

**“WE SHALL EVOLVE A REAL SCHOOL  
OF NATIONAL ART, LITERATURE AND MUSIC”**

– MAUD POWELL

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This new "finding ourselves" musically is not a mere passing phase. The question is so large and involves so many interlocked developments in other arts and sciences, to say nothing of our national soul awakening, that it were impossible to go into the subject thoroughly in a few words. I venture to hazard, however, that music will be democratized and brought to the great public more than the world has dreamed of heretofore. The process will not so much benefit music per se, as it will benefit that same great public more than the world has dreamed of heretofore.

America has been the land of opportunity for untold thousands of emigrants who have come to us from all quarters of the earth. Their children have received, in most instances, a pretty good common school education and have gone out into the world to succeed better than they could have hoped to succeed in the old country.

What has this done to us as a nation? We are quick, brainy, full of mental vitality and nervous energy; we are straightforward, democratic, practical. We have amazing inventiveness and have established institutions for the benefit of the great public. We have most of the virtues that one might care to enumerate--but not for one moment can we pride ourselves on being cultured. (The reader must not confuse culture with obnoxious "Kultur," which is another thing altogether.)

Now I feel that as we have raised standards of education, and of opportunity for the *masses* in this great democracy of ours and have given every man a chance to live and to have his say in the government, so shall music in its process of democratization gain a great vitality and make a new place for itself in the world. It will become a necessary part of the people's individual life, their family life, their civic and national life. What the art gains in this evolution of robustness it will lose in distinction and "apartness." It will be democratic—not aristocratic. It will be cast in trenchant, unbefurrowed workday form. It will strike between the eyes and find its way straight to elemental reaction in the heart—as Sousa's marches find their way thither through the toes!

Out of all this, in good time, say in several generations, we shall probably evolve a real school of national art, literature and music. Why think about that now? Such things must come, evolve, normally—else they are likely to be artificial and unlasting.

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