

**COMMENT ON AMERICAN COMPOSERS  
BY  
MAUD POWELL**

*In 1896, addressing the Minneapolis Ladies' Thursday Musicale, which sponsored a concert in honor of their local musicians, Powell wrote:*

“Our American painters produce few large canvases for the reason that they are not marketable. In a somewhat like manner our American composers produce few large symphonic works. In the midst of strife for bread and butter it is a wild venture to spend time, energy and even money on a symphony, a suite or a concerto that is almost sure to be shelved after one or two performances, or more likely without any performance at all. In the majority of cases the shelving is deserved. Why? Because the young musician has had little or no opportunity to make practical tests in instrumentation; he has had no chance to hear his ideas literally translated into sound.<sup>1</sup> Cannot our women, who have worked so nobly and with such wide-spread influence for the advancement of music, extend their field of action in this direction, giving the young composer opportunity to hear actually, in orchestral presentation, and not in groping or more often too flattering imagination, the tone-creations of his own brain?”

*This comment was published in the program, along with comments by Amy Beach and H.E. Krehbiel.*

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

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<sup>1</sup> Program, MPS Archive.