed “Golliwogg’s Cake-Walk.” . . .