

-Rhapsodia-
The Maud Powell

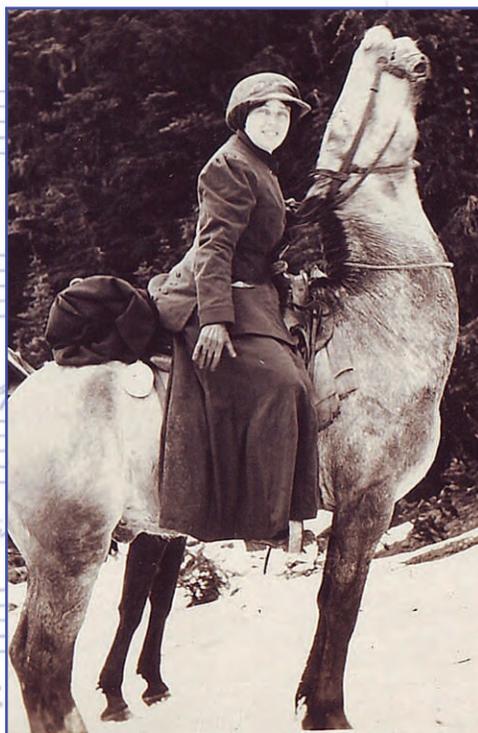
Signature

Lilian Elkington - Op. 2

Women in Music



f *mezzo*
**Elfrida Andrée, Rachel Barton Pine, Gena Branscombe, Lilian Elkington,
Berta Geissmar, Mary Davenport Engberg, Alice Mary Smith**



"Lost and Found" - Autumn 2008

The Maud Powell Signature, Women in Music

Lost and Found
Autumn 2008, Vol. II, No. 3

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The Maud Powell Signature, Women in Music

The March of the Women
Autumn 2008, Vol. II, No. 3

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Lost and Found —

an attic, a garden shed, a used bookshop — How many women in music have suffered similar fates?

During the summer a musician friend decided it was time to visit her attic and go through all the music stored there to see what might still be of interest or what she might find homes for elsewhere. What started as a simple clearing out task turned into a journey of discovery, one that led her to find music by forgotten women composers going back to the 19th and 20th centuries – Ida Lester, Lily Belle Stroud, Dorothy Lee, Kate Vannah, Julia Klumpkey. Their music was mixed in with that of a few women who have not toppled into the black hole of obscurity – Amy Beach, Cecile Chaminade and Augusta Holmes.

Any time I see a name new to me I do a little research. I found nothing about Ida Lester; learned that Kate Vannah (1855-1926) was a prolific composer and a poet from Maine (so why do we have her represented on only one recording?), discovered a Lily Belle Stroud but she turned out to be someone other than the composer (I think, same name but born too late to have been the composer). I learned that the prolific Dorothy Lee was actually a man – John Stepan Zamecnik who composed music for silent films. Now that was quite a switch because most times women composers assumed the names of men to improve their opportunities! I think of Lucie Johnstone in England who became “the very popular” Lewis Carey, or of Augusta Holmes in France who became Hermann Zenta – for a while anyway. Of course, I wonder how popular Lucie Johnstone’s music would have been if she had written as Lucie Johnstone instead of Lewis Carey!

Julia Klumpkey (or Klumpke) proved to be the only seemingly obscure woman from the attic collection who was a bit more visible. She is not as lost as some women composers are, thanks to the work of Maryalice Mohr at the New England Conservatory (NEC), where she found the Klumpkey collection. Klumpkey was born in San Francisco in 1870 and spent part of her childhood in Europe, completing her education in Paris. She moved to Boston, where she studied violin and composition at the NEC. She eventually returned to Europe where she studied violin with Eugene Ysaie and composition with Nadia Boulanger.

Klumpkey became head of the violin department at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, served as director of the Spartanburg Symphony Orchestra, went on a world tour and met Gandhi in India, eventually returned to San Francisco where she died in 1961 at the age of 91. Her compositions include a tone poem “The Twin Guardians of the Golden Gate” from 1939, string music and probably a lot more, but someone needs to take on a major study of Klumpkey for us to learn more about

this bold woman who built several careers for herself during a long life. Her four older sisters were also very accomplished women. It a pity that Klumpkey’s legacy is so little known and that I only learned about her because a friend found her music in an attic.

The Lost Are Found — Sometimes

We can only begin to imagine how many other gifted women have suffered similar fates but I prefer to look at the positive side and think about the women who have been saved from total oblivion by women and men – yes, men – who have stumbled upon their legacies and have worked hard to restore them. You will meet some of these women in this issue of *The Maud Powell Signature* – Alice Mary Smith, Lilian Elkington, Berta Geissmar, Elfrida Andrée, Gena Branscombe, Mary Davenport Engberg. While Andrée has never really been lost, little is known of her and her music outside of her native Sweden. Geissmar and Davenport Engberg left intangible legacies – Geissmar as the administrator of the Berlin Philharmonic that notoriously anti-woman bastion and Davenport Engberg as a conductor in the American Northwest.

The story of Lilian Elkington describes the fate of too many women in music. Until David J. Brown found manuscripts of four of her compositions – one orchestral work, one song, and two pieces for violin and piano -- in a used bookshop in Worthing, England -- no one had heard of her. That is, no one had heard of her as a composer but those who attended churches in Erdington and Sutton Coldfield in England knew of her as an organist in one church and organist and choir master in the other. We owe David Brown a great deal of credit for his persistence in bringing Lilian Elkington back into the public awareness. His first effort resulted in a performance of Elkington’s orchestral work *Out of the Mist*, some 66 years after its premiere in 1922. Then in 2006, the BBC Symphony Orchestra recorded this evocative tone poem on the Dutton Epoch label – 85 years after Elkington had composed it. David paid a mere £3.75, or about seven dollars, for Elkington’s legacy – “How could I leave it there?” he asked himself.

Alice Mary Smith never dropped completely from sight and her family had the foresight to save nearly all of her manuscripts. However, a number of them were stored in a leaking garden shed while information about her life was stored Kellogg’s Corn Flakes boxes at another location! That made the job of Ian Graham-Jones all the more

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Lost and Found

challenging when he set out to catalogue and produce editions of her music and to piece together her life. But like David Brown, Ian persevered and not only do we have editions of her music available now, we have a recording as well.

In Sweden, Eva Öhrström has published a major biography of Elfrida Andrée that unfortunately is not available in English while in the United States, Susan Pickett has published editions of Andrée's music and several recording companies have recorded her compositions, including her symphony.

In Canada, Anya Laurence has helped preserve the legacy of Gena Branscombe who has not exactly faded into obscurity but whose work deserves to be better known than it is and by a much wider audience. These are significant achievements by dedicated scholars who believe that the work of women in music merits recognition, performance, publication and recording.

The task becomes a bit more difficult when a woman in music leaves no tangible legacy. Such is the case with orchestra administrator Berta Geissmar and conductor Mary Davenport Engberg. Annemarie Vogt, who lives in Berlin, where Geissmar worked for the Berlin Philharmonic, found that her best source of information was Geissmar's own memoir *The Baton and the Jackboot* (the title is watered down in the U.S. to the bland *Two Worlds of Music*). In her work on conductor Mary

Davenport Engberg, Elizabeth Juliana Knighton was fortunate that original source material and photographs were available in Washington State, but until Elizabeth came along Engberg was a footnote in music history.

Not Enough Women Have Been Found

Clearly, women in music need champions. Too many have been lost and not enough have been found. I think of the struggles early women had and how they were motivated driven by the creative drive just like men but had few if any outlets for their compositions or opportunities as performers and certainly not as conductors. Hard to believe that only within the past decade or so have women finally been allowed to conduct at all and that only Marin Alsop and JoAnn Falletta are conducting important orchestras in the United States. A sad commentary on our times and on attitudes towards women.

One of the main reasons we are publishing *The Maud Powell Signature* is to ensure that women past and present will not be lost and that readers and scholars will be encouraged to delve more deeply into the lives of women in music and share with others what they learn. No woman deserves to have her musical legacy left to moulder in a leaking garden shed or to have her life reduced to papers stuffed into empty cereal boxes.

Pamela Blevins

Have you ever heard of...

Clara Anna Gerlach Korn, who was born in Berlin on January 30, 1866 and died in New York City on July 14, 1940. A native of Germany, where she studied with Bruno Klein, she was brought to the United States at an early age, and received her education in the New Jersey School System where she also later taught for a few years. Advised by Tchaikowsky to concentrate on composition, she received a scholarship in 1901 to the National Conservatory of Music in New York City, where she studied with Horatio Parker and Antonin Dvorak.

From 1893 to 1898 she taught theory at the conservatory and later became head of the piano department at the De Bauer School of Music and Languages in New York. Her compositions include an opera, *Our Last War*; a piano concerto; a piano sonata; a symphonic poem, *Morpheus*; two suites for orchestra (No.1, *Ancient Dances*; No.2, *Rural Snapshots*); a violin suite, *Op.10* and several songs.

Or...

Elise Fellows White. She was a concert violinist and composer who was born in Skowhegan, Maine, on November 14, 1873. Elise began the study of the violin at the age of eight and later studied with Adamowski and Campanari. She began playing in concerts in the Boston area and studied for seven years with Franz Kneisel.

She made three appearances in Vienna during 1891-92 and in 1895-96 was managed by the Wolfsohn Concert Bureau, resulting in concert tours of Canada and the United States. 1896 saw her in the first violin section of the New York Women's Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Carl Lachmund. She was the composer of 12 published songs; one violin concert piece; three choral numbers (words and music) for women's voices with violin and Madrigals for Thirty Women's Voices with violin. She contributed over fifty articles to various music journals and publications. She died, penniless, at the age of eighty on March 22, 1953.

Women of Notes by Anya Laurence

Sirens

Readers of this magazine will be familiar with the fact that there have been many women composers, throughout history. They are fortunate. I was educated at a time when there was no knowledge of this work and I never questioned the lack of information. Then, in my professional life as a pianist and Musical Director of the Ambache Chamber Orchestra, I stumbled upon a description of a Piano Concerto by Germaine Tailleferre. I was curious, and set about getting hold of a score. This took some doing. However it seemed to me to be a delightful piece, bubbling like champagne, and we gave it's UK premiere; the press said it was all style and no content, and the musicians said it would be in the standard repertoire if it had been by a man.

The press response illustrated an issue which has recurred since then - that people bring all sorts of attitudes to their listening; a pervasive one is that women are no good as composers. A second is that they could only write pretty little 'salon' bon-bons, and certainly not symphonies. Other generalizations include that men are noisy and women are quiet: George Bernard Shaw reviewed a Prom concert as follows *"When E M Smyth's heroically brassy Overture to 'Anthony & Cleopatra' was finished, and the composer called to the platform, it was observed with stupefaction that all that tremendous noise had been made by a lady"*. This rather suggests that Beethoven was male, Chopin female, and Mozart both.

Sometimes women have been accepted as composers by being included in the male fraternity; history relates that the famous violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim said to Clara Schumann in 1870 *"As far as art is concerned, you are man enough"*. She actually transcended the traditional gender divide through her phenomenal talent. Amy Beach received another version of that compliment from her colleague George Chadwick; about her Gaelic Symphony he said: *"I always feel a thrill of pride when I hear a work by one of us, and as such you will have to be counted one of the boys."*

All this begs the question of whether women are different, musically speaking, from men. When I'm feeling aggressive about it, to "what is music by women like?" I reply with "what is music by men like?" In other words, I think it's down to a person's character, not their gender. The whole of an individual's experience goes into how they express themselves and what they express. We all have a different version of that 'stew', which is what makes life interesting. However, we don't get rid of the prejudices around this music just by saying that. Through a quarter of a century of performing and recording music by women composers, I have seen attitudes shift from the one mentioned above, to a newspaper review headlined



Germaine Tailleferre, a member of Les Six whose members included Milhaud, Poulenc and Honegger.

(Lance Bowling Collection)

Critics said Tailleferre's Piano Concerto was all style and no content. Musicians said it would be in the standard repertoire if it had been by a man.

Sirens

"I once thought I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose - there has never yet been one able to, and why should I expect to be the one?"

Clara Wieck Schumann
Diary entry 1839



Clara Schumann won massive fame as one of the great piano virtuosi of the 19th century but doubted her own creative ability.

(Maud Powell Society)

with 'Vive la musique des femmes!' I think there is a little more willingness to encounter this music these days; however The Proms and BBC Radio 3 still program very little of it. Six women composers are featured in the 2008 Proms, out of a total of 117.

Having discovered the pleasures of playing music by Tailleferre, I realized that there must be more music by women to explore. I have spent nearly a quarter of a century digging around in various libraries and on the internet, and have come across a lot more fine works. With my Orchestra, I have given 45 premieres, and enjoyed discovering this new (old) music. My musical interests lie mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries, and it has been a great pleasure to find women composers who were able to pursue their musical activities through their love of music and despite society's discouragement.

I am a keen Mozartian, so I was full of envy for Marianne Martinez. The tenor Michael Kelly wrote *"Mozart was in almost constant attention at her parties and I have heard him play duets of his own composition on the piano-forte with her"*. I've played some very lively Concertos of hers; she also wrote Cantatas, a large Oratorio, and the first known Symphony by a woman. She had been taught by Haydn, and was also a fine singer and keyboard player, and an ambitious composer, so was an all-round musician.

Another woman I have great respect for was Louise Farrenc (1804-75). Like me, she seems to have been

interested in playing with others, and she left a large body of chamber works, some of which are getting known again today. She was a multi-talented person who played the piano, composed, taught, and researched musical history about a century before that became fashionable. She made the wise move of marrying a music publisher, Aristide Farrenc, who published many of her works. With him she explored the keyboard repertoire of the Baroque period, and together they published 24 historical volumes of *'Le Trésor des Pianistes'*. She also illustrates another of those attitudes: people sometimes liken her music to that of her teachers - Hummel and Reicha - even though she has a distinctively personal sense of harmony. I love her chamber music and enjoy the interactive conversations they include, and her effervescent energy.

Even if they don't know the music, there are two names that people remember, thanks to male associations: Schumann and Mendelssohn. However there are pitfalls here, with the women being accused of copying their men. Personally I find Fanny's music more exciting than that of Felix, as she is so passionate. And Clara has her own unique voice, full of noble melancholy, which is different from Robert's contrast of inner and outer.

They are also good examples of further attitudes. Fanny was lucky in receiving the same musical education as Felix, and like him was a child prodigy pianist. Despite this, it was not socially acceptable for a woman to be a

CONTINUED

Sirens

composer in those days and her father wrote her a letter which has become musical history's most famous discouragement: *"Perhaps for Felix music will become his profession, while for you it will always remain but an ornament; never can and never should become the foundation of your existence"*. Well, it was a fundamental in her being, and she expressed this by running, performing in, and composing for the Sunday Musicales at their house in Berlin; and so we have received some fine songs, piano pieces and a wonderful Piano Trio from her. If you want to get to know her intensity, these are fascinating works to explore.

And Clara, despite massive fame as one of the greatest piano virtuosi of the 19th Century, shows us how women often doubt their talents. Her diary in 1839 said *"I once thought I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose - there has never yet been one able to, and why should I expect to be the one?"* She was very busy performing, teaching, looking after Robert and bringing up seven children, so it's not too surprising she didn't have a lot of time for composing as well. People say that boys are having a hard time keeping up with girls now, so perhaps times are changing.

Competitiveness seems to be a regular human attribute. Going back to Ethel Smyth, she had a favorite legend about rivalry: one afternoon, when Adam was asleep, Eve, anticipating the great God Pan, bored some holes in a reed and began to what we call 'pick out a tune'. Thereupon Adam awoke and roared *"Stop that horrible noise; besides which, if anyone is going to make it, it's not you but me"*. I have difficulty understanding why people think women can't compose, unless it's a kind of competitiveness. Could it be that because women make babies, men feel the need to keep writing symphonies to themselves? The trouble with competition is that it sometimes makes people think about showing off, and not the quality of the music.

What has interested me in my explorations of music by women, has been finding their individual voices. Although, to put people in context, sometimes it can be useful to say that there is a similarity with a more famous composer. For me, what makes the music interesting is finding someone who has a unique way with sounds, melodies, harmonies and form. There are two American women I've been particularly struck by. Amy Beach's music is more played and known these days; when I first came across her Piano Quintet in F sharp minor, I was very impressed by the sensuality, and the strength of the music. In a completely different way Louise Talma is also very striking; as a neo-Classical composer, her music is very focussed and succinct. We did a new recording of her chamber works for Naxos *American Classics*, and her clarity and imagination impressed me hugely. I included some of her children's pieces *Soundshots* on the disc, and found them amusing and engaging. Another of those



Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel received the same musical education as her younger brother Felix but was told by her father that "music never can and never should become the foundation of your existence."

(Maud Powell Society)

attitudes is that women don't innovate in their compositions. The only answer to that question is to listen to the music and see for yourself whether it speaks to you, and whether you find an authentic voice there. Talma made me smile - that's no mean achievement.

Over the last quarter century I have engaged with numerous women composers, and I thought it might be helpful if I made my discoveries available to other people. So I have put my knowledge and experience of the music on to the web site www.womenofnote.co.uk. I've included all the practical information, like scoring, length, access to the parts, in the hopes that people will go and explore the music for themselves. I hope it will enable people to program the works I've played. If you're curious to know what it sounds like, our six recordings of women composers are available on www.ambache.co.uk/records.htm.

I think that the way to change all these attitudes that I've written about is for the music to become a normal part of concert and broadcast programming. The more people hear this music, the more it will be understood and accepted. Is there anything you can do to get it heard?

Lest we forget...

Gwynne Kimpton - A British Woman Conductor



(Editor's Note: In this new feature we will publish articles from the past about women in music that provide information not readily available now. Our first article focuses on the forgotten British conductor Gwynne Kimpton, who was interviewed "*sempre accelerando*" in June 1924 by critic Marion Scott. Her article appeared in the June 21, 1924 edition of the *Christian Science Monitor*.¹)

by Marion M. Scott

On several accounts the inaugural concert of the British Women's Symphony Orchestra was a notable occasion. Here was a full orchestra "manned" entirely by women, conducted by a woman, Miss Gwynne Kimpton, giving a concert appropriately enough in Queen's Hall under the immediate patronage of H.M. The Queen, with women as the soloists, namely Lady Maud Warrender and Miss Beatrice Harrison, a program made up exclusively of works by British composers of whom nearly half were women, and with the leading woman composer, Dame Ethel Smyth, present to give the enterprise her benediction and to speak on its behalf. Great was the amusement when she admitted, in the course of her speech, that the idea of a woman conductor was so unheard of that when told that Lady Folkestone conducted an orchestra, she regarded it as something rather shocking!

Though no longer "shocking," women conductors are still very scarce. How Miss Kimpton became one formed the theme of the talk [I] had with her a few days after the concert. It was an interview "*sempre accelerando*," begun in a drawing-room, continued along the road to Victoria Station, and ended at the train. There are no delays or wastings of time about this tall woman, who drives straight on with her work and play like a perpetual sea breeze.

Beginnings

A friend once remarked, "Wherever Gwynne Kimpton goes, orchestras spring up." This is true. Though she began her professional career as a violinist she has always been connected with orchestral work. Even when she was still a student at the Guildhall School of Music she led – and often conducted – the orchestra. Later at schools where she taught and in the Strings Club, which she founded, little bands grew up that did increasingly good work, and year-by-year the scope of her activities widened. All this time she was teaching herself to conduct, and though she would probably say there is still plenty she wants to learn, the success recently achieved by the British Women's Symphony Orchestra is a definite landmark not only in her own career as an artist but in the whole women's movement as it concerns music.

"When did it all begin?" she said in reply to a question. "Why, in 1910, in Berlin. I was there on a holiday and had just one afternoon left, and I went into Bote and Bock's and said, 'Can you tell me of a good concert to go to?' I found the Philharmonic Orchestra was giving a children's concert so I went. It lasted from 2:30 till 6. Think of it! and how English kiddies would be out of doors playing in Kensington Gardens most of the time.

"But it gave me an idea – the German children so enjoyed their Haydn and Mozart. It was after that I started my children's concerts at Steinway and the Aeolian Hall. They ran for five

years and then there were the Bromley Orchestral Concerts. Ruth Howell, the violinist, collected the string players for me – the best women-talent available – but the woodwind and brass were men professionals from some of the leading orchestras. I don't believe in antagonism between men and women – I believe they ought to co-operate – and the men orchestral players have always been good friends and so helpful. I say I learned to conduct on them – with them playing in the band they just carried me along.

Women Wind Players Rare

"But I sometimes wonder whether I ought to have had all women from the outset. Only it was so hard to get capable women wind players. There was no good market for them and they didn't find it worthwhile to learn the instruments. Even now they are usually forced to take work in the tea shops and cinemas and thus when they come to the Symphony Orchestra they have to learn all their classical repertoire from the beginning, whereas the good men are getting classical music all the time in their daily work. That's one difference, and it has meant a lot of training in the British Women's Orchestra. But the brass are coming on nicely now and things will improve. It's a question of providing a market in classical music for the brass and wood wind.

"The Women's Symphony Orchestra was absolutely a logical necessity, don't you agree? How long have we been rehearsing together? Since last July. Oh! I nearly forgot to tell you that our own real new stunt is co-operation. The orchestra aims at giving regular concerts in London, at working up a repertoire of all the best music, and at taking engagements (collectively and individually) for operas, oratorios, festivals, schools, etc. But our special idea is to develop a scheme of co-operative concerts by which solo artists may be enabled to give concerts on co-operative terms sharing risk and profits, instead of, as at present, being obliged to engage both hall and orchestra and to accept the entire risk.

"Another of our plans is to allow young soloists to rehearse with the orchestra on payment of a fee. At present there are so few opportunities for gaining that sort of experience and how is anyone to do his best when for the first time he suddenly finds himself playing in – say – Albert Hall with a full orchestra and no experience at his back. I know I couldn't, could you?"

¹ To learn more about Marion Scott, see "The Society of Women Musicians," *The Maud Powell Signature*, June 2008.

Gwynne Kimpton's full name was Edith Gwynne Kimpton. I have not been able to learn when or where she was born. She died on November 26, 1930, following surgery. If readers have additional information to share on Kimpton or the British Women's Symphony Orchestra, please contact the editor, Pam Blevins at pblevins@erols.com.

Elfrida Andrée



The Elevation of Womankind

Elfrida Andrée:

*"to give freedom to the bound...
and courage to the frightened"*

My first exposure to the name Elfrida Andrée came in 1991, through Aaron Cohen's *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers*. It offered just enough information to whet my appetite. Shortly thereafter I found Andrée's *Piano Quintet* at the Library of Congress, which inspired me to look for the rest of her works. Since all of this happened during a time when internet access to library collections was in infancy, I felt like I was looking for a needle in a haystack.

I obtained a short biographical article about Elfrida as well as a published book of 150 family letters written by Elfrida's sister, Fredrika Andrée Stenhammar, who was an opera singer.¹ The very existence of this book told me that the Andrée sisters were a known entity in their native Sweden, but all of these resources were in Swedish.

Like much of my research about women composers, I felt eerily guided and blessed. Such was the case with finding a Swedish translator. The mother of one of my college students was born in Sweden, and now lived nearby. She wasn't a musician, so would she be interested? She told me that just the week before she was commiserating with two Swedish friends that their native language ability was faltering owing to lack of practice. She whole-heartedly dove into the translations.

In the meantime, I looked for Elfrida's manuscripts. My investigative instincts told me to start looking for Elfrida's trail at the library of the city where she died: Göteborg, Sweden. Her manuscripts were not there, but they guided me to the Statens Musikbibliotek in Stockholm (The Music Library of Sweden, formerly Musikaliska akademiens bibliotek). Indeed, over 100 of her manuscripts are meticulously preserved there, along with her diaries, letters, and memorabilia. The head music librarian, Anna Lena Holm, has been an indispensable resource as well.

I now own photocopies or microfilms of nearly all of Elfrida's works and have published several editions of her music (Hildegard Publishing Company). In the interim, I have come to greatly admire the composer and the woman. She was highly gifted, determined, and certainly gritty in the face of enormous obstacles.

Eight years after my quest began for information about Elfrida, the Swedish pianist and historian, Eva Öhrström, wrote a wonderful biography, *Elfrida Andrée* (available only in Swedish).² Because my translator wasn't doing a word-for-word, or page-for-page translation of the various resources, I cannot offer many detailed footnotes. So I must begin by giving full credit to Eva Öhrström. But without my faithful translator, Sonja Moseley, Elfrida's story in English would be sketchier indeed. Additional information comes from my own experiences performing and editing Elfrida's music.

A Outstanding Education

Today, Visby, Sweden, where Elfrida was born, is a town of about 20,000 people. The mid-nineteenth century Visby was less populated, but it was then, as it is now, the main town on the

island of Gotland, which is about 50 miles southeast from the mainland of Sweden, and about 100 miles by boat from the capitol of Stockholm. Göteborg (Gothenburg), where Elfrida's career unfolded, is on the southwestern edge of Sweden, and is currently a city of 500,000.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Visby's town physician was Dr. Andreas Andrée, who has been described as a highly original personality—a liberal in politics, a music lover, intrigued by new ideas like photography, street lighting, regular bathing, and physical fitness, and considered radical for his notion that women should be given equal opportunity for education.

Dr. Andrée and his wife, Lovisa, had three children, two girls and a boy, all of whom were trained in music as children. Their two daughters became highly regarded musicians: Fredrika, born in 1836, and Elfrida, born 19 February 1841. The Andrée home was often the focal point for music in Visby. Sometimes these performances were quite casual: musicians in Visby gathering at the Andrée home to play chamber music together and friends dropping by to listen. Other performances seem much more formal: choirs and soloists invited to "take the stage" in the family home. It seems very likely that the Andrée home had a salon, where a fairly large number of people could gather for formal performances.

Dr. Andrée provided an outstanding liberal arts and music education for his children, which for girls was rare in Swedish society. The cost of their education came out of Andrée's own pocket, so he was apparently a man of financial means. When his two daughters were teenagers he sent them elsewhere for advanced training.

Fredrika was sent to Europe at age fifteen to study voice, piano, and composition. She began in Leipzig, in 1851, at the conservatory that Felix Mendelssohn established, but by 1851 both Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn had died, and Clara and Robert Schumann had moved away from Leipzig.

We learn from Fredrika's letters to her family that her teachers in Leipzig characterized her compositions as "nice little pieces," but that she wanted to be an opera singer.³ In fact, as you might expect from a teenager, she said she wanted to be a "famous" opera singer. Fredrika commented on the prevailing "Liszt school" of piano playing, which emphasized virtuosity. She wrote, "Why are beauty and purity in music so often adulterated by trickery?"⁴

Fredrika performed in Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna, and then moved on to Paris in 1857 for further study. She began to have important debuts, as Agatha, in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, and Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

From Paris, in 1858, Fredrika wrote a letter to Elfrida, "My Dearest Frida, Sometimes I yearn very deeply for you and my dear parents, and right now it is one of these moments, when

CONTINUED

Elfrida Andrée



Visby, Sweden, the birthplace of Elfrida Andrée, is the main town on the island of Gotland. Andrée's father was the town physician. He provided an outstanding liberal arts and music education for his children.

there is a sadness inside me and I feel so very lonely in the big city. But more than anything I want to congratulate you on having passed your exam so splendidly, which I heard about in a letter from Papa. I am so glad, and I wish I could have been there with you to witness the honor bestowed on you.”⁵

Fredrika was referring to the culmination of Elfrida's studies at the Royal Musical Academy (Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien) in Stockholm. Dr. Andrée had sent Elfrida there when she was fourteen years old. Elfrida was enrolled as a general music student, but was not in the organist class—no women allowed! The primary organ professor did take Elfrida as a private student. As an “external” student she passed all of her classes and performance exams, but without any hope of a career opportunity.

Outlawing Women Organists

Sometimes the laws regarding women can astonish even the most indoctrinated. In Sweden at that time professional women organists had been literally outlawed because St. Paul had declared that women should be silent in the church, and that dictum had been extended to include church organists.

So Elfrida and her father, with the help of liberal members of parliament, fought to have the law changed; they even mounted a newspaper campaign. Their grievance was brought before parliament several times over four years, finally with success. Well, success of a sort. The new law of 1861 declared that an unmarried woman over twenty-five could be a professional organist and play in churches. Elfrida was now only twenty, but nonetheless she became the first woman professional organist in Sweden, playing for two churches in Stockholm starting in 1861.

Around this same time, Elfrida and her father fought for another law to be changed—the law that banned women from the occupation of telegraph operator. They were also successful in changing this law, and Elfrida became the first Swedish woman to be a certified telegraphist. Why? Perhaps her father wanted to make sure that she could “earn her own way” in life if her music career faltered.

Turning to Elfrida as composer, she had been writing music from at least age seven, which is the time of her earliest extant compositions. Between the ages of seven and fourteen, she composed at least nineteen pieces for piano, voice, and choir. A dozen more pieces come from her student years of 1854–61, including her first orchestral works.

Elfrida studied composition with Ludwig Norman at the Academy from 1859–61, and it appears he emphasized chamber and orchestral composition. Among these early compositions is her four-movement *String Quartet in A Major* that she composed at age nineteen. Interestingly, at the top of the title page Elfrida wrote, “This quartet should never be published. 1860.” Forty-eight years later she made several minor revisions in the quartet, and at the bottom of the same title page, she wrote, “Well, why not. With revision and various adjustments, it will be beautiful. There is inspiration in it. July 31, 1908.”

The quartet is written in a conservative, Mendelssohnian style, which is especially evident in the scherzo movement. While it is not a fully mature work, and is a little technically awkward in places, it does show Elfrida's melodic and contrapuntal gifts. It is well worth playing (and a modern edition has been published).

One early piece we have on recording is her first published

CONTINUED

Elfrida Andrée



Elfrida Andrée's first compositions date from at least the age of seven. By the age of twenty she was the first professional woman organist in Sweden. At twenty-six she held one of the most prestigious music jobs in Sweden.

The first performance of Andrée's first symphony by the Stockholm Philharmonic was a disaster. "I think the musicians deliberately played the wrong notes," she declared.

work: *Piano Quintet* for piano, two violins, viola, and cello, which she composed at age twenty-four. Elfrida noted in her diary that the Stockholm musicians welcomed the *Quintet*. Elfrida had learned more about composing for string instruments since her *String Quartet in A*, and all of the *Quintet* parts are written idiomatically. It was composed with a classical attention to formal structure. Elfrida's mastery of harmony and counterpoint is evident, and it is a little more chromatic than her earlier string quartet.

The first movement is infused with gorgeous melodic lines and masterful interactions among all the instruments. The somber slow movement is melodically glorious. There is more textural variety here, with contrasts between all instruments playing and duo and trio passages. It is the longest of the three movements, and gripping throughout. The cheerful last movement at times has a scherzo-like character, and at other times sounds decidedly operatic. It could be argued that the last movement is not as strong as the first two.

Nonetheless, overall Elfrida's *Piano Quintet* is an outstanding work that deserves a place in modern chamber music literature. A reprint of the 1865 edition has been published (Hildegard Publishing Company) and more than one recording has been issued. Shortly after composing her quintet, she composed another outstanding chamber work, *Piano Quartet*, which is now available in a modern edition (A-R Editions).

The First Female Cathedral Organist

At age twenty-six Elfrida applied for the post of organist at the Gustav Cathedral in Göteborg, one of the most prestigious music jobs in Sweden. There were eight finalists for the position, seven men and Elfrida. By unanimous vote, Elfrida was appointed. Attempts to block Elfrida's appointment failed, and she retained the position in Göteborg for the rest of her career. When Elfrida learned that she had been appointed to the position she was stunned. She wrote to her brother about how she felt, "Glorious ambition! I am tempted to compare my own possibilities to an elastic band. Sometimes I feel that I have half an aune [measurement], I stretch it, and I get a whole aune. . . . Even ambition gets greater with one's own ability."⁶ She was the first female cathedral organist in Europe.

Returning to her family for a moment, Elfrida and Fredrika's mother died around the time of her Göteborg appointment, so their father took up residence in Stockholm, and Fredrika returned from continental Europe to Stockholm to sing for the Royal Opera there. She married Oscar Stenhammar, but continued her career and fulfilled her wish to become a famous singer, especially known for her Wagner roles. Because Fredrika and her father were in the same city now, the letters between them stopped, but Fredrika's correspondence with Elfrida, who lived at considerable distance from Stockholm, continued.

The Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra premiered Elfrida's *Symphony No. 1* in 1869. She was proud of the symphony, and anxiously awaited its performance. From her home base in Göteborg she hired professional copyists in Stockholm to create the orchestral parts from her full score. But the copyists made so many mistakes in the parts that the rehearsals were a fiasco, and ultimately Elfrida considered the performance unsuccessful. She wrote, "My first symphony was performed in 1869. The performance was terrible, and I think the musicians deliberately played wrong notes. Fredrika and I left when the Finale started and the first violins were continually behind the rest of the orchestra one entire measure." The reviewers didn't know what was happening on stage, and so the reviews were terrible: "The Symphony may be the most difficult ever written and should not be played again."⁷

CONTINUED

Elfrida Andrée

Elfrida's father became less supportive and recommended that she change directions by writing only salon music. He and Elfrida exchanged angry words. Elfrida wrote, "The popularity of all these little ladies with their piano fantasies or pretty songs is not what I want to do."⁸ She also said, "I prefer to be overcome, mentally and physically, because of a work where I gave my best than to be praised for something hurriedly put together. Above all, I want to remain faithful to myself and deserving of my own self-esteem."

The circumstances surrounding the premiere of the symphony were so stressful that Elfrida wrote that she was ill for several days afterward. The symphony was never published and has never been recorded. For her subsequent orchestral works, she hired the local orchestra in Göteborg to read through her pieces so she wouldn't have to deal with copyists and conductors who were unknown to her.⁹ In fact, she became the first woman in Sweden to conduct an orchestra. She didn't have professional aspirations in that direction—she was just trying to get her own pieces performed well. Surprisingly, her local Swedish colleagues and the press applauded her success as conductor.

Elfrida later composed more orchestral works—she was drawn to the medium throughout her career. In a letter to her sister Elfrida said, "If you could conceive of the ideal light in which the orchestra appears to my sight! It is an interpreter of the wondrous surgings of the soul." And in her diary she noted, "The orchestra, that is my goal!"¹⁰

Wary of Women

Elfrida's struggles were not just with orchestral players and conductors—she had similar troubles with publishers. Many were wary of publishing music by a woman, so she sometimes submitted her works under the name Monsieur E. Andrée. One painful example of publishing problems was in regard to her *Piano Sonata*. A publisher agreed to print it, but there were many errors in the final proofs—wrong notes, wrong rhythms, and wrong dynamics—and the publisher even made major mistakes with the tempo indications of the movements. Elfrida threw a fit, and most of the problems were fixed except the tempo indications. Thus, for example, the slow movement, that should have been marked *Andante*, was marked *Allegro ma non troppo*.¹¹ This is not a minor error. The difference for the performer between these two markings would make the piece sound completely different than it was intended. The first movement of the sonata again shows Mendelssohn's influence, with running notes nearly throughout. Its obvious formal design is in contrast to the slow movement, which is far less predictable and often sounds improvisatory. It has emotional punch, ranging from delicate, intimate passages to soaring lines that use the full range of the keyboard. The last movement sounds inspired by Chopin and is technically more challenging. (One recording of this work is available.)

By her twenty-ninth year, Elfrida was already considered one of the leading composers in Sweden, which was a source of great pride for her, her family, and her supporters. She wasn't satisfied, though, and decided to pursue intensive composition study with Niels Gade in Copenhagen during the summer of 1870. He was a native of Denmark, but he had spent several years in Leipzig, as Felix Mendelssohn's assistant and later as Mendelssohn's successor as conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Gade was both an organist and a composer, so perhaps we might think of him as the ideal teacher for Elfrida, except for his published declaration, "a woman cannot accomplish anything in the way of composing."¹²



The Gustav Cathedral at Göteborg. Attempts to block Andrée's historic appointment as organist failed. (Photo by Des Reid)

At their first meeting, Gade expressed astonishment and disapproval of a woman serving as a cathedral organist: ". . . perhaps [at a] a church of lesser importance . . ." Nonetheless, he accepted Elfrida as a student and she remained under his tutelage for several months. She must have impressed him because she later returned to Copenhagen at his personal invitation to give an organ recital in the church where Gade himself was primary organist. He also endorsed the idea of Elfrida giving organ recitals in other countries, and tried to pave the way for her.

"A woman...inappropriate"

Elfrida did give recitals elsewhere in Europe, although she ran into obstacles even with Gade trying to help her. For example, she wanted to give a recital at the church where Bach had played and was told by the clergy there that, "A woman in the organ loft would be highly inappropriate and contrary to all of our customs and ideas."

As to Elfrida's reaction, my translator summarized the contents of several letters: "[The letters] begin to reveal differences in disposition between the sisters: Fredrika copes pensively with the condescending attitudes, while Elfrida resists vigorously and assertively when confronted with the contemptuousness of her contemporaries. Fredrika urges Elfrida to be understanding of insensitive remarks regarding women composers, and to view criticism within the context of prevailing

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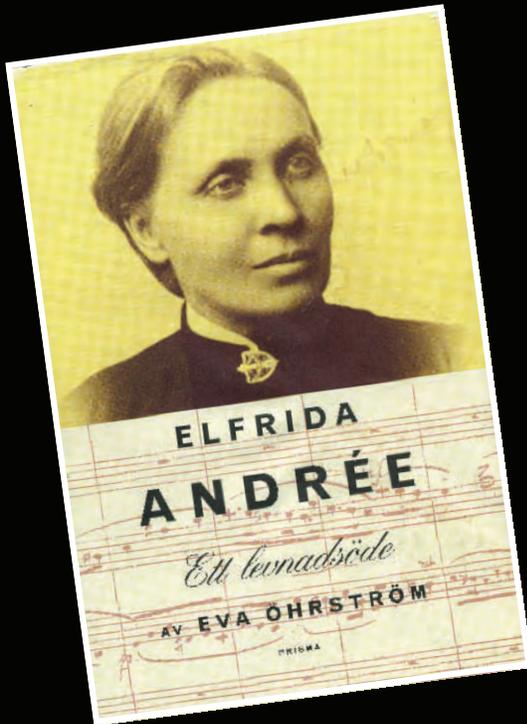


Top: the beginning of the slow movement of Elfrida André's String Quartet in A.

Bottom: the opening movement of her Sonata in Eb for violin and piano.



Elfrida Andrée



Eva Öhrström's *Elfrida Andrée, Ett levnadsöde* was published in Sweden in 1999 and is the most comprehensive account of Andrée's life and currently available (in Swedish only).



Andrée's *Symphony #2* won a standing ovation but she was not allowed to acknowledge the applause from the stage because she was a woman. The conductor would not permit an encore either.

musical traditions, whereas Elfrida is both discouraged and incensed by biased criticism."¹³

After her studies with Gade, Elfrida composed a cantata entitled *Snöfrid* for vocal soloists, choir, and orchestra. She may have thought that her reputation as a composer by this time would make the road to a good performance of this work a little easier. But it wasn't. Elfrida wrote to her sister that the concertmaster was overheard attempting to persuade orchestra members not to come to scheduled rehearsals. The choirmaster tried to do the same with the choir, but a contingent of performers refused to honor the boycott and Elfrida later wrote, "I have to say that my piece went with speed, even enthusiasm. It was as if everyone had made up their mind to do their best. It was a full house, and the feeling spread to the audience. Thanks be to God! A little kindness and success is for the soul what sunshine is for the body." Every major musical ensemble in the country subsequently performed her cantata.

Elfrida started her *Symphony #2* during her studies with Gade, then she set the symphony aside for several years, and finished it in 1879, the same year she was elected to the Swedish Academy of Music. Unfortunately, the Göteborg orchestra had disbanded shortly before she completed her symphony, so many years would elapse before its first performance.¹⁴ The joy of the honor of being elected to the academy was dampened shortly thereafter by the death of her sister, Fredrika, from tuberculosis. Elfrida then seemed to fill a maternal role for Fredrika's daughter, Elsa Stenhammar, a pianist, who later became Elfrida's caregiver and the executor of her estate.

Shortly after Fredrika's death, Elfrida visited London where she met the internationally famous singer, Jenny Lind. Elfrida told Jenny Lind that she had just composed her second symphony. Lind's reaction was one of being puzzled, unable to conceive that a woman was able to compose a symphony. According to Elfrida's letter, "Jenny Lind has a good

head, but I am sorry to say she has some very old fashioned ideas. She said to me that it is impossible for a woman's brain to understand an orchestra, and that there must be a limit to what a woman can and cannot do. My blood started to boil, and before I knew what I was doing, I started to speak about the right to be able to work with what one wants and loves to do, and I finished by saying that I for my part could show any time that *my* brain is big enough to handle an orchestra." She then went to the piano, and passionately played excerpts from her symphony.

A Standing Ovation, But...

In 1893, fourteen years after she composed her *Symphony #2*, it was finally performed for the first time. It received a standing ovation, but Elfrida was not permitted to acknowledge the applause from the stage, because she was a woman. The audience clamored for a repeat of the last movement as an encore, but the

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Elfrida Andrée

conductor refused.¹⁵ The next year that same work won second prize in an international competition in Brussels. Elfrida remarked, “. . . the public should be allowed a reminder that there are many roads to the grave even for female persons. Nothing else but inability should be an obstacle for the activity that their inclination and mind challenges them to choose. But this is not the case yet. One conductor after the other is terribly annoyed and they have put unimaginable obstacles in my way only because I have an irrepressible desire to devote myself to the orchestra.” Fortunately, a recording of the symphony is now available, and during the 2004 Nobel Prize ceremonies the scherzo movement was performed—125 years after it was composed.

The symphony begins with a pensive slow introduction, and then segues into the fast section. Compared to her chamber music, Elfrida demands more technical virtuosity of the string players in this work. The initial theme is motivic, whereas the second theme is longer, and nicely arched. Woodwind and brass instruments are often melodically highlighted while the strings provide rhythmic drive. The moods of the slow movement range from reflective to brooding, with an opening Wagneresque leitmotiv that returns periodically. The beginning of the scherzo movement is reminiscent of Beethoven in its formal structure and motivic development. The style of the trio section, however, is more lighthearted in its humorous treatment of beat-emphasis and interrupted phrases. The last movement opens with a grand organ-like *forte* full orchestra passage. Although the symphony is in A minor, the last movement is in A major, and is more upbeat in character. The grand ending of the thirty-minute symphony is punctuated with prominent use of horns, trumpets, and trombones.

In addition to being an organist, Elfrida played harp and piano. She performed Clara Schumann's *Piano Trio in G minor* in concert in Göteborg. Elfrida had composed one piano trio earlier in her life. Perhaps now inspired by Clara's work, Elfrida embarked on her own *Trio in G minor*, which was published in 1887. (One recording of it is available.) One of Elfrida's most poignant small ensemble works from around the same time is *Svanen*, for voice, violin, and piano or harp (also arranged with string orchestra accompaniment). The text is about a dying Swan. It is breathlessly beautiful and has been recorded.

Fritiofs Saga—a venture into opera

In the 1890s the Royal Theatre in Stockholm held a competition to compose an opera. The winning work would be performed at the opening of the new opera house. Elfrida collaborated with Selma Lagerlöf, a Nobel Prize-winning novelist, to produce her only opera, *Fritiofs Saga*; it didn't win the competition and she never heard it performed. To my knowledge the opera has never been performed, although the manuscript is extant.

However, Elfrida did rework parts of the opera into the five-movement *Fritiof Suite* for orchestra, which has been recorded. The suite opens with a majestic passage that sounds like Elfrida conceived of it on organ. There is less emphasis on formal organization and long stretches of melodic passages, as expected in a suite extracted from an opera. There are surprises: brass-infused grand sections interrupted by intimate solo strings and more chromaticism than found in Elfrida's earlier works. The slow second movement has a more foreboding mood, which is balanced by a stately third movement. Concertmaster and principal cello solos highlight the yearning fourth movement. The last movement returns to the grandiosity of the opening movement, until the very end, which is quiet, calm, and reflective.

One of Elfrida's trips outside of Sweden was to Dresden, Germany, in 1904. She was invited to conduct a performance of her *Fritiof Suite* and *Symphony #2*. The performance received rave reviews, but some of the commentary concentrated on the idea of a woman conducting an orchestra. The Germans had never seen such a sight before!

From Saint Saëns to Bach

In Göteborg, Elfrida played the organ for the services at the Cathedral and she also composed works for solo organ and for choir, which were performed during church services, an activity not unlike that of J. S. Bach. In addition, in the 1890s she took over the Labor Concerts (public concerts), for which she organized over 800 performances, often conducting the orchestra herself. She taught as well, and by 1891 “all but two of the organist posts in Göteborg were held by her former women students.”¹⁶ Elfrida was lauded as an outstanding organist who performed the gamut, from Bach to Saint-Saëns, and was considered an expert improviser as well. Her largest composition for organ, *Organ Symphony No. 2* for organ and brass ensemble, was recorded recently.



Selma Lagerlöf, the Nobel Prize-winning novelist, collaborated on Andrée's only opera, *Fritiofs Saga*. Andrée never heard it performed.

Elfrida composed into her seventies, including several large choral works with orchestra in the early twentieth century, probably for performances in her church. She was particularly proud of her two Swedish masses, from 1902 and 1903. Fortunately, *Svensk Mässa No. 1* has been recorded. The forces, of course, reflect what she had available in her own church: SATB soloists, mixed chorus, children's choir, string orchestra, harp, and organ. Contrasts between full forces, more soloistic passages, and solo organ interludes pervade the texture throughout. Perhaps the most gripping movement is the third, the “Herre förbarma dig” (Kyrie), but that is not meant to demean the other movements. The thirteen-section, thirty-minute mass is a splendid piece.

At the age of seventy, Elfrida was the keynote speaker at the International Suffragette Conference in Stockholm in 1911, for which she composed a cantata. In her address to the conference she remarked that her goal was to “give freedom to the bound . . . and courage to the frightened.” Her self-proclaimed motto, which she coined in the 1870s, was “the elevation of womankind” (det kvinnliga släktets höjande). The fact that there were few women composers of symphonic music and no professional

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Elfrida Andrée

women orchestral conductors was profoundly troubling to her. She said, “How many times haven’t I been bitter when someone says that women cannot be mentioned in the context of serious art music?”

After a long and successful career, Elfrida Andrée died in Göteborg on 11 January 1929, just six weeks shy of her eighty-eighth birthday. Her gravestone bears a miniature replica of organ pipes. Her sister’s daughter, Elsa Stenhammar, was caretaker of Elfrida’s manuscripts; she meticulously catalogued them, and then donated them to the Statens Musikbibliotek in Stockholm where they are today. She also published the letters of her mother, Fredrika.

Why was Elfrida’s music ignored for nearly a century? In part, of course, because she was a woman composer. Furthermore, the style of her music was that of the end of the era of romanticism. As new musical ideals emerged—impressionism, expressionism, and neoclassicism—the music of lesser-known romantic composers wasn’t played as often. This impediment was compounded by the fact that only a small portion of Elfrida’s music was published and, therefore, was not widely available to performers even during her lifetime, and certainly less so thereafter.

Fortunately, the present concurrence of the popularity of the style of neoromantic composers with new recordings and editions of Elfrida’s music offers us an opportunity to judge her contributions with fresh eyes and ears. Some of Elfrida Andrée’s compositions definitely deserve to be part of the modern canon, but we just don’t know how many. We cannot fully appreciate or judge the full magnitude of her accomplishments until more of her larger works, such as *Snöfrid* and *Fritiofs Saga*, have been resurrected. Judging from her works that have recently been rescued from the “black hole of women composers,” we should have high expectations.



Elfrida Andrée died six weeks shy of her eighty-eighth birthday in January 1929. Her gravestone bears a miniature replica of organ pipes.

NOTES

¹ Fredrika Stenhammar, *Brev*, ed. Elsa Stenhammar (Uppsala: Gebers, 1958).

² Eva Öhrström, *Elfrida Andrée. Ett levnadsöde* (Stockholm: Prisma, 1999).

³ Sonja Moseley to author, n.d.

⁴ Sonja Moseley to author, n.d.

⁵ Sonja Moseley to author, n.d. Translation of Fredrika’s 14 January 1858 letter published in *Brev*.

⁶ Sonja Moseley to author. Translated from Öhrström, p. 106.

⁷ Sonja Moseley to author, n.d.

⁸ *Elfrida Andrée—Kammarmusik*, Stockholm Quartet, Lena Johnson (piano), Lena Hoel (soprano), Caprice 21530, 1996, CD booklet, p. 17.

⁹ *Elfrida Andrée*, Stockholm Symphony conducted by Gustaf Sjökvist, Sterling 1016, 1995, CD booklet, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹ *Elfrida Andrée—Kammarmusik*, p. 18.

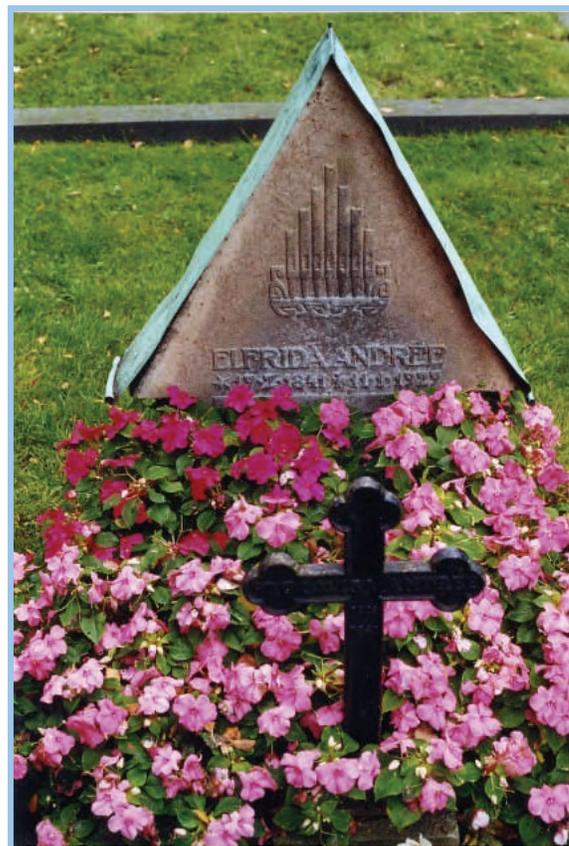
¹² Sonja Moseley to author, n.d. Translation of phrase from *Brev*, p. 111.

¹³ Sonja Moseley to author, n.d.

¹⁴ *Elfrida Andrée*, Stockholm Symphony, p. 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Cathedral Music*, Gothenburg Symphony, Gustavi Cathedral Choir, Rose-Marie Svensson (organ), Bengt Nilsson (organ), Ann-Marie Rydberg (conductor), Intim Musik 98, 2006, CD booklet, p. 9.



Elfrida Andrée—Selected Compositions

Over 100 works, the majority of which were never published
 These titles and dates are from Eva Öhrström's biography *Elfrida Andrée. Ett levnadsöde*

Work / medium	Composed/Published
Piano Trio in C minor	1860
String Quartet in A Major	1860
Overture in G minor (orchestra)	1864
Piano Quintet in E minor	1865/1865
Piano Quartet in A minor	1865
“Kom Guds ande” (soprano, piano or orchestra)	1869
Symphony #1 in C Major	1869
Piano Sonata in A Major, Opus 3	1870/1873
Eight works for organ	1870
Tre Romanser (violin, piano)	1871
Sonata for Organ	1871 or 1872
Qvartett för Qvinnoröster (a cappella chorus)	1871
Violin Sonata #1 in Eb Major (violin, piano)	1872
Violin Sonata #2 in Bb Major (violin, piano)	1872
Tonbilder, Opus 4 (piano)	1872/1874
Overture in D Major (later revised., n.d.)	1873
Skogsrået (voice, piano)	1878/1878
Kyrko-aria “Mitt fasta hopp” (voice, organ or piano)	1879
Lotusblomma och Svan (voice, piano)	1879
Recitative and Aria “Här hon stod, Den englalika” (tenor, orchestra)	1881
Piano Trio in G minor (piano, violin, cello)	1884/1887
String Quartet in D minor	1887
O skräm ej barnens hjärtan (a cappella chorus)	1879
Snöfrid (chorus, orchestra)	1879/1879
Symphony #2 in A minor	1870–1879
Fem smärre tonbilder, Opus 7 (piano)	1880/1880
Tre sånger (Three Songs), Opus 8 (voice, piano)	1881/1881
Tandverks-Fugetta (piano)	1881
Bröllops-sånger för blandade röster (a cappella chorus)	1881 or 1879
Ur Droemlif (a cappella chorus)	1882/1882
Två Romanser (violin and piano)	1884/1884
Svanen (voice, violin, harp or piano or string orchestra)	1886/1890
Organ Symphony in B minor	1891/1892
Organ Symphony #2 with wind instruments	1893
Fritiofs Saga (opera)	1895
Swedish Mass #1 (soloists, chorus, children's chorus, organ, string orchestra, harp)	1902
Swedish Mass #2 (chorus, organ, orchestra)	1903/1907
Glömska in F Major (string orchestra and harp)	1905
Prelude (organ)	1907
Andante Cantabile (cello and organ)	late work?
Psalm 20 (chorus, organ)	1908
Kantat (Cantata; chorus, orchestra)	1909
Sommarminnen (string orchestra)	1909
Kantat, Psalm 56 (Cantata; chorus, orchestra)	1910
Kantat (Cantata; soloists, chorus, orchestra) for the suffragette conference	1911
Tre Sånger (voice, piano or string orchestra)	1908–1912
Melodrama: Saul and David	1912

Elfrida Andrée

Selected Modern Editions and Discography

Svensk mässå nr 1 (1902)



Modern editions

The following are published by the Hildegard Publishing Company and edited by Susan Pickett:

- Hildegard #494-02564: *Two Romances* (violin and piano)
- Hildegard #494-02625: *Piano Quintet in E minor*
- Hildegard #494-02612: *Piano Trio in G minor*
- Hildegard #494-02565: *Sonata in B Flat* (violin and piano)
- Hildegard #494-02566: *Sonata in E Flat* (violin and piano)
- Hildegard #494-02629: *String Quartet in A major*

The following are published by A-R Editions and edited by Katherine Axtell:

- A-R Editions N 40: *Piano Trio in C minor*
- A-R Editions N 40: *Piano Quartet in A minor*

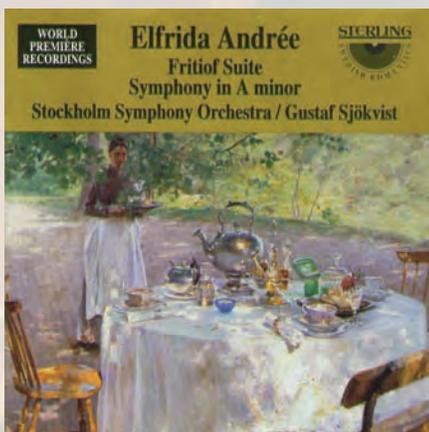
Recordings currently sold



- Title of album: Cathedral Music
- Label/release date: Intim Musik #98/2006
- Performers: Gothenburg Symphony; Gustavi Cathedral Choir; Rose-Marie Svensson, organ; Bengt Nilsson, organ; Ann-Marie Rydberg, conductor
- Work(s): *Swedish Mass No. 1*

- Title of album: Midsummer's Music
- Label/release date: Centaur Records #2448/1999
- Performers: Kevin Case, violin; Stephanie Preucil, violin, Marlise Klein, viola, Walter Preucil, cello, William Koehler, piano
- Work(s): *Piano Quintet in E minor*

- Title of album: Elfrida Andrée [et al]
- Label/release date: Zuk Records #324
- Performers: Karin Hendel, violin; Ewa Warykoewicz, piano
- Work(s): *Tva Romanser* (Two Romances)



- Title of album: Elfrida Andrée
- Label/release date: Sterling #1016/1995
- Performers: Stockholm Symphony; Gustaf Sjökvist, conductor
- Work(s): *Fritiof Suite* (suite extracted by Andrée from her opera); *Symphony No. 2 in A minor*

- Title of album: Divine Euterpe
- Label/release date: Loft Recordings #1021/2001
- Performers: Kimberly Marshall, organ
- Work(s): *Organ Symphony No. 1* (complete)

- Title of album: Music She Wrote—Organ Compositions By Women
- Label/release date: Raven Recordings #550
- Performers: Dr. Frances Nobert
- Work(s): *Organ Symphony No. 1* (Finale)

Elfrida Andrée

Recordings no longer sold, but found in libraries

Title of album: Elfrida Andrée—Kammarmusik

Label/release date: Caprice #21530/1996

Performers: Stockholm Quartet; Lena Johnson, piano; Lena Hoel, soprano

Work(s): *Piano Quintet in E minor*; *Svanen, Visa en vårmorgon, Polska, En vacker höstdag* (songs); *Piano Sonata in A major*; *Öfver Hafvet, Näktergalen* (songs); *String Quartet in D minor*

Note: this is a wonderful recording and worth searching for

Title of album: Musica Sveciae—Kammarmusik

Label/release date: Swedish Music Anthology, MSCD #528-529/1994

Performers: Bernt Lysell, violin; Ola Karlsson, cello; Lucia Negro, piano

Work(s): *Piano Trio in G minor*

Title of album: Elfrida Andrée: The Complete Works for Organ

Label/release date: Swedish Society, SCD #1085/1998

Performers: Ralph Gustafsson, organ

Work(s): *Organ Symphony No. 2* (with brass instruments); *Andantino in E minor*; *Fuga con spirito*; *Koral med variationer in D minor*; *Andante in G major*; *Melodi*; *Organ Symphony No. 1*

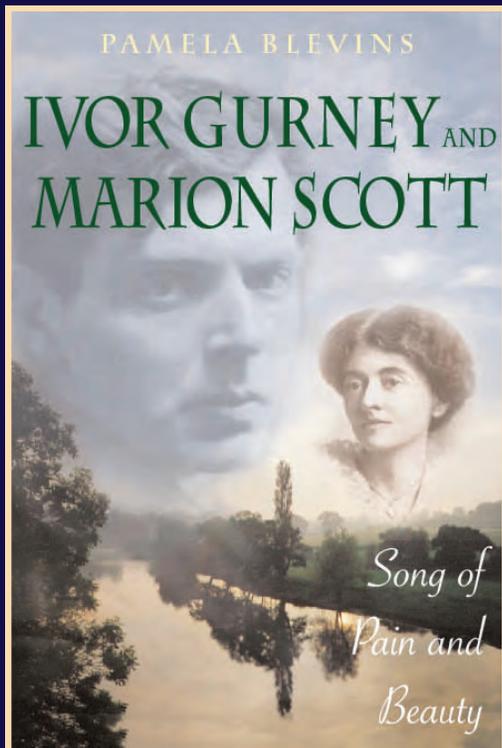
Note: despite the title of the album, this does not represent her complete output for the instrument

Title of album: Solveig Funseth—Women Composers

Label/release date: Swedish Society #1043/1988

Performers: Solveig Funseth, piano

Work(s): *Fem smärre Tonbilder*, opus 7 (Five Smaller Tone Pictures)



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by Pamela Blevins

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Gena Branscombe



*A successful woman
composer when there
were few around*

Gena Branscombe

She followed her light

When I wrote my book, *Women of Notes: 1,000 Women Composers Born Before the Year 1900* (New York City: Richards Rosen Press, 1978), I wanted to honor a living composer, although in my mind I had already dedicated it to all the composers in the book who had made such remarkable contributions to the world of music. My research had turned up many familiar names in the world of composition such as Amy Marcy Cheney (Mrs. H.H.A Beach), Clara Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn, Mana-Zucca, Lili Boulanger, Maria von Paradis, Maria Szymanowska, Mabel Wheeler Daniels, Marion Bauer, Ethel Smyth, Mary Howe and Margaret Ruthven Lang. But there was one woman in particular who piqued my curiosity because of the amazing amount of work she had produced and I decided to contact her with a view to requesting a personal interview.

That interview took place in her New York apartment two years before her death in 1977 at the age of ninety-six. I went to see her with a pianist friend and she was most gracious in welcoming us to her home on that sunny June day. We were greeted at the door by her daughter Gena Tenney Phenix, and we spent the afternoon having great conversation, fun and tea. A very youthful ninety-four years old, both in appearance and sharpness of mind, Gena Branscombe was exactly the person I was looking for and I subsequently dedicated my book to her.

Although this would be the only time I would see Branscombe in person, there would be many opportunities to be in touch by letter or telephone over the next year or so. Her life was extraordinary in the fact that she was a successful female classical music composer when there were few around. When I asked her if she found the climate favorable to her composing career she replied, "Oh, I didn't really notice. I was too busy following my light."

A talent for music at an early age

Gena Branscombe was born in Picton, Ontario, Canada, on November 4, 1881, the daughter of Dr. Henry William Branscombe and Sara Elizabeth Allison. She was found to have a talent for music at an early age.

When Branscombe was fifteen, she left Canada to travel

alone to Chicago for study at the Chicago Musical College, which was founded in 1867 as the Chicago Conservatorium of Music by Florenz Ziegfeld (father of the great Broadway impresario Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.). In 1872 the name was changed to the Chicago Musical College and that year 900 students came through the doors with an average cost per lesson of one dollar.

Branscombe's teachers there were among the finest of the time and included Rudolf Ganz (1877–1972), Arthur Friedheim (1859–1932) and Hans von Schiller (1891–1976) for piano. Ganz, a Swiss born in Zurich, had a fine career as a pianist, cellist and conductor. He was also a composer of some renown. Although only four years her senior, Ganz was highly respected by Branscombe and she made rapid progress under his tutelage. Arthur Friedheim was a celebrated concert pianist who came from St. Petersburg, Russia, and had studied with Franz Liszt, while Rudolf Ganz had been a pupil of the celebrated pianist Ferruccio Busoni. Thus Branscombe was the beneficiary of a fine pianistic legacy which she, in turn, passed down to her own piano students. While at the Chicago Musical College Branscombe also studied song writing for two years with Alexander von Fielitz (1860–1930).

Felix Borowski (1872–1956), another one of Branscombe's teachers, was a composer of some note who was born in England in 1872 and removed to Chicago where he subsequently became an American citizen. Best known for his violin solo, "Adoration," Borowski was also the composer of three symphonies, ballets and operas. He taught at the Chicago Musical College and became president of the school in 1916. Branscombe worked with him in Chicago before going to Berlin, Germany, to continue her studies in composition with Engelbert Humperdinck. She won praise for her compositions from the Italian composer Pietro Mascagni, who declared her to have a brilliant future ahead.

Lessons with Humperdinck must have been very interesting, as Branscombe told me "I spoke no German and he spoke very little English." But she admired him and somehow the two apparently communicated very well.

CONTINUED

Gena Branscombe



Composer, conductor, educator Gena Branscombe studied with some of the finest teachers in Europe, including Rudolf Ganz, Hans von Schiller and Ferruccio Busoni and conducting with Frank Damrosch and Albert Stroessel.

Branscombe's introduction to musical composition revealed a world that seemed to be the sole domain of men...she eagerly responded to the challenge of this environment.

Humperdinck was born in Sieburg, Germany, in 1854 and would have the distinction of being her oldest teacher. As the composer of the popular opera "Hansel and Gretel," Humperdinck was the recipient of great acclaim on both sides of the water.

So this was Gena Branscombe's introduction to the world of musical composition . . . a discipline that appeared to be the sole domain of impressive male personalities. She eagerly responded to the challenge of this environment and was soon receiving gold medals for her work.

After graduating from the Chicago Musical College Branscombe was approached to start a music department at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She agreed to do this and headed the piano department for a few years.

Marriage and family

By this time, Branscombe had met Harvard-educated lawyer John Ferguson Tenney and their deepening relationship led them to discuss the possibility of marriage. However, after much consideration Branscombe decided to travel to Berlin for the 1909–10 season to study with Engelbert Humperdinck. Upon her return from Europe, Gena Branscombe married John Ferguson Tenney in Picton, Ontario, in October 1910, and they soon welcomed four daughters into their family.

Gena, their first child, was born in 1911. A teacher, she became a member of the faculty of Barnard Columbia College from 1935 to 1943. She married mathematician and theologian Dr. Philip Phenix, whose doctoral dissertation was praised by none other than Albert Einstein. They had two sons, Dr. Morgan Phenix and Roger Phenix. Gena Phenix died in May 2007, in Virginia.

The Tenneys' second child, Vivian Allison Tenney, was born in 1913. She became a well-respected internist and gynecologist who graduated from Cornell Medical College in 1939 and completed her training at Massachusetts General Hospital and Philadelphia Hospital for Women. Affiliated with Memorial Hospital and Beekman Downtown Hospital in New York City for thirty-six years, she died in Virginia in September 1990, at the age of seventy-seven.

Betty Phenix was born in 1916 and died three years later.

Beatrice Branscombe Tenney (1919–54), as a student, was president of the freshman and junior classes at Barnard College and later became executive secretary with the Corporation of Trinity Church in New York City. Beatrice became the wife, in 1947, of Edgar Lloyd Brokaw (1917–2002), who was a well-loved professor of film and TV at UCLA's School of Theatre, Film and TV.

Gena Branscombe's area of concentration was choral music and she founded the very successful Branscombe Chorale in New York City in 1934. She was the founder, fundraiser, conductor, composer and arranger for the Chorale, and occasionally commissioned works from other composers.

CONTINUED

Branscombe also joined, along with Mrs. H.H.A. Beach and Mary Howe, the newly-founded Society of American Women Composers in 1925. She functioned as president of the society from 1929 to 1932. During these exceedingly busy years she gave full credit to her husband John Tenney for "without him," she said, "I wouldn't have been able to accomplish half of what I did."

Branscombe was also a member of the MacDowell Club of New York, Delta Omicron, General Federation of Music Clubs, Association of Women Composers of New York, National Federation of Music Clubs, ASCAP, National League of American Pen Women, National Association for American Composers and Conductors, and the National Opera Club of New York.

Gena Branscombe composed far too many works to be catalogued in this article, but the following will give the reader an impression of the scope of her creativity.

Cavalcade, and *Valse-Caprice*, for piano solo, were written in 1903 before her studies in Germany.

Elaine Keillor pronounced them to be "rhythmically vital and stylishly attractive." (*Piano Music II, Canadian Music Heritage*, 6. Edited by Elaine Keillor. Ottawa: The Canadian Musical Heritage, 1986).

Love in a Life, Song Cycle for medium voice and piano (1907)

1. I thought once how Theocritus had sung
2. But only three in all God's universe
3. How do I love thee?
4. The widest land doom
5. The face of all the world is change
6. My own beloved

A fourteen-minute setting of six poems from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. This cycle received such praise as "heartfelt, reflective recitative . . . passionate melodies . . . rich harmonies." *How do I love thee?* was sung at Gena Branscombe's wedding in 1910.

God of the Nations, by Sara (Gena's mother) and Gena Branscombe. SATB and Unison.

"A short good number of medium difficulty. Its words are a prayer for peace and good will for a war-torn and terror filled world."

A Lute of Jade, Song Cycle for medium voice and piano (1911).

1. *A Lovely Maiden, Roaming*. Based on a text in Chinese by Sikong-Tu (834-908), by Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng (1872-1945) in "*Return of Spring*," A Lute of Jade, published in 1918.

A lovely maiden, roaming
The wild dark valley through,
Culls from the shining waters
Lilies and lotus blue.
With leaves the peach-trees are laden.
The wind sighs through the haze,
And the willows wave their shadows
Down the oriole-haunted ways.
As, passion-tranced, I follow,
I hear the old refrain
Of Spring's eternal story,
That was old and is young again.

2. *My Fatherland*. Based on a text in Chinese by Li-Tai-Po (701-762), by Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng (1872-1945), "*Thoughts in a Tranquil Night*," A Lute of Jade, published in 1918.

Athwart the bed
I watch the mountains cast a trail
So bright, so cold, so frail.
That for a space it gleams
Like hoar-frost on the margin of my dreams.
I raise my head –
The splendid moon I see:
Then droop my head,
And sink to dreams of thee –
My Fatherland, of thee!

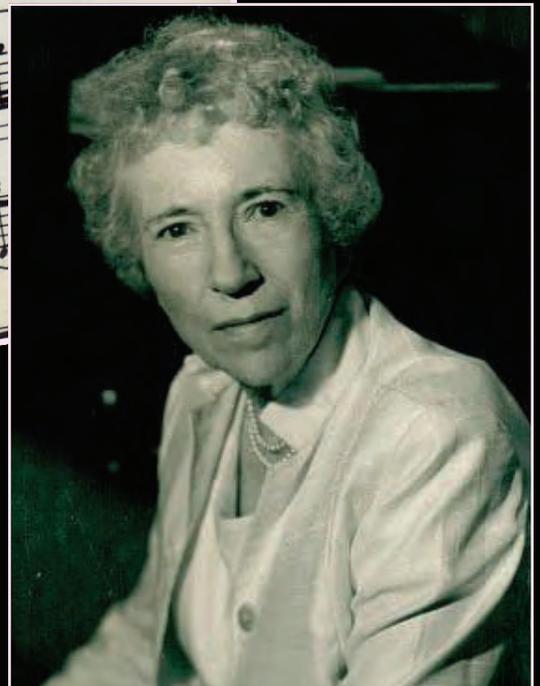
3. *There was a King of Liang*. Based on a text in Chinese by Gao-Shi (707-765), by Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng (1872-1945), "*Desolation*," A Lute of Jade, published in 1918.

There was a King of Liang –
A king of wondrous might –
Who kept an open palace,
Where music charmed the night –
Since he was Lord of Liang
A thousand years have flown,
And of the towers he builded
Yon ruin stands alone.
There reigns a heavy silence;
Gaunt weeds through windows pry,
And down the streets of Liang
Old echoes, wailing, die.

4. *Fair is the pine grove*. Based on a text in Chinese by Sikong-Tu (834-908), by Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng (1872-1945), "*Fascination*," A Lute of Jade, published in 1918.

CONTINUED

Gena Branscombe



The first page of Branscombe's 1935 Sonata in A minor for Violin was greeted enthusiastically by violinists including Olga Rudge. Her compositional style was rooted in the late German Romantic tradition.

Sonata in A **Gena Branscombe**

Fair is the pine grove and the mountain stream
That gathers to the valley far below,
The black-winged junks on the dim sea reach, a
dream,
The pale blue firmament o'er banks of snow.
And her, more fair, more supple smooth than
jade,
Gleaming among the dark red woods I follow:
Now lingering, now as a bird afraid
Of pirate wings she seeks the haven hollow.
Vague, and beyond the daylight of recall,
Into the cloudland past my spirit flies,
As though before the gold of autumn's fall,
Before the glow of the moon-flooded skies.

"Battle Hymn of the Republic," by William Steffe, arranged by Gena Branscombe. SSA with accompaniment. "Miss Branscombe uses three contrasting keys for the three stanzas . . . sound harmonization."

"Annie Laurie," by Lady Alicia Scott, arranged by Gena Branscombe. SSA with accompaniment. "A nice harmonization for four voices."

"Pilgrims of Destiny," composed in 1919, is a Choral Drama for Soprano, Bass, Chorus and Orchestra.

- I: The Sailors.
- II: Richard and Ellen More.
- III: The Storm.
- IV: William Bradford & Rose Standish.
- V: Before the Dawn.
- VI: Land Sighting.

This oratorio takes 90 minutes to perform and is accompanied by a large orchestra. Published by Oliver Ditson Music Company.

Branscombe also wrote the libretto for this music drama about the first English settlers sailing, in 1620, on the ship *Mayflower* to America. The choral drama tells the story of the nine-week journey of the pilgrims crossing the Atlantic Ocean and faith triumphing over adversity, illness and persecution. The *New York Times* found it to be "bubbling with tunefulness." The League of American Pen Women declared this work to be "the finest work composed by a woman."

"A Wind From the Sea," for female voices and orchestra, with text taken from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 1924.

"Quebec Suite," a work which came from an unfinished opera, *The Bells of Circumstance*, for which Gena Branscombe wrote the words and music. It was performed in 1930 by the Chicago Women's Symphony under the composer's direction.

"By The River Gloman," SSA, published by Galaxy Music Corporation.

Gena Branscombe was listed as composer of this work in an ad in the *Music Educator's Journal*, 1935.

"Starlit Night," by Claude Debussy, arranged by Gena Branscombe. G. Ricordi and Co., Inc.

Part-Song, **"Maples,"** for 4 female voices by Gena Branscombe. The *Musical Times* of August 1935 described it as follows: "proved fresh and clear but not obvious. The parts dovetailed with a delicate skill that somehow suggests the interweaving of soft leaves."

"[A] Sonata in A Minor for violin and piano by Gena Branscombe was melodic and well written. It has had enthusiastic interpreters in the persons of Olga Rudge and Jessie Hall." (*Musical Times*, January 1935. From a performance in London, England.)

"Youth of the World," by Gena Branscombe (M. Witmark & Sons). Review by Will Earhart:

"This cycle of songs for a chorus of women's voices has a degree of musical beauty and effectiveness that lifts it high above the plane of most of the print that rolls from the music presses. It possesses sincerity, great emotional force, that only music written out of the real creative thrill possesses.

The titles of the separate numbers are: Airmen, Maples, and Youth of the World. The composer is author also of the verses. Which further explains the unity and fervor that one feels invests this proclamation. Women's choruses everywhere should sing it. It is scored for piano accompaniment.

We quote only a few concluding lines:

"Oh, youth of the world with shining eyes,
Let your mighty vows as incense rise.
Swear, by their wounds that the Plague shall
cease,

CONTINUED

Gena Branscombe



Arthur Farwell, the American composer, who created awareness of Native American music through his Wa-Wan Press. He had been in love with Branscombe.

“Her impatient melodies leap and dash with youthful life, while her accompaniments abound in harmonic hair-breadth escapes.”

Arthur Farwell

That love is the victor, and strength is Peace.
Then singing together, the lads who died
And the youth of the world shall onward ride!”

(Born in 1872, Will Earhart was a respected teacher of music in the Richmond, Indiana, school system. He went to Pittsburgh and taught there until his retirement in 1940. A founder of the Music Editors National Conference, in 1916 he was made president. He was a noted music critic and wrote books that were used as college texts, including *Eloquent Baton*, *Music to the Listening Ears*, and *The Meaning and Teaching of Music*.

Critique by American Composer Arthur Farwell. The well-known American composer Arthur Farwell offered a critique of the same composition in an article in *Music in America*. Farwell writes: “Her work is an outpouring of moods, moods of an intensity and richness which demand a high musical color scheme. This, not science, though Miss Branscombe is well grounded in theory, but a startling character of intuition, provides her withal. Her impatient melodies leap and dash with youthful life, while her accompaniments abound in harmonic hair-breadth escapes. No considered harmonic or modularity scheme gives her music its richness of color; she continually leaps into apparently remote progressions without looking before, and the same intuition which suggested the hazard suggests also the way out, which comes with surprising facility.”

Arthur Farwell was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on March 23, 1872, and died on January 20, 1952. He studied composition with George Chadwick and Edward MacDowell in America and also with Engelbert Humperdinck in Germany. He created the Wa-Wan Press in 1901 in an effort to print more music that incorporated native American melodies, something he did with great success. Branscombe's daughter Gena Phenix confided to me that Arthur Farwell had been in love with her mother at one time and that feeling had perhaps been “a little reciprocated.” At any rate, Gena Branscombe treasured Farwell's music and it was with great pleasure that I was able to send to her, in the last year of her life, several tapes of his compositions which she was thrilled to have.

CONTINUED

Gena Branscombe

“Serenade,” by Franz Schubert, arranged by Gena Branscombe for male voices, TTBB. “As the usual accompaniment has been transferred to the voices, it will take expert handling to retain the subtle beauty of this masterpiece.” (*Music Educator’s Journal*, Vol.26, No.4, February 1940).

“Prayer for Song,” by Gena Branscombe, words by Ruth E. MacDonald. SSAA with accompaniment. “This song has verve. The changes in rhythm increase interest as well as difficulty.” (*Music Educator’s Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 6, May–June, 1943).

“The Arkansas Traveller” arranged by Gena Branscombe. SSAA “an intricate setting.” (*Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 4, February–March, 1943).

“Coventry’s Choir,” words by Violet B. Alvarez, for soprano and female voices with orchestral accompaniment, 1944. Performed at Coventry in 1962 and many other places thereafter. Published by G. Schirmer.

“O Maiden Come Directly” by Cavalli-Branscombe (Elkan-Vogel Co. Philadelphia, April, 1945).

Pacific Sketches, Three Pieces for Horn and Piano, 1956.

Kona Beach: Marcato.
Night in the Islands: Adagio teneremente.
Home Port: Allegro con giusto.

These three pieces exhibit Branscombe's deep compositional foundation in the late German Romantic style, and were first performed at WNYC's 17th Annual American Music Festival in 1956.

“Berceuse” (‘Sleep, Sleep, Tsarevna Fair’), from *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky. Words and music arranged by Gena Branscombe. This title appeared in *Music Educator’s Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 6, May 1957.

“Sylvelin” by Christian Sinding, arranged by Gena Branscombe. A solo for tenor or soprano; piano accompaniment featuring glissandi. Critics said it was an “effective arrangement.”

American Suite, Three Pieces for Horn and Piano, 1959.

1. **Bright Autumn: Marcato.**
2. **Love Song: Adagio teneremente.**
3. **Parade: Marziale.**

A reworking of the *Pacific Sketches*, Branscombe added new material to create this suite of miniatures, which features a beautifully muted horn in the Adagio movement. Copies of this work may be found at the New York Public Library.

“Arms That Have Sheltered Us.” This composition was adopted as a hymn by the Royal Canadian Navy in 1960.

“Introit, Prayer Response and Amen,” SATB, commissioned by the Riverside Church, New York City, premiered 1973.

Writings about Gena Branscombe:

“Honors for Gena Branscombe,” *The Musical Leader*, 13 May 1909.

“Miss Gena Branscombe,” *MCan*, September, 1909.

Stella Reid Crowthers, “A Versatile and Productive muse is Gena Branscombe, whose song celebrities sing,” *Musical America*, 11 December 1909.

Britten, “Gena Branscombe,” *CanJM*, Vol.1, June 1914.

Florence Deacon Black, ‘Gena Branscombe, Canada’s most distinguished woman composer,’ *The Christian Guardian*, 28 May 1924.

J. Herbert Hodgins, “Canadian Composer has Two Selves,” *MacLean’s Magazine*, 1 June 1925.

Obituary for Gena Branscombe Tenney, *Picton Gazette*, 10 August 1977.

Sources:

Anya Laurence’s conversations with Gena Branscombe and Gena Phenix.

The Musical Leader, 13 May 1909.

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The New York Times, 1919.

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Music Educator’s Journal, 1935.

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Music Educator’s Journal, Vol. 26, No. 4, February 1940.

Music Educator’s Journal, Vol. 29, No. 4, February–March 1943.

Music Educator’s Journal, Vol. 29, No. 5, May–June 1943.

Music Educator’s Journal, Vol. 23, No. 6, May 1957.

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Mary Davenport Engberg Pioneering Conductor



Mrs. Davenport Engberg in her home in 1929.
(Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA)

“To Mrs. Engberg, too high praise cannot be given for directing the individual efforts of the musicians toward a common goal with such success”

-- Musical Observer

Elizabeth Juliana Knighton

Mary Davenport Engberg



Mary Davenport Engbert, ca 1906.

“We shall play great music.”

While on tour in January 1913, the American violinist Maud Powell arrived in Bellingham, Washington, where she performed with the Davenport Engberg Orchestra. “Fancy a place so remote having an orchestra!” she later said to reporters from *Musical America*.¹ Powell was astonished and pleased at the musical ability displayed in the little city of about 30,000 people. After the concert the *Bellingham Herald* reported, “Madame Powell expressed herself as being surprised at the astounding degree of success that has been accomplished by Mrs. Engberg and her orchestra, which, with the exception of a few members, is composed of practically green material, and says that there is not a city of twice the size on the coast that can boast of such an organization. . . .”²

So who was this “Mrs. Engberg,” and how did she, a married woman in a remote town in the Pacific Northwest, come to conduct a full, mixed-gender orchestra? In 1913 the United States was emerging from the industrial revolution with booming businesses, new technologies, new rights for workers, and reforms to help the urban poor, but women were still subject to many social inequalities and did not yet have a nation-wide right to vote. In music, too, women were limited by gender expectations. String instruments had only slowly become socially acceptable for women to play, and women who followed performing careers had to overcome great obstacles before they were taken seriously as masters of their instruments or viewed as

professional musicians who could be compared to men. Women were barred from playing in professional symphony orchestras with men, and significant barriers remained for women who wanted to conduct anything but the all-women “Lady Orchestras” which had arisen to provide performance opportunities for female musicians.

Mary Davenport Engberg (1880-1951) was a European-trained violin virtuoso, an influential teacher, the creator of the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra, conductor of the Seattle Symphony, and the first director of the Seattle Civic Opera, but despite the larger-than-life image she exuded during her career, her memory quickly faded and her story was nearly lost after her death. Several generations later, most of those who knew her have passed away, and tangible reminders, such as her house and possessions, are gone. Rediscovering her story has been a wonderful exercise in detective work and can now be told in context with the place and time within which she lived.

In the early 1900s, Bellingham, Washington, was a remote town separated from its largest neighbor, the young city of Seattle, by thick virgin forests, poor roads, and problematic train lines, but it was imbued with the spirit of the Northwest. The communities of this region were settled over a relatively short span of time in the late nineteenth century. As men cleared the

CONTINUED

Mary Davenport Engberg

land and established themselves through exploration, trapping, and logging, women of various backgrounds worked together to create schools, libraries, religious aid groups, and anything else required to meet the perceived needs of their community. Through this collaboration the Northwest became a very progressive place for women, offering fewer restrictions and greater opportunities for professional women of various fields than were found in the East. The region was well poised for Madame Engberg's contributions as a performer, teacher, and conductor.

Early years

Madame Engberg, as she was called throughout her adult and professional life, was born Mary Laura Cornwall on February 15, 1880, the daughter of pioneer George A. Cornwall. Her birth reportedly took place in a covered wagon near Spokane, Washington, as George Cornwall and his family were completing a move into Washington territory. Following the death of her mother from unknown causes, Mary Cornwall was adopted by Richard and Cynthia (Moore) Davenport of Spokane County in 1883. With the Davenports, Mary moved to the Bellingham Bay area where she was brought up, attended the Sehome School, and received her early musical training on

the violin. No records of her violin teachers survive, but Madame Engberg first played in public at the age of twelve and was known in the area as a child prodigy even before that, receiving mention in the press and fond attention from the citizens of Bellingham.

After Mary's 1899 marriage to Henry Engberg, a Danish immigrant and successful pharmacist in Bellingham, the couple departed for Europe so that Madame Engberg could study in the great musical centers there. They traveled first to Copenhagen, where she studied with Anton Svendsen and made her European debut in 1903 when she played for the King and Queen of Denmark. After leaving Denmark, the Engbergs traveled to Berlin, where Mary studied at the Berlin Hochschule with Carl Halir, then the second violinist in the Joachim Quartet, and Willy Hess. Throughout her time in Europe, Madame Engberg appeared as a soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony, and Copenhagen Symphony. The Engberg's first child, Hans Paul Kruckow Engberg, was born on February 12, 1901, in Copenhagen. Henry split his time between his family in Denmark and maintaining his business back home in Bellingham.

In the fall of 1904, after five years of study abroad, Madame Engberg returned to the United States, stopping in New York

City to give a recital on November 25 at the Mendelssohn Hall. By this time Madame Engberg's playing was well developed and described favorably by critics. A reviewer wrote of her New York recital:

One will never forget how she makes [her Amati violin] sing in Bach's G-string aria or Wilhelm's "Ave Maria." For quality of tone, excellent interpretation, and brilliant bowing, this young artist has few equals and there is no seeking after effect in her playing. She puts into her expression the very soul of the composer. Mrs. Engberg is an artist of exceptional power and magnetism.³

When Madame Davenport Engberg returned home to Bellingham, she was greeted with much enthusiasm. Her first public appearance after her return brought the largest audience of the winter to Beck's Theater. She settled into a new home in Bellingham, combining her roles of wife, mother, and musician. Her second son, Ralph Cornwall Engberg, was born shortly after her return to the United States.

Madame Engberg became extensively involved in community outreach with music through the YWCA and Bellingham Women's Musical Club. She continued to perform often in Bellingham, all over the

CONTINUED



Bellingham in the early 20th century. Anchored on the Washington coast not far from the Canadian border, Bellingham thrived on the progressive ideas and attitudes of its citizens. (The Maud Powell Society Archive)

Mary Davenport Engberg



Violinist, conductor, visionary Mary Davenport Engberg in 1910. (Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA)

She believed that music was a tool which could directly improve the community and that not only should members of a community be exposed to good music, they should make music themselves.

Seattle area, and with orchestras along the coast. She taught in the music school she developed in her home, as well as the Washington State Normal School (now Western Washington University), where she was on the faculty.

Bellingham's favor for the violinist never waned. In the 1907–08 season Madame Engberg and Mrs. Irving Cross, a friend and fellow colleague at the Normal School, gave a full recital series together. No fewer than six articles printed in the *Bellingham Herald* prior to the second recital praised Madame Engberg's playing and promoted the upcoming performance. When the convention of the State Federation of Women's Clubs was held in Bellingham, a recital by Madame Engberg was chosen as the featured entertainment for the week.

Good music — “a moral obligation”

In spite of this attention, Mary Davenport Engberg wanted to exert a larger influence in her community than simply as a performer and teacher. In 1909 after playing with an orchestra on the West coast (we do not know which one), Madame Engberg became convinced that her community needed an orchestra, that she could lead it, and that it could be better than the orchestra with which she had just performed! Bringing good music to the community was, for her, a moral obligation. She believed that music was a tool which could directly improve the community and that not only should members of a community be *exposed* to good music, they should make music themselves.

Her convictions were strengthened by Maud Powell, who gave a violin recital in Bellingham on February 22, 1910, that was avidly promoted by Madame Engberg.⁴ The two became fast friends as Powell encouraged Engberg to fulfill her dreams.⁵

In 1911 Madame Engberg began recruiting orchestra members and teaching students to play the instruments for which there were not yet players. She purchased some instruments, such as violas, which no one in the town owned and pressed into service anyone who had previously played a string instrument. To fill out the ranks, she took on new students with the express purpose of preparing them for the ensemble. The work was tedious at first. Madame Engberg gave private lessons on the orchestral parts to each member of the string section in order to teach unity of phrasing and articulation since the musicians were not experienced enough to be able to pick that up in rehearsals. The rehearsals themselves were demanding and well directed. Madame Engberg had high standards and believed in painstakingly detailed rehearsal. One friend described her as “an outspoken perfectionist who would deliver tongue-lashings to whip the amateur musicians into proficiency.”⁶

The students worked hard too. In her 1917 article in *Etude* Madame Davenport Engberg recalled a funny story of when the young orchestra was learning Jules Massenet's *Scene Pittoresque*, and all the students needed many additional private lessons in order to master the parts:

It so happened that during this time a carpenter was doing some work for us in the basement directly under my studio, work which kept him busy about a week at odd times. In the meantime he worked at other places, on Friday morning upon making his appearance to finish up he inquired of the maid, “What is that queer piece that everyone in town is playing anyway? Now, I have worked here nearly a week and I have heard nothing but that same crazy piece played by everybody that has been here; then the other day I went over to the other side of town to repair a door sill and somebody in that house was playing the same piece. After I got to bed the other night somebody in the next house struck it up and stuck to it till midnight, and last night I went down to the Y.M.C.A. reading room to read in peace and quiet and, upon my soul, I hadn't been there ten minutes before a whole big orchestra struck up the same piece . . . it seems as if everybody has gone crazy over music and it certainly is crazy stuff they play.”⁷

CONTINUED

Mary Davenport Engberg



Violinist Maud Powell, right, arrived in Bellingham in the cold winter of 1913. She was met by Mrs. Engberg at the Hotel Byron. Bellingham was off the beaten track for concert artists but Powell braved the considerable hazards of travel to get there. (The Maud Powell Society Archive)

Madame Engberg wrote that the carpenter soon “caught the bug” and became an ardent supporter of the orchestra!

The orchestra’s premiere concert was given on May 3, 1912, to a sold-out audience at Beck’s Theater in Bellingham. Audience members came from as far as Seattle. The orchestra received rave reviews for their performance of Edvard Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* Suites, some unidentified dances by W.A. Mozart and Luigi Boccherini, a “March” from Richard Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, and a Spanish Dance by Moritz Moszkowski. Principal cellist “Mr. Stone” played a solo, “Song of the Evening Star,” also from *Tannhäuser*, and concertmaster Charles Morse performed Niccoló Paganini’s *Variations on the G String* for solo violin in addition to Wieniawski’s *Souvenir de Moscow* with the orchestra.

The second concert took place on November 15, 1912, this time attracting attention in national periodicals. A columnist for the *Musical Observer* wrote:

*So perfect was the work of the orchestra and soloists, so charming the selections rendered and so thoroughly delightful the entire evening that the audience of more than a thousand which packed the house unanimously departed proud of the fact that Bellingham could justly boast of a symphony orchestra superior to similar organizations in many cities of much greater population . . . So complete has been [Madame Engberg’s] success that it is seldom an orchestra capable of playing in such perfect harmony and of rendering such difficult selections with so much ease and charm is heard today. To Mrs. Engberg too high praise cannot be given for directing the individual efforts of the musicians toward a common goal with such success.*⁸

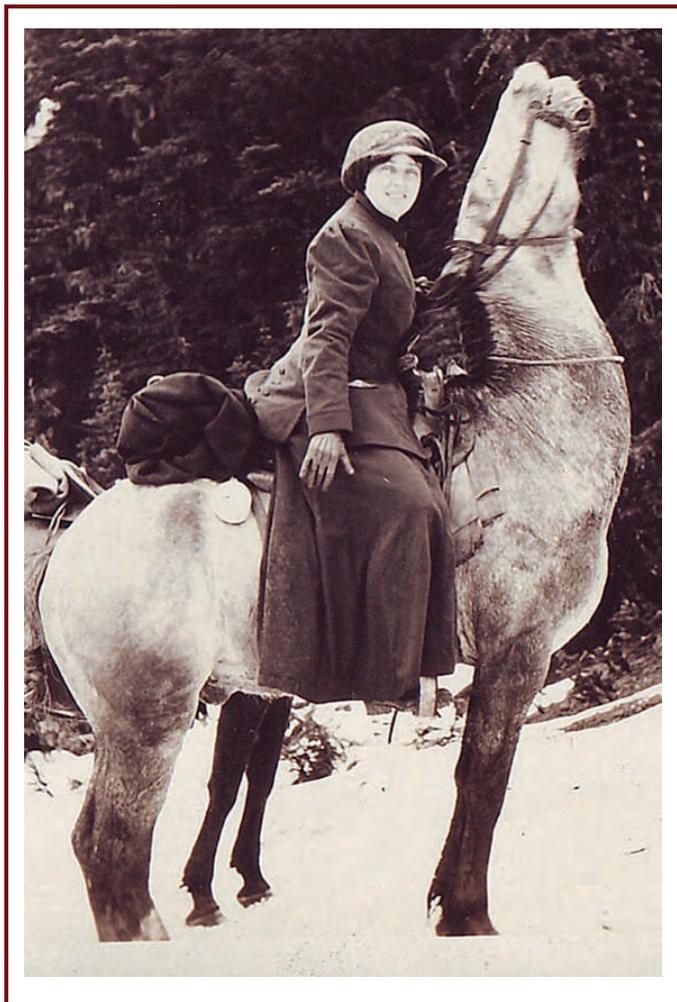
After the great success of the first two concerts, Madame Engberg decided to expand the orchestra’s programming to include nationally recognized artists. The first opportunity came during Maud Powell’s West Coast tour in the winter of 1912–13. By this time the orchestra consisted of forty-five players, about half of whom were women, making Madame Engberg the first known American woman to be the conductor of a mixed-gender orchestra.

The concert at which Maud Powell performed with the Davenport Engberg Orchestra took place on January 24, 1913, at the Metropolitan Theatre. The program was a compilation of several violin solos with piano, some orchestral pieces, and the *Souvenir de Moscow* by Wieniawski, which Powell and the orchestra played together. Rehearsals for this concert were reportedly quite intense, since it was the orchestra’s first concert with a touring soloist. The concert went well and with the largest advance sale in the history of the orchestra, there was a sizeable and enthusiastic audience. Maud Powell delighted the players by telling them how proud she was of their progress, and praised Madame Engberg for throwing her whole soul and emotion into her work.

After the milestone concert with Maud Powell, the orchestra continued to thrive. George Hamlin, a well-known operatic tenor, performed with the orchestra on April 2, 1913, and by the beginning of the orchestra’s third season, the size of the ensemble had increased to eighty-five members. In the fall of 1917 a Board of Directors and fundraising committee were formed to support the orchestra, and the ensemble became known as the Bellingham

CONTINUED

Mary Davenport Engberg



Mrs. Engberg enjoyed outdoor activities with her family, particularly horseback riding.

With Mrs. Engberg encouraging and training them, Bellingham citizens took pride in their new ability to make good music for themselves and others.

Symphony Orchestra instead of the “Davenport Engberg Orchestra,” as it had been called at the start.

In just fifteen years Madame Engberg’s teaching, conducting, and sheer determination created the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra and allowed it to grow in numbers and scope of activity, bringing music to prominence in the city. Bellingham citizens took pride in their new ability to make good music for themselves and to discern and appreciate the artistry of visiting performers.

A close-knit family

During this time the Engberg family was quite close-knit and enjoyed various pastimes together. They enjoyed spending winter evenings reading classics, such as Alexandre Dumas’s *The Three Musketeers* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*, aloud to one another, and in the summer months, the family took pleasure in outdoor activities such as gardening and hiking. When out of the city, Madame Engberg had no qualms about tucking up her skirts for easier management on the trails or mounting a horse for a ride, another one of her favorite diversions. She was a fast runner and at home she would race her boys in their yard just for fun.

In 1920 the Engberg family relocated to Seattle in order to pursue greater musical opportunities. Madame Engberg soon found herself conducting the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra, founded in 1903, had a rocky history fraught with financial troubles. From 1911 to 1918 the orchestra’s existence had been tenuous, but it did give occasional concerts under the leadership of John Spargur, the orchestra’s former concertmaster. In 1919 there was a rejuvenation of support, prospects seemed bright, and Spargur was officially appointed as music director. He led one successful season before financial troubles again beset the organization and the effort was abandoned.

Madame Engberg saw the need and stepped in as conductor to fill the void. Using many of the former Seattle Symphony players, she formed what she called the “Seattle Civic Symphony Orchestra” in the spring of 1921. (In press articles, this ensemble is alternately called the Seattle Civic Symphony Orchestra or the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.) As the only major orchestra in the city, it was a mixed ensemble of approximately ninety male and female players, some professional and some amateur, all unpaid. The new Civic Symphony’s first concert on April 24, 1921 received very positive reviews. Madame Engberg was also given high praise for her efforts:

The reception accorded was an enthusiastic one and was as much a personal tribute to Mme. Davenport-Engberg, conductor, whose untiring efforts have resulted in bringing together an excellent musical organization, as it was to the contributing artists themselves.⁹

The Seattle Civic Symphony Orchestra continued with great success for the next three years. In the fall of 1923, it was announced that during the ensuing season Madame Engberg would conduct two orchestras, one amateur and one fully professional. The new professional orchestra, composed of approximately sixty-five musicians, took on the old name “Seattle Civic Symphony Orchestra.” As the top orchestra in Seattle, it would bring in great soloists and provide a five-concert series.

CONTINUED

Mary Davenport Engberg

In the ensuing season, the professional orchestra engaged Frances Alda, soprano, Efrem Zimbalist, violin, Arnold Krauss, violin, Boris Malsky, lyric baritone, Wasili Gromakovsky, dramatic baritone, and Ossip Gabrilowitsch, piano, as soloists. Attendance at the concerts was consistently high, and reviews were enthusiastic. Madame Engberg continued to receive attention for her determination and will power. A reviewer in the *Musical Observer* commented:

*To Mme. Davenport-Engberg, who organized and directs the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, great credit is due. Its present capabilities clearly show the vision she possesses, and her power to impress that vision upon others.*¹⁰

Seattle musicians considered the orchestra possibly the best musical ensemble of which the city had been able to boast up to that time. During the 1923–24 season the Seattle Civic Symphony Orchestra was so well liked by the public that an additional concert was requested. Even so, Madame Engberg did not continue conducting the professional orchestra after the season was completed. An article in the *New York Times* implies that the orchestra had to disband for financial reasons. Two years later Maestro Karl Krueger moved to Seattle to become the Symphony's conductor, but he resigned after only six years as a result of yet more financial instability.

Although her tenure with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra had ended, Madame Davenport Engberg did not in the least fade from Seattle musical life. In addition to continuing her own solo performances and serving as a piano accompanist for many Seattle musicians, Madame Engberg formed a string quartet

which performed in Seattle and the surrounding areas, including in her hometown, Bellingham.

Creating a legacy

She directed the “Davenport Engberg School of Violin” in her home, through which she taught extensively. Staffed by Madame Engberg and a group of assistant teachers, the school offered lessons in violin, viola, cello, piano, and string bass, as well as courses in music theory, composition, instrumentation, and piano accompaniment. Ensemble playing was emphasized for all the students, who had the opportunity to participate in chamber groups of all sizes as well as in an orchestra under Madame Engberg's direction.

Madame Engberg's pupils went on to perform all over the country, many of them with successful musical careers. Catherine Wade Smith, for example, appeared twice with the Chicago Symphony under Frederick Stock, and Albert Bensen became the head of the violin department at the Bellingham School of Music and the conductor of the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra. Mildred Ebey Robinson won a scholarship to the Chicago College of Music, and Wilma Wills played for many years in the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Anita Lipp gave her debut recital in New York City on April 2, 1948, to great acclaim by the critics and continued to perform there over the next few years. Twice, students of Madame Engberg won the biennial contest of the National Federation of Music Clubs.

In 1932 Madame Engberg, together with her son Paul, founded the Seattle Civic Opera Association, the only opera

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Mrs. Davenport Engberg poised to conduct her Bellingham Orchestra. Later she became the conductor of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. (Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA)

Mary Davenport Engberg



Madame Engberg in 1924. She and her son Paul championed opera in Seattle. She became involved in tasks as diverse as sewing costumes to hosting receptions in her home. (Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA)

Mary Davenport Engberg was a hard worker who found relaxation in reading Westerns or science fiction novels.

company in Seattle at that time. The opera society's goal was to use local talent to produce grand opera. To that end Madame Engberg and her son established a board of directors which worked on a volunteer basis to advertise and raise funds for the organization. Paul recruited and trained the singers while his mother rehearsed and directed an opera orchestra made up of musicians from the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, the first opera the Seattle Civic Opera produced, opened on June 23, 1932. The production met with favorable reviews from Seattle critics. The Seattle Civic Opera Association continued to produce three operas per year into the mid-1930s, when it reduced that number to two. Rehearsals took place twice each week. All the work was done on a volunteer basis with costs covered by fundraising. Even Madame Engberg and Paul received no remuneration for their work because they believed so strongly in the good of what they were doing for the community and the benefits that could come to the people of Seattle through attending or participating in opera. Only two operas actually brought in a profit — because the Engbergs wanted the productions to have wide exposure in the community, 600 of the 2,000 seats in the Moore Theater were regularly reserved for students and sold for 35 cents. (Regular ticket prices were \$1.58 and \$2.10.) Madame Engberg continued directing the opera orchestra for two seasons, after which she handed the baton to Paul.

When Madame Engberg was no longer conducting the opera performances, she remained very involved in the productions through sewing costumes, helping backstage, and hosting receptions in her home after opera concerts. In fact, Madame Engberg was celebrated in Seattle for her social entertaining and was sure to host a party in her home whenever a renowned soloist arrived in town to perform with the opera or symphony. When the Italian tenor Tito Schipa came to Seattle, the Engbergs hosted a reception for 150 guests after his performance. The party for Edith Oldrup, a leading soprano for the Royal Danish Opera, included the Danish consul and vice-consul.

The Depression

Despite financial setbacks due to the Great Depression and personal loss with the death of her husband in 1942, Mary Davenport Engberg maintained a sense of aristocratic poise. She was a tiny woman with large clear eyes, a perfect complexion, deep red hair, and a youthful appearance that lasted even into her sixties. She carried herself with a noble manner and commanding presence both on and off the stage. Margaret Price, sister of Madame Engberg's daughter-in-law Gladys Berge Engberg, recalls spending weekends in the Engberg home while she was a University of Washington student in the late 1940s and being intimidated by Madame Engberg because she was such an authority figure. At the same time, however, the musical matriarch came across as gracious, charming, and very engaging.

Madame Engberg was a hard worker. She taught private lessons right up to the end of her life, although she cut back their numbers as she aged. Yet she knew how to take time for herself as well. At nighttime, Margaret Price remembers Madame Engberg retiring to her room and reading Westerns or science fiction novels before bed. The family owned property outside the city and on the weekends they went out to their "farm" and tried their hand at raising sheep and chickens and growing vegetables. The farm never yielded much, but they enjoyed the challenge and the break from city life. Madame Engberg gardened extensively in the yard of their Seattle home as well, and the trips to the mountains to fish and hike

CONTINUED

Mary Davenport Engberg

continued even as she aged. In Seattle, Madame Engberg was a member of the American Association of Penwomen, the Soroptimist Club, and the Daughters of the American Revolution and was very involved with her young grandchildren.

Mary Davenport Engberg passed away of a heart attack outside her home in Seattle on January 23, 1951, abruptly ending her productive life. No public funeral service was held. It seems that this gesture, combined with other circumstances, accelerated a rather quick disappearance of knowledge of Madame Engberg's legacy. There is no grave to act as a memorial to her, her house was torn down to make room for apartment buildings in Seattle's changing south Capitol Hill, and although her son initially kept all of his mother's gowns, programs, and newspaper clippings, they too were eventually destroyed when he could no longer keep them. The Seattle Symphony's financial turmoil and instability had continued into the 1930s and the ensemble was without a permanent home until the 1990s, so the orchestra had been in no condition to keep archives and its records of her are poor. Within only a few years of her death, tangible reminders of Madame

Engberg were gone, and her contribution was very nearly forgotten.

As a conductor, performer and teacher, Madame Engberg made a significant contribution to the musical culture of the Pacific Northwest. She saw herself as a music ambassador to the communities in which she lived. Her love for the music drove her to share it with the people she loved.

Wherever she found herself, Mary Davenport Engberg was determined that "We shall play great music."¹¹ It was not enough, she believed, for a community to engage touring artists – that is only evidence of wealth. Members of a community need to play music themselves in order to internalize it, understand it, and even in order to appreciate it when played by others. Madame Engberg often explained that "a community's musical standards are determined by the music it makes for itself," and her purpose was to enable her communities to make music for themselves, at a high standard of excellence.¹² It is the pursuit of that ambition which claims for her a place among the pioneers of music in America.

Notes

- ¹ "Go West, Young Musician! Maud Powell Advises," *Musical America* (March 29, 1913): 5.
- ² "Orchestra Gets Praise from Violinist," *Bellingham Herald* (January 25, 1913).
- ³ *The New York Press* as quoted by: "Mrs. Engberg Will Appear on Normal Lecture Course," *Bellingham Herald* (November 3, 1906).
- ⁴ MDE letter to the editor of the *Bellingham Herald*, February 20, 1910.
- ⁵ HFP, "Go West, Young Musician! Maud Powell Advises," *Musical America*, March 29, 1913
- ⁶ Marci Whitney, "Seattle Women's Pursuits Varied," *News Tribune* (Tacoma, WA) (August 15, 1976).
- ⁷ Mary Davenport-Engberg, "How to Start a Local Symphony Orchestra," *Etude* (May, 1917): 310.
- ⁸ Concert review of the Davenport Engberg Orchestra, November 15, 1912, *Musical Observer* (January, 1913): 1004.
- ⁹ "Civic Orchestra Heard in Concert," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (April 25, 1921).
- ¹⁰ "Mme. Davenport-Engberg, Only Woman Leader of Symphony Orchestra," *Musical Observer* (February 1924): 51.
- ¹¹ Mary Davenport Engberg quoted in Steven Winn, "Seattle's – and the World's – First Woman Conductor," *Argus* (Seattle), (December 19, 1975). Emphasis added.
- ¹² Esther W. Campbell, *Bagpipes in the Woodwind Section: A History of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and its Women's Association* (Seattle: Seattle Symphony Women's Association, 1978) 14.

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The original source research for this article and excerpts of the text are from the author's M.A. thesis, "We Shall Play Great Music": Mary Davenport Engberg as a Pioneering Conductor and Educator in the Pacific Northwest," University of Washington, 2008.

For Further Reading

The following books and studies provide a helpful cross-section of perspectives and information on Mrs. Davenport Engberg's colorful era and the women who were among the early pioneers in music.

Ammer, Christine. *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music.* Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2001.

Blair, Karen J., ed. *Women in Pacific Northwest History.* Rev. ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

Bowers, Jane and Judith Tick, eds. *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Edwards, G. Thomas and Carlos A. Schwantes, eds. *Experiences in a Promised Land: Essays in Pacific Northwest History.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986.

Macleod, Beth Abelson. "Whence Comes the Lady Tympanist?" *Gender and Instrumental Musicians in America, 1853-1990.* *Journal of Social History* 27, no. 2 (Winter, 1993): 291-308.

Shaffer, Karen A. and Neva Garner Greenwood. *Maud Powell, Pioneer American Violinist.* Ames: Iowa State University Press (1988): 291-3.

Tick, Judith. "Women as Professional Musicians in the United States, 1870-1900." *Anuario Interamericano de Investigacion Musical* 9 (1973): 95-133.



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After her death, all signs of Mary Davenport Engberg seemed to vanish, a fate that too often befell women in music. Little record of her work remains but recent efforts to uncover her contributions have brought her name back into the public consciousness. (Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA)

Inspiration to Succeed: the friendship of two women pioneers in music

Mrs. Davenport-Engberg Praises Maud Powell

Editor Herald:

In connection with Maud Powell's appearance in this city next Tuesday evening, I have heard numerous regrets expressed that she is not to be heard in the best house in the city [Bellingham Theater]. I most sincerely join in this sentiment and regret deeply that she cannot appear here under the most favorable conditions, however, when the management of such a world renowned artist places our city among those which are able to appreciate and support such an artist, above mentioned conditions should not keep any music lover who has the reputation of Bellingham at heart from giving the support of their presence at the concert, even if the surroundings are not so pleasant. Maud Powell's opinion, expressed occasionally the world over, is worth something. She will know the reason why and wherefor and we do not want her to leave us with an unfavorable impression.

She is, not alone without question, the greatest violinist America has ever produced, but she will stand comparison with any of the greatest European violinists as well.

There is intellect and deep musicianship in everything she plays. She is a great woman as well as artist. To hear her is educational and uplifting to anyone and Bellingham may well congratulate itself on this privilege. The citizens at large are not at fault in regard to the conditions under which the artist must appear, but it is left to them alone to see that she has a large audience. I am sure Bellingham will show itself equal to the occasion next Tuesday evening by giving this great artist a big and enthusiastic welcome and by letting nothing mar the pleasure of this forthcoming treat.

*Mrs. M. Davenport-Engberg
The Bellingham Herald
February 20, 1910 **

**(From a clipping in the Maud Powell Society Archive)*



Maud Powell and Mary Davenport-Engberg both enjoyed the managerial support of their husbands who are seen in this photograph standing at the far sides of the stage facing their respective wives. (Maud Powell Society Archive)

Two gifted women in service to music

A full house greeted the American violinist Maud Powell (1867-1920) for her recital in Bellingham, Washington, on Tuesday evening, February 22, 1910. The captivated audience “sat enraptured” as she presented a program which included the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor (received with “thunders of applause”) and two movements from César Franck’s violin sonata, along with numerous smaller works that delighted and charmed her audience. Her pianist Waldemar Liachowsky performed two piano solos “with facility and beauty.” Powell concluded her recital with Schumann’s “Traumeri”, followed by Wieniawski’s “Russian Airs.” She was recalled again and again to the platform by enthusiastic applause.

The next day, *The Bellingham Herald* reported:

The immense technique required in each number seemed like mere play to the artist, for from the deep and powerful numbers to the daintiest of airs her power and skill were like magic. To hear her is like standing in the sunlight of a lovely spring day, her art is so stimulating and wholesome. She possesses warmth of feeling and depth of sympathy wherein lies the secret of her wonderful ability. Her art is not the far-away kind that seems to float around the snowcapped mountains, but it is deeply human. . . . [I]t is the unpretentious, absolutely natural and warm-hearted personality of Miss Powell that makes her so delightful.¹

Maud Powell’s appearance in Bellingham encouraged Mary Davenport-Engberg (1880-1951) to pursue her dream of forming an orchestra in Bellingham. She undoubtedly shared her ambition with Powell, whose enthusiasm for the enterprise can well be imagined. Engberg understood that if she established an orchestra, Maud Powell would return to perform as soloist with the orchestra, even if the piece required only minimal accompani-

ment, giving a boost to the orchestra players and the citizens’ pride in their community. Powell earnestly urged her younger colleague on, perhaps because Powell herself had dreamed of being a conductor.

Powell knew only too well the challenges women musicians faced in gaining acceptance as concert artists as well as in their efforts to awaken and educate their fellow citizens to the value of classical music in communities throughout the country. She had faced every kind of challenge as she pioneered the violin recital throughout the continent. She let nothing deter her service to music. No doubt her willingness to come to Bellingham, which was “off the beaten track,” endeared her to Davenport-Engberg, an artist in her own right who must have felt deeply deprived of great music, with few artistic colleagues and minimal first-class music making in Bellingham. There was still virgin timber along most of the highway from Seattle north to Bellingham, near the Canadian border, and few artists of Powell’s caliber braved the hazards of winter travel to get there, which added to Engberg’s sense of isolation. In one instance, Emilio de Gogorza, a famous Spanish baritone, turned back to Seattle after a mudslide on the Great Northern Railway delayed his arrival.

When Maud Powell returned to Bellingham in 1913 to perform with the orchestra (the ensemble’s third public performance after its formation), Powell was delighted with the work that Engberg had done. She explained to a *Musical America* reporter that Engberg’s own violin pupils formed the nucleus of the ensemble and noted, “She had no easy task before her.”

At that time [1911–12] not a soul in Bellingham had any idea of what a viola was. Mrs. Engberg industriously set about teaching some of her pupils the viola. Gradually other

CONTINUED

Engberg and Powell — in service to music

instrumentalists were secured. A flutist was found and in order that his sojourn in Bellingham would be assured the resourceful organizer of the orchestra procured him eleven pupils. Picture to yourself a town of that rank with eleven people busily learning to play the flute!

Well, they rehearsed ceaselessly. As the time drew near they practiced the piece I was going to play with them [Wieniawski's "Souvenir de Moscow"]. Their concertmaster played the solo part. Nervousness was naturally aroused to a high pitch when I appeared to rehearse with them. "Now if you make a single mistake at the performance," Mrs. Engberg flatly told her players, "I solemnly vow to run right out through the door at the back of the platform." "Very well," answered a voice in the orchestra, "but you won't be able to get through for the crowd!" But the concert went off most creditably.²

Maud Powell and the Davenport-Engberg Orchestra rendered a joint program on January 24th at the Metropolitan Theater, opening with Schubert's "Rosamunde" overture, followed by Powell's solo with the orchestra. "Miss Powell had the audience in her power from the moment she first drew the bow across her violin and she added to this power as often as she appeared," the *American Reveille* reported.³ The violinist performed several pieces with piano, including Wieniawski's "Polonaise brillante", and the orchestra played music by Delibes, Meyerbeer, Drigo, and Spindler. The large crowd of listeners gave the musicians and their music a hearty reception. No one could have left the theater "unsatisfied," the reviewer concluded.

The critic for the *Herald* wrote: "The hold which the Davenport-Engberg Orchestra has upon the musical life of Bellingham was strengthened by the performance of last night. It would hardly seem possible that a symphony orchestra of such excellence could belong to Bellingham and the fact that it does should make the city feel proud."⁴

Powell reinforced the town's support for the orchestra, not only by performing with it, but by pointing out its significance to the community: "Bellingham is very fortunate, indeed, in having the splendid symphony orchestra that Mrs. Davenport-Engberg has made possible, not only from a musical point of view, but also taken from a publicity and advertising standpoint. . . . There is nothing that will give a city better publicity and standing than prestige along musical lines, and right here in your pretty little city you have headed in the right direction in that respect. . . ."⁵ She expressed surprise at the degree of success achieved by the young orchestra and pointed out that not one city on the coast of twice its size could boast of such an organization.

Powell understood how important it was to give the right encouragement and how much her personal encouragement meant to the orchestra members especially. "They asked me if I were pleased. 'Pleased,' I answered, 'why I am thoroughly amazed!' So I was. But my saying so delighted them beyond all words. And now, through the work and devotion of one woman that town has an orchestra on which it may well pride itself."⁶

Powell rightly attributed Engberg's success to her ability to awaken in her pupils their latent musical spirit. She pointed out that the atmosphere of classical music cultivated by Engberg had enabled the people of Bellingham to gain more sophisticated musical taste.

During her visit in 1913, Powell and Engberg thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. They spent most of the day with Mrs. C. X. Larrabee, a superb pianist who had studied in Boston. Engberg's son Paul reported: "Maud Powell was politically congenial at first, but thawed to adolescent enthusiasm on several occasions, particularly when she played my mother's Amati — which had an immense full tone."⁷ Willy Hess, her teacher in Berlin, had sent her to Joseph Joachim who suggested the instrument for her.



Maud Powell around the time she journeyed to Bellingham, Washington. (Maud Powell Archive)

The women played the Sarasate duet for two violins and recorded it on an old Edison phonograph (wax cylinder record), which pleased Powell.

According to Paul Engberg, Powell was "such a lovely person — graceful and considerate." Sensing the struggle within her pioneering sister, she encouraged Engberg to continue her lonely work, not only at that time but through the years that followed. "To show you how good she was — when my mother deprecated the work she was doing, and not being able to follow her career out in the 'sticks' Maud Powell said, 'I'll trade places with you.' Ten years later my mother became the first woman conductor of a major professional orchestra, the Seattle Symphony, and she attributed her long conversations with Maud Powell for her perseverance in the face of discouraging odds."⁸

Karen A. Shaffer

Notes

¹ "Violinist Captivates Large Audience," *The Bellingham Herald*, 23 February 1910. The program is in the Maud Powell Society Archive.

² H. F. P., "'Go West, Young Musician!' Maud Powell Advises," *Musical America*, 29 March 1913. The concert was promoted in *The Bellingham Herald* — "Maud Powell at the Metropolitan Theater With the Davenport-Engberg Orchestra, Tomorrow Night," 23 January 1913; "Maud Powell to Appear with Orchestra Tonight," 24 January 1913.

³ "Large Audience Hears Concert; Keenly Enjoyed," *American Reveille* (Bellingham), 25 January 1913.

⁴ "Maud Powell Holds Large Audience Under Spell," *The Bellingham Herald*, 25 January 1913.

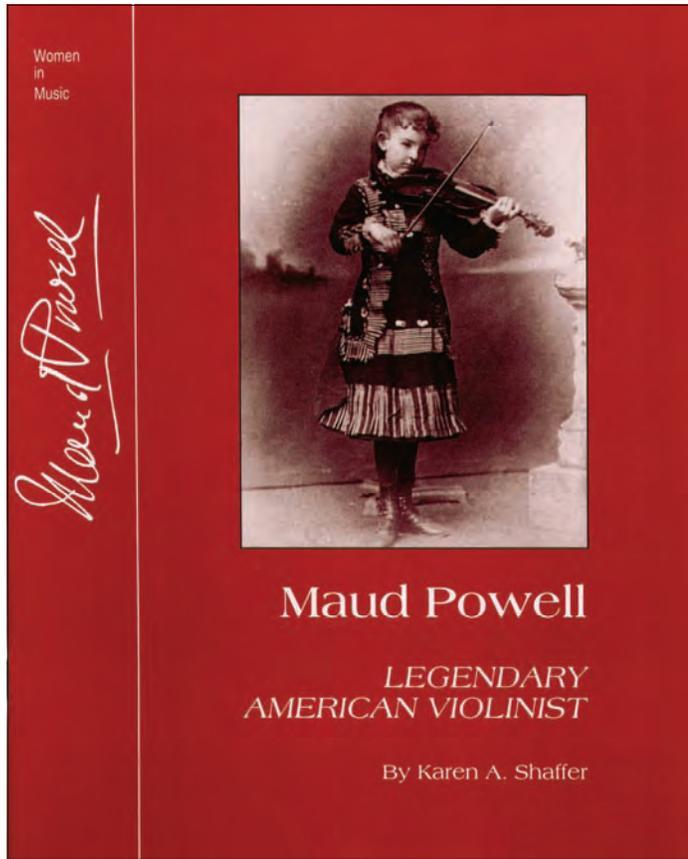
⁵ "Orchestra Gets Praise From Violinist," *The Bellingham Herald*, 25 January 1913; "Success of the Davenport-Engberg Symphony Orchestra," *The Musical Observer*, March 1913.

⁶ *Musical America*, 29 March 1913, 5.

⁷ Letter from Paul K. Engberg, 22 August 1979, Maud Powell Society Archive.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Women in Music for Children



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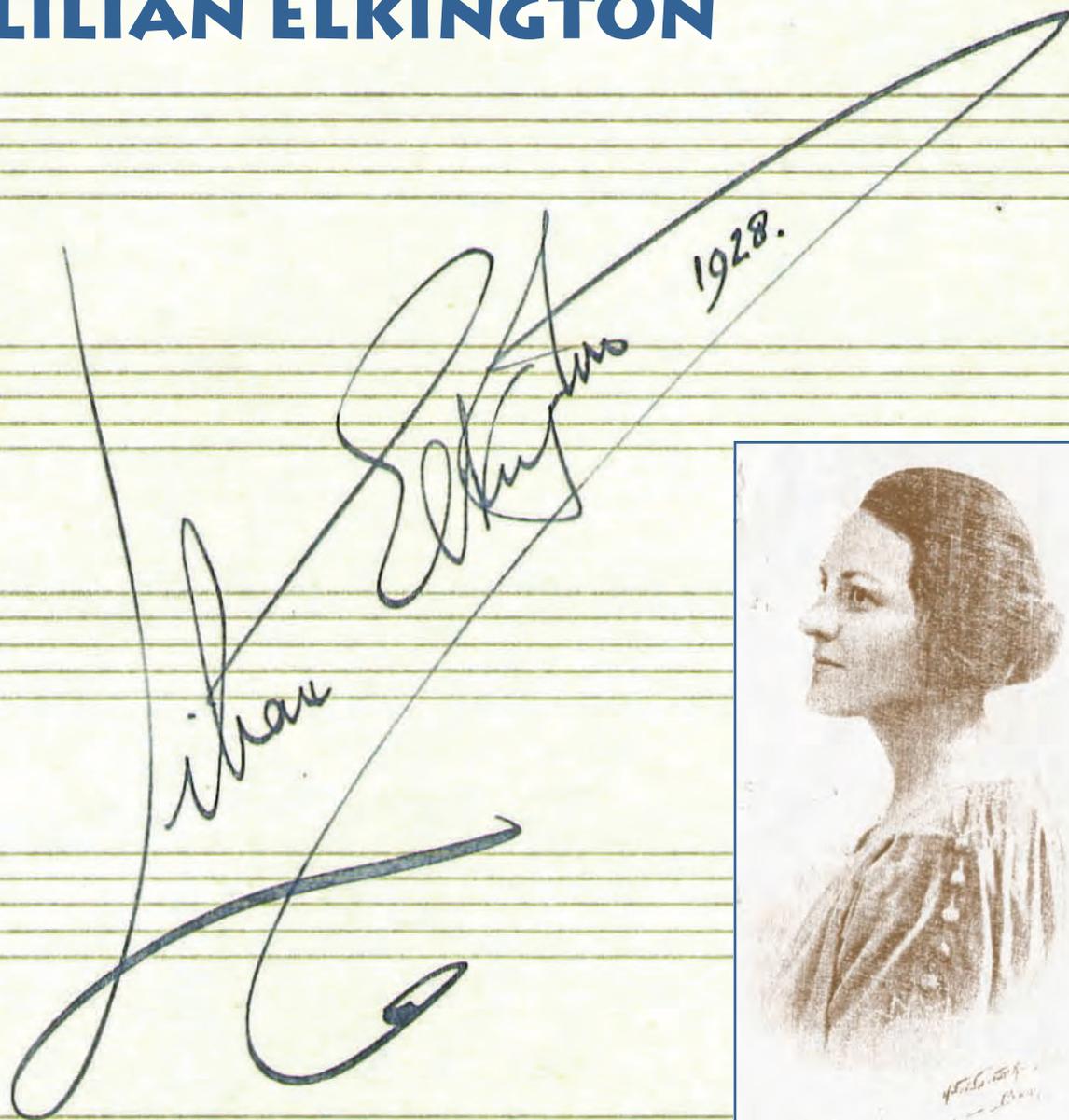
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LILIAN ELKINGTON



OUT OF THE MIST

DAVID J. BROWN

LILIAN ELKINGTON

RE-EMERGING OUT OF THE MIST

There are all kinds of reasons for the neglect of composers, only one of which is that their music may not be very good -- neither worth digging up in the first place, nor worth the rehearsal time and expense of performing it. The reasons for neglect are complex and numerous, maybe as many as there are forgotten or neglected composers and works. Chance gave me the opportunity to rescue Lilian Elkington's entire output, as it would seem, from oblivion.

By any normal standard of a composer's output, hers is almost non-existent. Elkington's entire extant oeuvre amounts to one short orchestral tone-poem, two pieces for violin and piano, and one song. And that is it!

How could this be?

Iris Lilian Mary Elkington was born on September 15, 1900, in Birmingham, Warwickshire, England, according to a note dated August 14, 1984, by her daughter, Mary Williams. I am indebted to this note for the following brief biography.¹

Elkington began to learn the piano at the age of four and gave her first public performance at the age of six. She was educated at a convent in Olton, Warwickshire, which it is reasonable to surmise was run by a French order, the Sisters of Our Lady of Compassion.

At eighteen, she passed with distinction her matriculation examination qualifying her for university attendance and subsequently studied piano and composition at the Birmingham and Midland Institute School of Music with Sir Granville Bantock. She also studied the organ, and became a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music (LRAM) and Associate of the Royal College of Organists (ARCO) in her early twenties.

Ms. Williams' note continues: "Lilian Elkington gave many public concerts and recitals in Birmingham Town Hall and other cities in England and her repertoire included all the Beethoven Piano Concertos, the Grieg Piano Concerto, Schumann Piano Concerto, etc. She also performed in a number of chamber music ensembles and was a fine accompanist.

"Lilian Elkington composed all her works before her marriage in 1926, after which time she gradually gave up her musical career. However, she continued to be an organist and was for many years the organist at The Abbey, Erdington [Erdington Abbey Church], Birmingham, and later became organist and choir mistress at The Catholic Church [presumably Holy Trinity], Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

"She is a direct descendant of Lord Neville, the first Earl of Warwick, and married Arthur Kennedy, a professional violinist and viola player, in 1926. In 1948 they moved from Birmingham to Bookham, and then in 1954 to East Horsley. She died August 13th 1969 [while] on holiday in Austria."

A Used Book Store in Worthing

The fact that anything is now known of Lilian Elkington stems from my chance discovery of her music. In the late 1970s, I found a parcel of manuscript scores of four works in a second-hand book store in Worthing, Sussex and purchased them for the princely sum of £3.75. It was one of those "moments" -- how could I leave them there?

There were two copies each of (1) a song titled "Little Hands," (2) a Rhapsodie and (3) a Romance, both for violin and piano, and most importantly, (4) the full score of an orchestral work titled *Out of the Mist*. Fortunately a full set of orchestral parts for the latter was also in the parcel, eventually enabling its first performance in recent times. *Out of the Mist* was performed on September 24, 1988, as part of the 17th annual concert of the Broadheath Singers, by the Windsor Sinfonia conducted by Robert Tucker -- who is, not coincidentally, my oldest friend.²

The score bears the date 1921, and researches at the time of the 1988 performance revealed that Bantock conducted what must have been the premiere with the Midland Institute student orchestra in June 1921. Another performance took place the following June in Harrogate, Yorkshire, under Howard Carr, and on December 21, 1922, *Out of the Mist* appeared in a program with Brahms' Academic Festival Overture, Dvořák's Violin Concerto, and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony as one of the many British music novelties Sir Dan Godfrey was wont to include in his concerts at Bournemouth, Hampshire, on England's south coast. Sadly, that little flurry of airings seems to have been all that the work had until Robert Tucker's performance almost sixty-six years later.

Nearly eighteen more years were to pass before *Out of the Mist* received its premiere recording -- by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, no less -- conducted by David Lloyd-Jones. Its release on the Dutton label's Epoch series (CDLX 7172) was richly deserved. Masterminded by the indefatigable Lewis Foreman, the disc includes music that

CONTINUED

The only known image of Lilian Elkington is a photocopy of a small photograph of her. (David J. Brown Collection)

Out of the Mist

LILIAN ELKINGTON

was composed during or is concerned with World War I. Apart from Elkington's tone-poem, the disc includes the following works: F.S. (Frederick) Kelly's *Elegy for Strings "In Memoriam Rupert Brooke"*, Ivor Gurney's *War Elegy*, Sir Hubert Parry's *The Chivalry of the Sea*, and the

fronting masterpiece that gives its title to the whole collection, *The Spirit of England* by Sir Edward Elgar.

A cutting from a concert program for *Out of the Mist* pasted behind the title page of Elkington's manuscript bears the following description:

"4. ORCHESTRAL POEM – 'OUT OF THE MIST' -- Lilian Elkington

This short tone-poem is the outcome of a poignant memory connected with the war. The equal suffering and sacrifice of all classes in the cause of common humanity, which led to the honouring of the Unknown Warrior, have been felt by all, and have been well expressed by Laurence Binyon in the lines:

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea:
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free, etc.

When the Unknown Warrior was brought home to his last resting-place 'there was a thick mist over the Channel, out of which the warship slowly emerged' as she drew near to Dover. This explanation of the title will give the clue to the understanding of the music. The opening is quiet, with muted lower strings, as the ship feels her way through the murk. Slight rifts in the mist are hinted at by the use here and there of the upper strings; and the melancholy phrases enlarge as the ship creeps onward with her fateful burden. After a pause, mutes are removed, the air grows brighter, and the deep gloom upon men's spirits is somewhat relieved, though the tension is still strong. Gradually the style enlarges and becomes more elevated as larger views of the meaning of sacrifice calm the spirit. The agitation of the soul reasserts itself, broadens, and leads to the final section, *Largamente appassionata*, *ff*, as with a burst of sad exaltation the representative of the nameless thousands who have died in the common cause is brought out of the darkness to his own."



The body of the Unknown Warrior returned to England on the HMS Verdun. Spectators on the pier at Dover could hear the vessel moving through the water but could not see it for the fog. Then, as the Verdun neared the shore, it emerged from the mist.

LILIAN ELKINGTON



The tomb of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey in London.

The note is identical to that included in the programme book for Godfrey's Bournemouth concert, where it is signed "H Orsmond Anderton." That does not, however, explain the numeral "4" – one can hardly imagine Godfrey following Beethoven's Pastoral with Lilian Elkington's work. Pending further investigation, the most likely explanation is that the pasted-in note was clipped from the program for the first, student, performance in 1921, where *Out of the Mist* would seem on this evidence to have been item no. 4. Anderton's authorship is easily explained – he was Bantock's friend, and indeed, biographer.

Whether or not this was its provenance, the note gives all the programmatic description necessary. However, only the 2006 professional recording revealed however the real mastery of orchestral texture and colour that Elkington managed to achieve in what we can only assume was her first such work. Not one of the scant 71 bars is superfluous. With a concision and directness that many might envy, *Out of the Mist* makes its powerful point in just under eight minutes. On-line reviewer Michael Cookson justly concluded his review of the disc: "A real find is Lilian Elkington's score *Out of the Mist*. It reminded me at times of Rachmaninov's symphonic poem *the Isle of the Dead*. Intense and deeply affecting, *Out of*

the Mist is a work that deserves to be heard more often."³

What of the remaining three pieces from that dusty brown-paper parcel? Their chronological indications in the composer's output are tantalising – one can only speculate about what is missing between opus numbers and the intervening years. The Romance for Violin and Piano is labelled Op 1, with no date. The Rhapsodie for Violin and Piano is Op 3, again with no date. *Out of the Mist*, as already noted, bears the date 1921, but has no opus number. "Little Hands" also bears no opus number but intriguingly is dated 1928 on the fair copy and thus gives the lie, just, to Mary Williams' note that "Lilian Elkington composed all her works before her marriage in 1926."

Both the Rhapsodie and the Romance are, in terms of measures, slightly longer than *Out of the Mist* – 74 and 88 bars respectively. Pending hearing them, both works would seem, from the manuscripts, to possess something of their orchestral sibling's power and atmosphere – markings like *con passione*, *sonore maestoso*, and even *con somma passione* litter their pages. The words for "Little Hands" are credited to S.J.J. Wise -- a quick Google indicates that he or she was a Hampshire poet -- and are as follows:

CONTINUED

LILIAN ELKINGTON

*Tiny hands, The first sweet visioning of love's caress
Striving to twine a finger on a tress
Or press a bosom fair
Tiny hands I love
Tiny hands I love*

*Little hands, not always clean or still or doing right
Come creeping round the dreaming head at night
To smooth the furrows out
Little hands I love
Little hands I love*

*Brown hands, so full of manly strength and gentle power
In their firm hold I should not fear death's hour
But now for every day
Brown hands I love
Brown hands I love*

*Old hands, perhaps a little horny rough and worn
God grant that on the last long journey home
I find the pressure of
Old hands I love
Old hands I love.*

Lilian Elkington's musical setting may prove to be more than sentimental.

None of the fair copies of the three works (including separate violin parts for the Rhapsodie and Romance) shows any sign of performers' markings, which cannot be said for the full score of *Out of the Mist*, which has emendations by one or more of its conductors in red and blue crayon and pencil. The Rhapsodie, the Romance, and "Little Hands," therefore, presumably await their premieres.

So where does this leave us? Can these four pieces by a clearly extremely talented young woman really be all that has survived? The missing "Op 2" and, in particular, that long seven-year gap between 1921 and 1928 surely indicate that more of her works may once have existed, but one must fear the worst for their survival in the absence of any evidence of other manuscripts, let alone publications. That parcel seems to have got to the bookshop where I found it only by the proverbial skin of its teeth. Apparently

after Lilian Elkington's death Arthur Kennedy remarried. When he died, his wife – having no connection with Elkington – disposed of an unknown quantity of material. In the meantime, the very quality of *Out of the Mist* now revealed makes even more poignant the sacrifice of such a talent, as it would appear, to wifely duty.

Notes

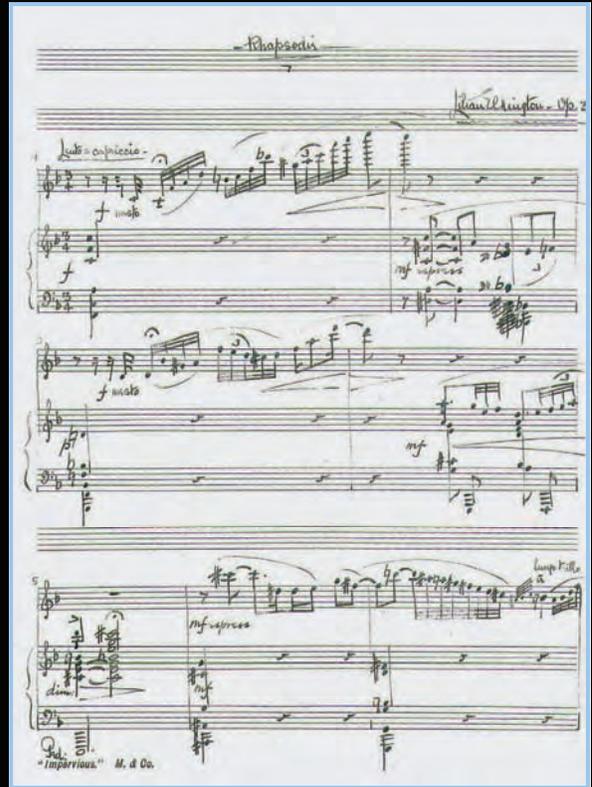
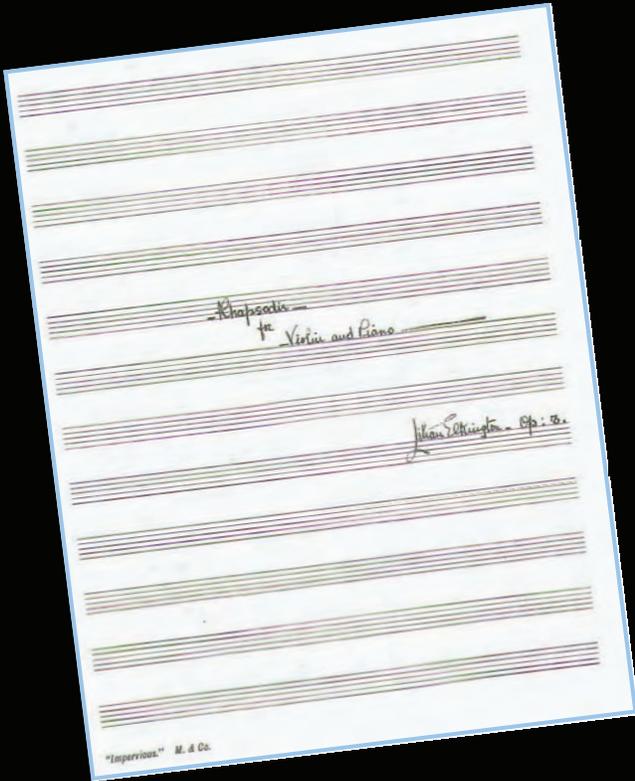
¹ Williams' birth date for her mother contradicts the birth year of 1901 that has somehow become attached to all references to the composer.

² Robert Tucker founded the Broadheath Singers in 1971 and over the next thirty years or so amassed an extraordinary tally of musical resuscitations, mostly but not exclusively, of British choral/orchestral and orchestral works.

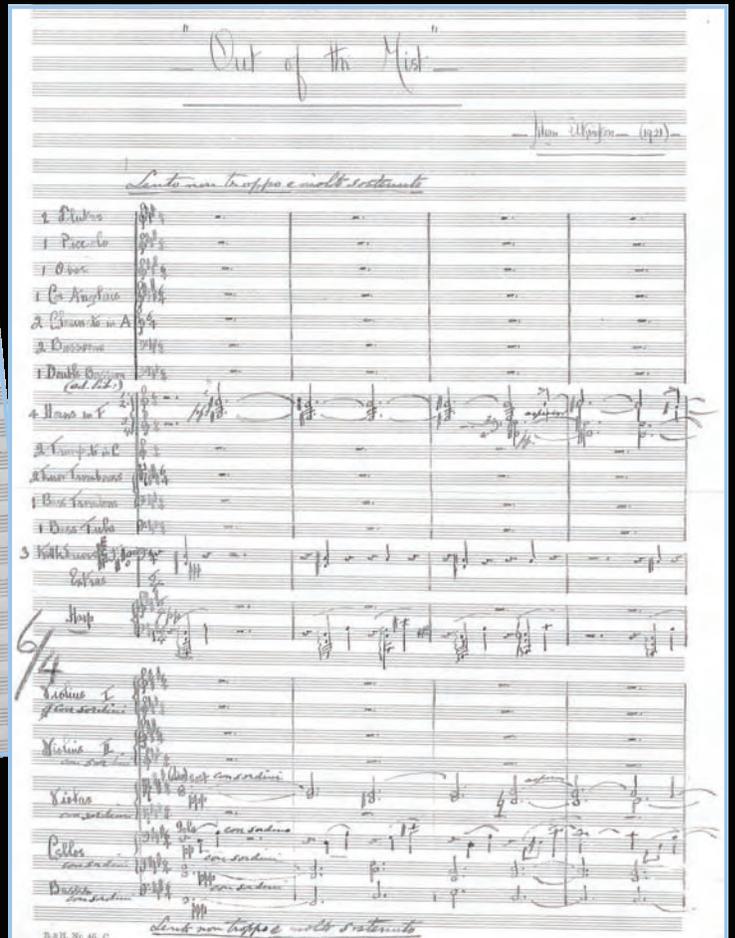
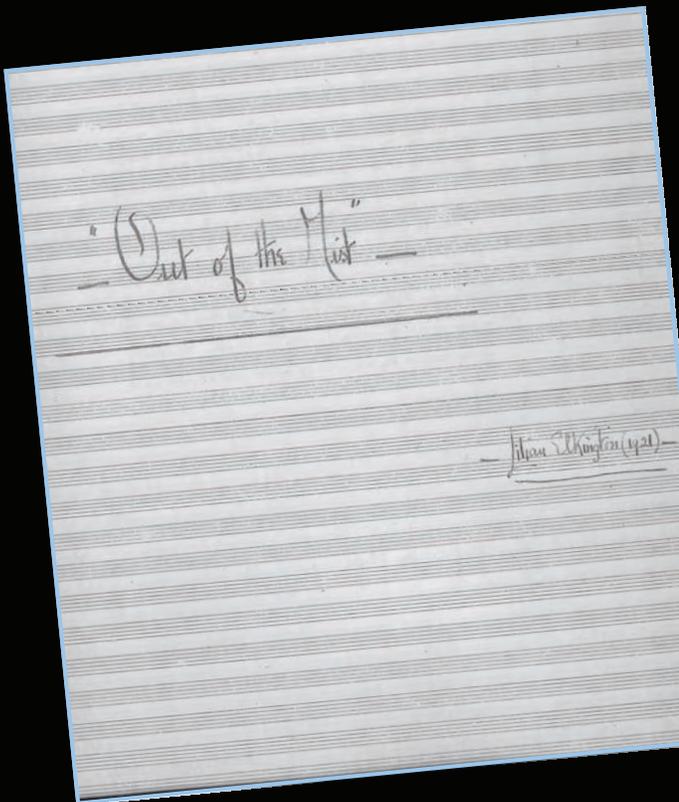
³ http://www.musicweb-international.com/classRev/2007/July07/Elgar_spirit_CDLX7172.htm .

To see samples of Lilian Elkington's music manuscripts, please continue.

LILIAN ELKINGTON



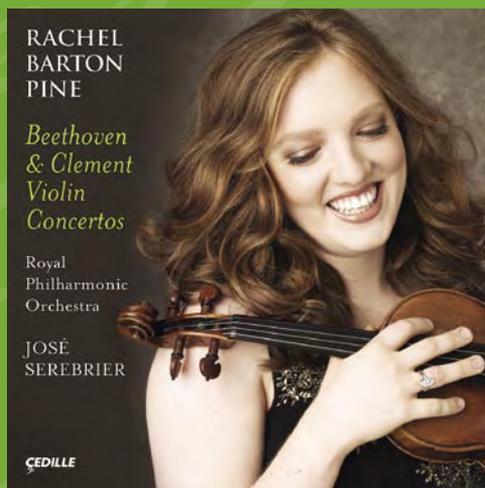
Rhapsodie for Violin and Piano, op. 3



Out of the Mist, orchestral score, 1921

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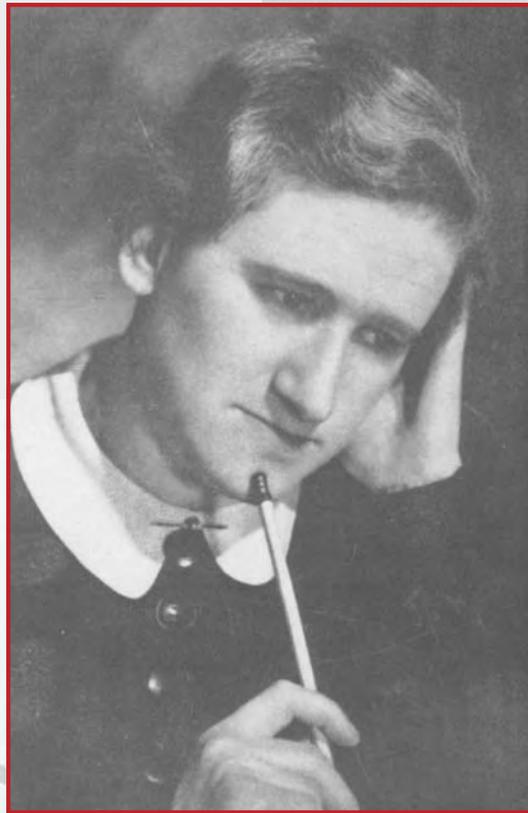
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BERTA GEISSMAR



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The Baton and the Jackboot Music in the Shadow of Politics

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the Berlin Philharmonic is among the best orchestras in the world. Besides the outstanding quality of its musicians and chief conductors there have always been people behind the stage carefully and efficiently arranging concerts, solving problems, and dealing with difficulties in order to let its members concentrate on their music. Some of these music managers were well known and, like Wolfgang Stresemann, are well remembered. Others who kept in the background were nonetheless important. One of them was Berta Geissmar, to whom the orchestra owed a good deal of its success during the 1920s and the early 1930s.

Berta Geissmar was Wilhelm Furtwängler's secretary. When he became chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, she started taking care of the orchestra's business affairs as well as his. As an orchestra manager she was a pioneer, travelling around Europe and organizing tours and concerts with the greatest precision. She sacrificed her private life to devote all her energy to the orchestra.

The only reliable source on Berta Geissmar's life comes from her autobiography *The Baton and the Jackboot*. She was born in 1892 in Mannheim, a city in south-western Germany with a great musical heritage. Her father was a well-known lawyer and, along with her mother, a passionate music lover. They started taking their only daughter to concerts at an early age and let her learn to play the violin. As a child Geissmar had the opportunity to meet many famous musicians whom her parents regularly invited to their home.

In 1910 Geissmar enrolled at the University of Heidelberg, where she was the only woman to choose philosophy as a major. In addition she studied psychology, art history, and archaeology. During World War I, Geissmar worked in a hospital while she continued her studies. In 1918 she became a member of the board of the Mannheim concert association. Two years later she finished her doctoral thesis titled *Art and Science as Concepts of the Universe*. She lived in Berlin from 1921 until she had to leave her home country in 1935. Sir Thomas Beecham gave her the opportunity to work and live in London during World War II.

There is little information on how Geissmar spent the years after the War. She stayed in London, where she met Wilhelm Furtwängler again. Clearly, she remained in the music business and continued to travel to festivals on the Continent. In November 1949 she suffered a stroke and died shortly after.

The Baton and the Jackboot

Berta Geissmar's autobiography was first published in English under the title *The Baton and the Jackboot* in 1944. The original version in German was published one year later under the title *Musik im Schatten der Politik (Music in the Shadow of Politics)* by the Swiss publisher Atlantis Verlag Zürich. The first edition in

the United States was published in 1946 under the title *Two Worlds of Music*. Later German editions bear the translation of the somehow rougher English title *Taktstock und Schafstiefel (The Baton and the Jackboot)*.

Geissmar divided her book into five parts: Germany before Hitler – Hitler Germany, 1933-1935 – American Interlude, 1936 – Pre-War England, 1936-1939 – England in War Time, 1939-1945. She concludes her book with a short note on how she spent May 9th 1945, the day after Germany's capitulation. The first half of the book mainly deals with Geissmar's work for Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. It actually is one of the main sources for the orchestra's history during the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the second part of the book she writes about her work in England for the Australian conductor Sir Thomas Beecham. Although Geissmar focuses her narrative on Furtwängler and Beecham, her own important role and achievements become very clear, especially in her work with Furtwängler.

Before summarizing the book, it is important to take a short look at Wilhelm Furtwängler's activities under the Nazi-regime. He was determined to stay in Germany and keep conducting the Berlin Philharmonic as in his opinion his music had nothing to do with politics. In 1933 he was appointed vice-president of the Reichsmusikkammer. He tried to protect Jewish and other persecuted musicians as well as he could, even hiding them in his own apartment. Even today discussions go on about his case. He was blamed for taking personal advantage of the fact that he was in such a high position that the Nazis could not allow themselves to do him harm. There are historians who call him arrogant and egoistical and those who blame others to minimize the role he played unwillingly for the Nazi-regime.

In 1934 Furtwängler wrote a newspaper article supporting Paul Hindemith, whose music was considered degenerate by the Nazis. Further, he performed Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* in concert. As a consequence Furtwängler was forced to retire from all his music positions. In April 1935 he started conducting again, however, even though he held no official post.

After 1945 Furtwängler was not allowed to perform until he was denazified. In Geissmar's book it becomes very clear that she regarded Wilhelm Furtwängler as a victim of the Nazi-regime. In spite of the fact that she tried to persuade him to emigrate, without success, she never blamed him for staying in Germany. There is not a single negative comment about his activities on her part. Her dedication to him was so profound that she would not allow herself to criticize him. In reading her memoirs one has to be aware of that fact.

Germany before Hitler

In the very beginning of her book, Berta Geissmar mentions several musical and cultural events of historical importance that

CONTINUED

took place in her hometown Mannheim. Mozart and Goethe visited Mannheim and Schiller's drama *Die Räuber* had its première there. Mannheim indeed played a great role in the development of musical life in Germany. During the eighteenth century the city became one of the most important centers for art and music in Europe due mostly to its excellent orchestra and the musicians, teachers, and composers who lived and worked in Mannheim. Johann Stamitz was among the most well known. They were all supported by their sovereign, the great art-loving Elector Karl Theodor.

Geissmar states that the people in her hometown were shaped by its special musical character. Her early surroundings gave her optimal conditions for her future work as an orchestra manager. She had the opportunity to meet many excellent musicians, not only in concerts she attended from an early age but also in her parents' home. Among them was Wilhelm Furtwängler whom Geissmar first met when they were both children.

When Furtwängler became director of the Mannheim opera in 1915, he was twenty-nine years old. Geissmar was twenty-three years old and she describes him as a tall and very attractive young man with a visionary expression in his deep blue eyes. It is clear that she was fascinated and attracted by him from that moment on. They soon shared a close friendship which was to last until her early death in 1949. Geissmar calls him the center of her life. His way of playing music was like a revelation to her. When they met during these times they regularly discussed music and future projects. Soon Geissmar gained the impression that Furtwängler needed her advice and became something like his unofficial secretary.

Geissmar received her first official assignment in music management in 1918. Her father had been on the board of the Mannheim concert association and, when he died, she was asked to take his place. Geissmar states that she hesitated to accept the offer as it was not common for a woman to hold such a position at that time. Yet she clearly was an emancipated person in every sense and eager to take the post. Furtwängler encouraged her although his encouragement was probably not necessary. Her membership on the board enabled Geissmar to gather a lot of useful experiences.

As Furtwängler became more and more successful, Geissmar continued her studies and finished her doctoral dissertation in 1920. As it was not accepted at the University of Heidelberg, she moved to Frankfurt where she was able to turn in the paper and take the exam immediately.

After spending the summer holidays with her mother and Furtwängler in Switzerland, Geissmar moved to Berlin where Furtwängler had succeeded Richard Strauss as conductor of the Staatsoper concerts. During the 1921–22 concert season, Geissmar spent most of her time taking care of Furtwängler's affairs while he was abroad, mainly in Vienna. She attended almost every concert in order to keep him informed about his conductor colleagues, including the famous Fritz Busch, Otto Klemperer, Arthur Nikisch, Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter and Felix Weingartner.

In 1922 when Arthur Nikisch, the chief-conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, died, Furtwängler was asked to succeed him. Furtwängler was thirty-six years old at that time. Geissmar states that his new position signalled a turning point in her own work. He assigned her to arrange all his appointments and help him to choose the right programs for his concerts. Geissmar obviously enjoyed her tasks and the fact that Furtwängler's celebrity brought her together with many foreign concert institutions. She negotiated with artists, composers, and music publishers on his behalf.

The early 1920s were not easy for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. They urgently needed money and so the idea came up to go on concert tours during the summer. They toured through several German cities in 1924. Geissmar's organization of all these concerts was so perfect that the orchestra asked her to take care of all its future tours. Geissmar writes how proud she was of this special mark of confidence. At that time the orchestra did not even have an office where Geissmar could do her work. All she had at her disposal were a typewriter in her own apartment and, later on, a steno-typist three times a week.

By the 1927–28 concert season, Furtwängler was head of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic and the famous Gewandhaus-Orchestra in Leipzig. Geissmar's responsibilities increased accordingly, including organizing numerous tours. All these tasks seemed to push Berta Geissmar's energy even further and she enthusiastically describes various meetings with well-known artists in Europe and the United States.

In 1924 she travelled with Furtwängler when he worked four weeks as a guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic. It was a great success and a fascinating experience for all. Geissmar heard concerts not only by the New York Philharmonic but also the Boston and Philadelphia Symphony Orchestras. She very much enjoyed the social aspects of her journey and especially mentions a dinner with the Steinway family where the guests included many outstanding personalities — Casals, Furtwängler, Kreisler, Rachmaninoff and Stokowski.

In December 1930, Furtwängler was invited by the Wagner family to conduct in Bayreuth the following summer. Again Geissmar assisted him, but she seems to have had some difficulties in adjusting to the tradition there. When Furtwängler was late to his first rehearsal due to a plane crash, it was rumoured to be her special trick to promote her boss.

Hitler Germany, 1933–1935

On January 30, 1933, the day that Adolf Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich, Geissmar was on tour with the Berlin Philharmonic. She confesses that she had not paid much attention to the political situation in her home country as she had been so busy with her job; neither had she read *Mein Kampf* nor was she aware of what the new laws against Jewish citizens meant. As she was a Protestant with Jewish roots and totally assimilated, she did not consider herself to be in danger. When in March the orchestra received a letter stating that its Jewish members and Dr. Geissmar were no longer acceptable and could not work for the orchestra, she thought it was a joke.

In the theatre and concert worlds everything was in chaos. As intrigues are quite common in this milieu under the best of circumstances, things went out of control. Actors and musicians who had not been very successful before thought they could take advantage of the situation. On the other hand many artists with Jewish roots felt, just like Berta Geissmar, so assimilated in Germany that they saw no reason to leave their homes and friends in order to emigrate. It was not clear who was allowed to keep performing and who was not.

The violinist Adolf Busch was one of the first to leave Germany, but many others hesitated. Furtwängler tried to use his prominent position to protect his musicians. However, the problem was that he never really got clear statements from the Nazi regime. They just kept postponing his requests. On the one hand, he had to defend himself against the Nazis, who blamed him for not sharing their political attitude. On the other hand, those who had already left Germany blamed him for staying in his home country.

CONTINUED

BERTA GEISSMAR

In August 1933 Furtwängler gave a report to Geissmar about his meeting with Adolf Hitler at the Obersalzberg. According to him, they had screamed at each other for more than two hours. Furtwängler stated that Hitler's attitude finally became clear to him. Nevertheless, two months later, the Reich officially took over the Berlin Philharmonic, and it seemed that salaries and pensions for its members were guaranteed. The "Arierparagraph" was not to be applied to the orchestra and the office held by Geissmar was not to be changed.

Geissmar continued with her work. In September 1934, she received a message from Furtwängler telling her to leave Berlin immediately. He had information that the Nazis were about to take Geissmar under arrest. She went to Southern Germany but returned to Berlin after Furtwängler had cleared everything with the officials. She was told that Göring had said that Furtwängler needed her and that was the only thing that mattered. However this state of security did not continue for long.

On November 25, Furtwängler's famous article "Der Fall Hindemith" was published in the newspaper, a great affront to Nazi politics. As a consequence Furtwängler was forced to resign from all his posts. Geissmar writes that afterwards he seemed to be quite relieved. Geissmar had to wind up the office.

Under public pressure the Nazis backed down and Furtwängler eventually started conducting again. It was made clear that all the harm had been the fault of his Jewish secretary Berta Geissmar.

One afternoon they came to tell her that she would be arrested if she did not leave Berlin immediately. Geissmar left for Southern Germany and made her decision to emigrate. However, the Nazis kept playing games with her, holding back her passport and keeping her in suspense. It was important for her to leave Germany legally as her mother was still living in Berlin. The period of waiting and doing nothing was unbearable to her who had been such a busy orchestra manager. In December 1935, after one year of waiting, she finally left Germany on a train to Holland.

American Interlude, 1936

Travelling via Paris and London, Geissmar sailed for New York on January 4, 1936. She writes that she was so happy to enjoy freedom again — to speak, write and attend concerts as before and to read newspapers from all over the world. She met Sir Thomas Beecham again in Carnegie Hall after he conducted the New York Philharmonic in concert. They had first met in London where Geissmar had been acting on behalf of the Berlin Philharmonic. He invited her to work for him in London and she promised to be there for the beginning of the following concert season.

In the meantime, she started working for the Hoboken Photo Archive. Musicologist A. van Hoboken's idea was to collect photographic reproductions of autograph music scores and gather them all in one library in Vienna. He was especially interested in compositions by J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Brahms. Geissmar searched for these holographs in the U.S. and found, among others, Beethoven's Sonata No. 10 in G major for violin and piano, op. 96, his sketch for the last movement of his "Moonlight" Sonata, and Wagner's original libretto to *Meistersinger*. Everywhere she went people were so fascinated by the idea of the Photo Archive that she was asked to create one in the U.S. However, she decided to go back to Europe.



Carnegie Hall, New York City, where Geissmar reconnected with English conductor Thomas Beecham, who asked her to work for him in London.

Pre-War England, 1936–1939

In April 1936 Berta Geissmar returned to England. She immediately started her work for Sir Thomas Beecham, who had founded the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932 and then was head of Covent Garden. For Sir Thomas it was only natural that she should also take care of his affairs in Germany. He arranged everything with the German ambassador in London and during the summer Geissmar travelled to Berlin and later on to Bayreuth in order to recruit singers for the Coronation Season. Beecham regarded her as a kind of ambassador for Covent Garden. Since he preferred to have things arranged personally, rather than writing letters or speaking on the phone, he sent her to the Continent regularly and often on very short notice. Geissmar was relieved and grateful to have a job again that matched her abilities.

In November 1936, the London Philharmonic Orchestra toured Germany. Sir Thomas Beecham and Berta Geissmar were guests of the German government throughout the tour, putting Geissmar in a very strange situation. The German officials who had caused her so much trouble before affirmed that they were delighted to work with her. Of course, they were just taking advantage of Geissmar's knowledge and experience.

From Geissmar's account of her time in England, it becomes clear how offended she had been when she was forced to quit her work for Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra despite her outstanding management skills. As she was quite aware of her abilities, she gained some satisfaction when Beecham gave her the opportunity to show the Nazis that they

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could not bring her down. She enjoyed meeting many outstanding musicians as well as participating in social events. She liked conversations with sophisticated people. She was especially delighted when there were distinguished and prominent people among the audience.

In addition to all her management qualities, Geissmar had a broad philosophical knowledge and perspective that clearly helped her deal with different kinds of personalities throughout her life. She was able to manage difficult situations with diplomacy. When Richard Strauss once did not dare to ask Furtwängler to conduct his compositions in a certain way, he asked Geissmar to mediate. At another time, when Wilhelm Mengelberg rehearsed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the musicians were so outraged about his endless speeches that Geissmar had to intervene. She writes that she simply mentioned that the orchestra had played *Tristan* with Beecham, Furtwängler, and Bruno Walter. Mengelberg understood.

In the spring of 1938 after the Nazis had occupied Austria, many excellent musicians and artists from Vienna contacted Beecham and Geissmar, begging for help. They did as much as they could, and many of the musicians escaped to London. Geissmar calls Covent Garden an asylum where musicians like Richard Tauber and Erich Kleiber met. During the summer of the same year Geissmar returned to Germany for the last time during the Third Reich, partly for a holiday and partly for business. It was only then that her mother, who still lived in Berlin, finally emigrated to London.

England in War Time, 1939–1945

The last chapter of Berta Geissmar's memoirs and the span of time it deals with are rather short compared to the previous ones. She describes the difficulties encountered by the London Philharmonic Orchestra during the war, the concerts they played in spite of the air alerts and how Queen's Hall was destroyed. Geissmar's home was bombed out, so she eventually joined her mother in Hampstead, which she considered a safer place than the center of London. However, bombs fell in her street there as well. Geissmar was lucky to survive. Beecham had left England for his home country Australia.

At one point Geissmar describes a little episode during a concert in Albert Hall. It is interesting to see her point of view: "During the Christmas of 1942 I had an experience which symbolised for me the difference between life in Germany as I had witnessed it since 1933, and life in England. The traditional Carol concert ... was sold out. I asked Dr. [Malcolm] Sargent whether he could get me in He sent me two seats in his box and I sat down with my mother. Suddenly the door opened, and a lady in grey asked whether this was Dr. Sargent's box. We immediately recognised Mrs. Churchill. She was with her daughter, ... and smilingly tried to prevent us from giving her the front seats in the box. With what a tremendous panoply and show Frau Goebbels or Frau Emmy Goering would have surrounded themselves on a similar occasion! But here was the wife of the British Prime Minister, bearing a proud and historic name, quietly slipping in to share a box with two refugees. This was democracy: this was England."

Epilogue

Geissmar ends her autobiography with a short note on how she spent the day after Germany's capitulation. Her words speak of great relief. On the other hand, she expresses great sorrow in feeling that she did not belong anywhere any more. She did not feel at home in either Germany or England in spite of the fact that she had lived in England for more than nine years.

Berta Geissmar – A Woman in Music

From Berta Geissmar's autobiography, it becomes clear that the way she saw herself cannot be compared to music managers now. She worked for the music, the orchestra, and the musicians without claiming honour for herself. Today some managers seem to consider themselves more important than the musicians. Maybe that is one reason why she is hardly remembered. Very little research has been done on her life. Of course, she is mentioned in literature dealing with Furtwängler and the Third Reich, but that is about all.

On the other hand, it is clear that she was very eager to have her work appreciated. She liked to have everything under control and forthrightly claimed to be the only important music manager in Berlin. However, she was not the only one.

The formidable Louise Wolff was the other music manager with great influence in Berlin during the 1920s. Louise's husband Hermann Wolff had founded the famous concert agency Wolff und Sachs. After his death Louise Wolff took over the responsibility for organizing the concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

She was an extraordinary and very respected personality, acquainted with everyone important in music and politics. Geissmar had the opportunity to meet her in her Salon. Louise Wolff regularly asked people to her house for lunch on Sundays.

When Furtwängler became chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Geissmar's and Wolff's interests collided, since Wolff took it for granted that she would exclusively arrange and profit from the orchestra's and the conductor's concerts. Geissmar was able to convince her that things would change a little in the future. Geissmar continued to organize Furtwängler's concerts and thus gained the nickname "Louise the Second."

In reality, Geissmar and Wolff were great rivals. Even though Geissmar could have accepted the older Louise Wolff as a role model for her own work, she made it clear that she belonged to a younger generation with new standards.

Geissmar's relationship with another great woman in the music business, Anita Colombo, Arturo Toscanini's secretary, was very different. Colombo, whom Geissmar esteemed, did not live in Berlin so the two were not rivals. When the two first met, Geissmar confesses that she watched with some jealousy the way artists and managers treated Colombo. Geissmar wondered whether, one day, people would treat her the same way.

With *The Baton and the Jackboot*, Berta Geissmar has given us a unique eyewitness account and an important documentary on music history during the first half of the twentieth century. Her book has been translated into Dutch, Danish and French. It relates the story of the courageous and frequently unsuccessful struggle on the behalf of music against a totalitarian regime. One of Geissmar's greatest achievements was to bring many excellent musicians together and to make wonderful concerts possible through her brilliant managerial skills. In that way, Berta Geissmar contributed to the development of at least one outstanding orchestra in the twentieth century.

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ALICE MARY SMITH

“The Steep and Weary Hill”

by Ian Graham-Jones

Alice Mary Smith? How could anyone with the most common surname in the United Kingdom possibly think that she could make her name as a composer in Victorian Britain? It may well have been frustration that made her consider the *nom de plume* of ‘Emil Künstler’ for a while. Yet it was through her marriage to a ‘White’ (the 17th most common name) in 1867 and her husband’s connections in society that she was able to promote her music to the forefront of women composers in England in the years from 1870 to her untimely death in 1884.

Born in 1839 into a relatively wealthy London family, Alice Mary Smith was the third child of Richard Smith, a lace merchant, and Elizabeth Lumley, who was forty-one at the time. Mary, as she was known in the family, had two elder brothers who both trained in the law. Richard Horton-Smith became a QC (Queen’s Counsel) and had a keen interest in music, being on the board of directors of the Royal Academy of Music in London. In 1916 he became the Academy’s vice-president and was also honorary counsel to the Philharmonic Society. Her second brother, Thomas Lumley Smith, had less direct interest in music. He became a High Court judge in 1892 and was knighted in 1914. It appears that Mary had a younger sister who exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy in London. So far, I have not been able to trace any record of her, since there are no references to her in the family papers.¹

In 1867, Mary married Frederick Meadows White, a London lawyer who had a keen interest in music and who actively encouraged his wife to devote time to composition. As a result, Mrs. Meadows White, as she then became known, produced by far the greatest number of substantial orchestral, chamber, and large-scale choral compositions of any female composer in the nineteenth century.

The list of her extant orchestral works consists of two symphonies, six concert overtures, an *Introduction and Allegro* for piano and orchestra, a slow movement for clarinet and orchestra (part of a lost clarinet concerto) and two intermezzi. Her chamber works are mostly relatively early compositions — two piano trios, four piano quartets and two string quartets — along with a third string quartet, a clarinet sonata and two pieces for cello and piano written after her marriage. Her choral music with orchestra embraces an operetta, a setting of Longfellow’s “The Masque of Pandora” (though the orchestral scoring was not fully completed), two large-scale odes, two works for male-voice choir and orchestra, and five anthems with organ accompaniment. To this can be added twelve part-songs, seven duets, thirty-two solo songs, and a handful of piano pieces.

That she was able to write so much while maintaining a family (the Meadows Whites had two daughters soon after their

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ALICE MARY SMITH

marriage) when so many contemporaries of her gender only succeeded in composing a few drawing-room ballads or light-weight piano miniatures, is a remarkable achievement. Regardless of the quality of the music, recognition must be given based on this fact alone.

Alice Mary Smith was clearly a highly intelligent and well-read young lady. Her grandson the Reverend Humphrey Kempe recounts in his autobiography how he was told that his grandmother started to learn Latin at the age of six, Greek at eight and Hebrew at ten. She was almost certainly educated privately, and had a wide knowledge of classical and contemporary literature and poetry, as evidenced by the titles of many of her compositions.

Although she was not a student at the Royal Academy of Music (as has in the past been maintained). Smith may well have attended for private lessons with her first teacher, then principal of the RAM William Sterndale Bennett. Her first publication was a song “Sing on, Sweet Thrush” in 1857, composed when she was eighteen. Further songs and some piano pieces followed, including a rhapsodic rondo, *The Vale of Tempe*. Amongst her papers are to be found, somewhat intriguingly, cuttings of reviews of two pieces published in 1861 by a certain Emil Künstler, thought to be a pseudonym adopted by Smith.²

Unusual ability — for “her sex”

By 1861, Smith had started lessons with George Alexander Macfarren, who took over as principal of the RAM in 1875. Macfarren continued to take a keen interest in Smith’s work to the end of her life, as confirmed by several letters from him found amongst the family papers.

Macfarren, no doubt, introduced Smith as a Lady Associate of The Musical Society of London in 1861, where she was able to hear trial performances of her first chamber music compositions pitted against the works of other contemporary composers such as Simon Waley, Emanuel Aguilar, James Lea Summers, Oliver May, Henry Baumer, John Francis Barnett and Henry Charles Banister, many of whose works, like those of Smith, have fallen into the black pit of obscurity. Of her first effort, the Piano Quartet in B Flat major, *The Musical World* reviewer wrote: “Miss A.M. Smith’s quartet created evident surprise. This young lady . . . betokens unusual ability, for one of her sex, in the highest school of writing.”

Further chamber music performances of her works at The Musical Society’s meetings led to the performance of Smith’s

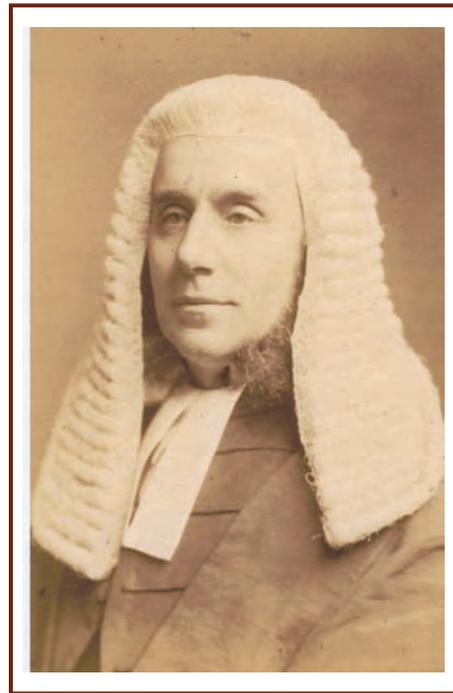
Symphony in C Minor in 1863. This first orchestral concert was a prestigious event, held on the anniversary of Mendelssohn’s death, and represented a decisive step in Smith’s career. Frank Mori, the founder of the London Orchestra, conducted Smith’s symphony and an overture by the blind Lea Summers, while the other composers conducted their own compositions.

The work, although conventional in structure and harmonic idiom, is remarkable for its clear orchestration, lyrical second subjects, wide-ranging modulations, and a particularly lively through-composed Mendelssohnian scherzo. Ideas in the first movement are almost Schubertian (though it is unlikely that she ever heard any of Schubert’s symphonies), while the finale anticipates Sullivan in many places. More orchestral works followed in the next three years — three concert overtures (two of which, *Endymion* and *Lalla Rookh*, were given performances at the Musical Society’s meetings) and an *Introduction and Allegro* for piano and orchestra in which Smith herself played the solo part.

In 1865, Smith composed her first operetta *Gisela of Rudesheim* (there are sketches of a second amongst her miscellaneous manuscripts). Scored for a chamber orchestra with piano, it was performed at the Fitzwilliam Musical Society, Cambridge. The work is remarkable for its use of accompanied recitative throughout as opposed to the spoken dialogue common in British operettas of the time. Its carefully integrated structure and well-planned key scheme give a cumulative dramatic impact to the work. The closing chorus, in which Conrad sings his farewell to Gisela (who has fallen to her death from the rocks of Rudesheim), relates in key, tempo and style directly to the opening number (See [Example 1, next page](#)).

Marriage

Smith met her future husband at this time. It was an active period of composition in which she completed two anthems as well as the overtures, the *Introduction and Allegro* mentioned above, a string quartet titled *Tubal Cain*, and a fourth piano quartet. Upon her marriage to Frederick Meadows White in 1867 she ceased serious composing for a period of two years, only writing one or two songs. Meadows White had become a barrister in 1853 and rose to Queen’s Counsel (QC) in 1877. He became a High Court judge in 1893. He held positions as standing counsel to the Philharmonic Society and was, like his brother-in-law, a director of



Alice Mary Smith married London lawyer Frederick Meadows White in 1867. He was supportive and encouraged his wife to devote time to composition.

the Royal Academy of Music, as well as the first representative of the RAM on the newly formed examining body, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

In 1869 Smith took up serious composition again with a complete re-writing of her earlier overture *Endymion*, which received a public performance in 1871 at the popular Crystal Palace Saturday concerts. She probably met Wilhelm Ganz at the ‘Soirées Musicales’, the chamber music concerts of the New Philharmonic Society. Ganz was the Society’s accompanist and later became conductor of the New Philharmonic Orchestra. Here, in March 1870, her third and last String Quartet in A Major was performed, as a result of which two pieces for cello and piano were commissioned by the quartet’s cellist, Guillaume Pâque.

Smith’s important Clarinet Sonata in A Major was performed by the virtuoso clarinetist Henry Lazarus, with Smith at the piano, in the same venue in December. This work is, I believe, the first British sonata for the instrument, to be followed ten years later by that of Charles Swinnerton Heap (1880) and Ebenezer Prout (1882). The Smith work shows many touches of originality, notably in the cadence writing, such as this passage which concludes the first movement. (See [Example 2, next page](#)).

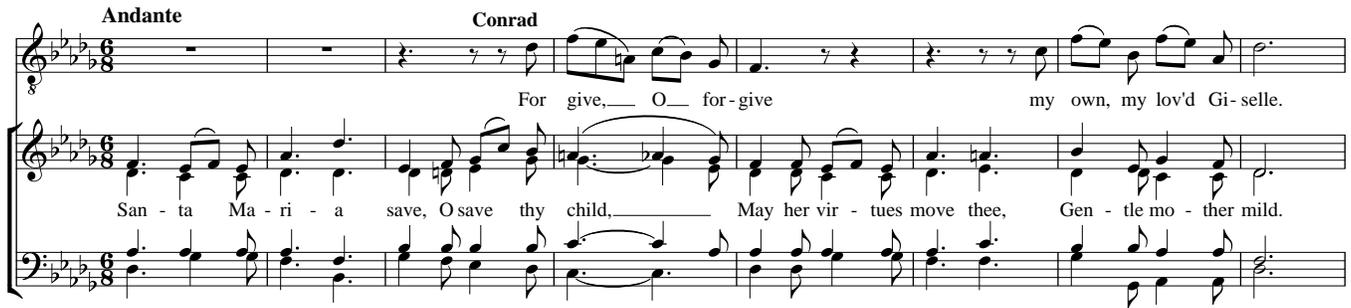
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ALICE MARY SMITH

EXAMPLE 1 — Closing Chorus *Gisela of Rudesheim*

Andante

Conrad



For give, O for-give my own, my lov'd Gi-selle.

San-ta Ma-ri-a save, O save thy child, May her vir-tues move thee, Gen-tle mo-ther mild.

EXAMPLE 2 — Clarinet Sonata, conclusion of first movement

303



dim. *dim.* *rit.*

Lazarus was clearly impressed by the work, as he persuaded Smith to adapt the sonata as a concerto. All that survives is the slow movement, a substantial piece that can stand on its own and which shows off the characteristics of the instrument, exploiting its full range and timbres. Lazarus gave three performances of the orchestrated version in 1872–73 at festivals in Norwich, Brighton and London.³

The period of 1869–70 also saw the composition of many of Smith's published songs, part-songs, and duets, the most popular

of which was "O that we two were Maying," which remained in publication until 1944. Of the songs of this period, "The Last Snowfall" and "L'Ange et L'Enfant" (1869) stand out for their musicality over the obvious sentimentality of songs by many contemporary composers of her gender. The published part-songs of 1870 are all skilfully written, the lullaby "Rock Them, Rock Them!" and "Queen of Love" being particularly noteworthy. This latter's ending could almost have been written by a Victorian John Rutter! (See Example below)

EXAMPLE 3 — Queen of Love, ending

[Allegro leggiero]



ff *[cresc.]* *ff*

Love, and so I wear her on my heart and take her for my

Queen.

[dim.] *p*

Queen, take her for my Queen of Love, my Queen.

take her for my Queen of Love,

ALICE MARY SMITH

During the three years from 1872 Smith produced no compositions of note. At this time articles began to appear in the press as to why women had produced so little music of worth compared to those of the opposite sex. A letter on the subject appeared in *The Monthly Musical Record* in 1877, to which a reply was penned, signed 'Artiste'. The author says, and I quote only in part from a lengthy response:

"... I now propose to suggest a few reasons which I believe to have caused this apparent incapacity — this want of creative power in women. I said apparent with intention, for my object is to try and show that women are not by nature debarred from shining in this branch of art any more than in any others. On the contrary, being usually gifted with a lively imagination, combined with a "peculiar sensitiveness and delicacy" (as the writer above referred to observes), these qualities are admirably adapted for the cultivation of an art which, in such a high degree, is dependent on feelings. . . . My own opinion is that this power does exist in many women, but that it is destroyed, or at least prevented from bearing worthy fruits, by various causes. Firstly, a woman endowed with a lively, excitable imagination rarely possesses the enormous perseverance and energy necessary for a composer; she cannot climb the steep and weary hill before her, nor struggle against the innumerable disappointments and disheartening obstacles which meet her at every turn — for success and fame are slow in coming to nearly all, but more especially to the composer. So she will not wait and work in patience, but prefers to waste her talents on frivolous compositions to satisfy the tastes of a certain class of people, which means she will gain, no doubt, more applause from the general public than had she aspired to something higher and nobler. It is an established maxim that "a woman can never be a great composer," and I do not mean to dispute its truth; certainly no female Beethoven has appeared as yet, nor do I think that such will ever be the case; setting aside everything else, no woman has the physical strength without which such a genius could not exist. I do not even contemplate the possibility of any rivals with the present masters in the field of composition. All I would maintain is that many a woman's talent is wasted by her undecided, vacillating spirit, and that were she only to aspire humbly but earnestly to a higher form of art, there is every cause to believe that she might work out a path of distinction for herself. . . . My object in writing this will have been obtained if my remarks serve in any degree to encourage and stimulate fresh efforts of perseverance, any who may have been disheartened and taught to have an exaggerated depreciation of their own abilities by those who are continually impressing upon their minds the disagreeable truth that "woman can never be a great composer."

ARTISTE

ALICE MARY SMITH

It is interesting that the press cuttings of reviews of the 1861 piano pieces by “Emil Künstler” referred to above are preserved in a scrapbook of reviews of performances and publications of Smith’s works kept by her husband after her death. As the German word “Künstler” translates as “artiste” in English, I think that it can reasonably be assumed that Smith was the anonymous writer. If so, this letter reflects her state of mind at this time and why she ceased composing any large-scale works from 1871 to 1875.

In 1876, however, Smith was persuaded to enter the Alexandra Palace competition for symphonies by British composers, for which the first and second prizes were £20 and £5, a pitiful reward even in those days for the work involved in composing four orchestral movements! George Alexander Macfarren and the violinist Joseph Joachim were the judges.

For this, Smith wrote her second symphony, the Symphony in A Minor, under the pseudonym of the Greek letter sigma. The last movement uses material from some earlier piano pieces and appears hurriedly scored. The work was never submitted. Frederick Meadows White wrote on the cover after her death that the first prize was awarded to Francis Davenport (Macfarren’s son-in-law), the second to Charles Villiers Stanford for his

first symphony (Stanford being a protégé of Joachim!), and the third prize to Oliveria Prescott. This lady was Macfarren’s amanuensis at the time (he started to become blind in the 1860s), and the work submitted was surely her lost “Alkestis” Symphony in B flat, the only other known symphony by a British woman composer in the nineteenth century.⁴

New Ventures

Smith’s mind at this time, however, was on setting Longfellow’s epic poem “The Masque of Pandora”. The composition was unfortunately never published, and it only exists complete in piano reduction. (The Grove dictionaries give its date of composition as 1865, but the poem was never published until 1875, and the Overture was only performed for the first time in 1878). The work, in eight movements, follows the poem’s eight sections strictly and is scored for twelve characters and SATB chorus with an overture and two intermezzi, which were later fully orchestrated for concert performances.

The concept of the *leitmotif* pervades the work, as musical ideas are consistently linked to characters and events. The main idea, which dominates the Overture, is the warning of the Eumenides, feared

goddesses represented by winged maidens with serpents entwined in their hair and blood coming from their eyes. Scored with menacing low winds, horns and trombones, it has its roots in Smith’s operetta *Gisela*, composed ten years earlier, where the same theme is used briefly for the Chorus of Priests. (See Examples 4 and 5 below).

This was such a large project that a performance would have been unlikely, and the proposed publication by Novello and Co. never materialised. It was probably with some regret, therefore, that Smith turned her attention to more practical forms of choral composition for amateur and male voice choral societies. *Ode to the North-East Wind* (words by Charles Kingsley) was the first of her last four choral works, all of which were published in vocal score by Novello and Co. The ode was tried by the Musical Artists’ Society at the Royal Academy of Music in 1878 with piano accompaniment and later performed in its full orchestral scoring by a North London choral society, conducted by Ebenezer Prout. The work is scored for choir and orchestra, with no soloists.

More Public Performances

Smith’s great achievement at this time, however, was the three performances of

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EXAMPLE 4 — From *Gisela of Ruedesheim*, No. 19

Sopranos
Altos

Hear us, hear us, saints in Heaven

Chorus of Priests

Vain are all pleasures found here below, Hear us, hear us, saints in Heaven
Curs'd be the treasures Heav'n can bestow,

EXAMPLE 5 — Opening of the Overture to *The Masque of Pandora*

Maestoso con moto
Oboes and bassoons

4 Horns and Trombones

ALICE MARY SMITH



The Crystal Palace, located 8 miles south of London, was the world's first theme park and the forerunner to today's world's fair. It was also a vast stage for music where one could hear "Pacific rollers of sound" at the popular Saturday afternoon concerts conducted by August Manns. Alice Mary Smith was one of the few women whose works were performed there.

the *Overture to The Masque of Pandora* given by Wilhelm Ganz with the New Philharmonic Orchestra and August Manns at the Crystal Palace Saturday concerts in 1878 and by Sir Julius Benedict at the Liverpool Philharmonic the following year. Its success was such that Smith composed another overture, *Jason, or The Argonauts and the Sirens*, which was performed by Ganz and the New Philharmonic Orchestra in 1879 and two years later by Manns at the Crystal Palace. This last overture is a strong work, almost Wagnerian in its dynamism, scored for the largest orchestra to date, including piccolo, four horns, three trombones and ophicleide.

These conductors liked to include "novelties", as they were termed, in their programmes, with at least one work by a contemporary British composer. Clearly Smith's music was highly regarded by these musicians. George Grove wrote, after a performance of the first overture:

I have been looking for you (in vain) to congratulate you on your new overture. I listened to it with the greatest care; and was very much pleased. I thought the middle part rather diffuse — and you seemed to fall, in one place, all of a sudden under the influence of Beethoven. I don't mean that there was any distinct plagiarism of subject, so much as that the style & harmonies were his; and that was a too-great contrast with the other portions. But, dear me, that's rather a feather in your cap — to be able to write like Beethoven! . . . The overture is full of tune and poetry, and very well scored. I hope you were pleased, for I think the performance was a very good one; and certainly the clapping, if I may compare (a thing I hate doing), was greater than that of Mr. Potter's Cymbeline or Macfarren's Romeo.

The success of these overtures led Ganz in 1881 to request a new overture for the season, but Smith declined, substituting the two *Intermezzi* from *The Masque of Pandora*. At this time Smith was busy with the composition of her biggest project to date, a setting for SATB soloists, choir and full orchestra of the eighteenth century poet William Collins's "Ode to The Passions". She completed this work for performance at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford in 1882.

Amongst the family papers, I found some interesting correspondence about the work. Her husband, with his connections, wrote to a colleague at Buckingham Palace suggesting the work could be dedicated to Queen Victoria, but this was declined. There was also some correspondence between Smith and the critic W.A. Barrett as to the suitability of the Hereford Cathedral organist Langdon Colbourne conducting the work. Barrett suggested that Smith herself should conduct:

My own impression is that Colbourne is anxious to give every composer whose work is produced at the festival the opportunity of conducting . . . because the public always feels more interested in the performance. It would be a novelty to see a lady conduct on such an occasion, especially one who is not altogether unknown. If you decide not to conduct you may leave the business in his hands quite safely. Colbourne is nervous by disposition but conscientious and trustworthy . . . but . . . — this is without prejudice — if you wish for a brilliant reading it will be necessary for you to conduct it yourself.

Smith declined, but had she accepted, this may well have been the first occasion before Dame Ethel Smyth that a woman had conducted a major work in public! Barrett's perceptive comment was borne out by Prout's review for *The Atheneum*:

The conductor had a strange fancy for beating four in a bar where the composer had indicated alla breve, and some of the movements were therefore taken at a much slower pace than that indicated by the metronomic marks. At the close Mrs. Meadows White was called to the platform and applauded with much warmth.

All the reviews of the work were complimentary, though the audience reception was somewhat muted. The *Sporting and Dramatic News* stated that the audience "took about as lively an interest in the proceeding as a defunct person does in his own burial rites. The audience was not merely quiet, it was sepulchral".

CONTINUED

ALICE MARY SMITH



Alice Mary Smith. Her premature death at the age of 45 prompted one writer to mourn what her loss meant to aspiring young “lady composers” who looked to her as a role model of what they might also achieve.

“Devoted to her art, Mrs. Smith was alike free from affectation and conceit; and in the roll of female musicians her name will hold an honourable place.”

The Girls’ Own Paper
January 1885

The success of this work at Hereford and a London performance the following year sparked a renewal of the debate as to whether a woman could ever compose a “great” work. Stephen Stratton presented a paper, “Woman in Relation to Musical Art”, at a meeting of the Royal Musical Association in May 1883 in London, at which Smith and her husband were present. Stratton commented:

The work performed in London last Monday [The Passions, on 30th April 1883 at St James’s Hall] has given rise to much comment, and re-started the subject of woman’s musical genius. Should I have the honour of including the composer of “The Passions” among my hearers, I hope she will pardon me making use of some of the remarks to which her work has given rise . . . The work in question I have not looked at, because I wish to maintain a position of neutrality; but from the general opinion it must come very near to greatness.

George Osborne, one of the directors of the Philharmonic Society, said of the work:

Let me speak of the individual pleasure I have received from the works of Mrs Bartholomew, from the works of Miss Prescott, and Mrs Meadows White. I was present the other evening when a cantata by the latter lady gave immense pleasure to all those who were capable of receiving pleasure.

The chairman then invited Frederick Meadows White to speak, as “you have the privilege of being married to a very clever woman”. In his reluctant reply Meadows White made several pertinent points, saying of his wife:

Mrs Meadows White has been kindly alluded to in this paper, but I am perfectly certain of this – and I desire to say so, for I know there are other ladies here equally distinguished in musical composition – I am sure she would be the last person to say that she has advanced very far on the road towards that eminence which Handel or Mozart or any of the great masters attained.

He then went on to refer to the conflicts of married life and composing, saying “it does not follow that, because a woman is married, she ceases to have any encouragement to go on a path in which she has been successful”. He concluded, “I may add from experience that there is nothing inconsistent with the little eminence my wife has attained in music with the good management of domestic affairs”.

Smith’s last two compositions were for male voices on poems by Charles Kingsley: “Song of The Little Baltung (AD 395)” and “The Red King”. Both were written in a simpler style, more suited to the demands of amateur choirs. The orchestration of the latter, composed only a few months before her death, was never completed. Novello and Co. then gave the contract to Battison Haynes, a London organist.⁵

In 1883 the Meadows Whites travelled to France to consult a specialist in laryngitis, a chronic condition suffered by Smith.

It appears that during her last year Smith was working on another large choral work, *The Valley of Remorse*, to a poem by the political anarchist Sarah Louise Bevington. According to her husband, it was “a setting in cantata form, unfinished but far advanced”. No trace of this work has been found. Alice Mary [Smith] Meadows White died of typhoid fever on 4th December 1884.

“She has conquered much, but she wore the laurels meekly.”⁶

Although *The Times* carried only a brief obituary, it appears that Alice Mary Smith’s work was well known in the United States. *The*

CONTINUED

ALICE MARY SMITH

276 JANUARY 31, 1885.

THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

IN MEMORIAM.

OUR readers, we feel sure, will be distressed to learn that one of our contributors, and the foremost of the women composers of our time, has been suddenly taken away from us by death. We speak of Mrs. Meadows White, who has published so much under this and her maiden name of Alice Mary Smith. It is remarkable that there have been so few women composers of any real importance, for one would think that, from their very nature, women could really rival men in certain styles of composition, as they certainly have done, although in limited numbers, in the writing of hymns.

Alice Mary Smith, daughter of the late Richard Smith, Esq., of Guildford Street and of Littlehampton, was born on May 19th, 1839. She studied music under Sir Sterndale Bennett and Sir George Macfarren, and first attracted attention as a composer by some songs published by the firm of Lamborn Cock in 1859. In 1861 she produced a pianoforte quartet at one of the trials of new compositions by the now defunct Musical Society of London, at whose meetings a string quartet from her pen was performed in the following year, and a Symphony in C minor in 1863. Two more quartets were produced at the sittings of the new Philharmonic Society. The Overture to *Endymion* (1864), and an Introduction and Allegro for piano and orchestra (1865), as well as a Pianoforte Trio (1862), were introduced by the Musical Society of London. The first work of hers which was heard at the Crystal Palace Concerts was the Overture to *Endymion*, which she had re-written, and which was produced in 1871. Two other overtures were subsequently performed at Sydenham, that to Longfellow's *Masque of Pandora* in 1878, and that to *Jason; or, the Argonauts and Sirens*, in 1881. Both these works had been previously heard at the concerts of the New Philharmonic Society. More recently the composer turned her attention to vocal music with orchestra. Her first essay in this direction was the setting of Kingsley's *Ode to the North-East Wind*. This work was sung with pianoforte accompaniment at the Musical Artists' Society in 1878, but its first production with full orchestra was by the Borough of Hackney Choral Association in 1880. Her next important choral work was the *Ode to the Passions*, first given at the Hereford Festival in 1882, and subsequently performed at St. James's Hall and elsewhere with considerable success. Her latest published work is the "Song of the Little Baltung" (words by Kingsley), for male choros and orchestra; but we learn that Messrs. Novello and Co. have now in the press another work of similar character, a setting of Kingsley's ballad, "The Red King." We have named only the more important of her published compositions; she has besides left in MS. a second symphony, the remaining music to *The Masque of Pandora*, completed with pianoforte accompaniment, but not orchestrated, and an unfinished cantata, *The Valley of Remorse*. In 1867 the

composer married Mr. F. Meadows White, Q.C., Recorder of Canterbury, a brother of the Rev. Lewis Borrett White, D.D., Rector of St. Mary Aldermary, and Secretary of the Religious Tract Society.

Mrs. Meadows White's society was much courted by her friends on account of her great charm of manner and vivaciousness of disposition.

The *Athenaeum* says that "Mrs. White's music is marked by elegance and grace rather than by any great individuality. That she was not deficient in power and energy is proved by portions of the *Ode to the North-East Wind* and *The Passions*. Her forms



MRS. MEADOWS WHITE.

were always clear and her ideas free from eccentricity; her sympathies were evidently with the classical rather than with the romantic school. Devoted to her art, Mrs. Smith was alike free from affectation and conceit; and in the roll of female musicians her name will hold an honourable place."

New York Times carried an extensive column, stating:

Not only will a large circle of friends mourn Mrs. White's loss, but it will be felt strongly by those young aspiring spirits among lady composers, who are rising rapidly through the superior culture accorded to girls and women in the musical schools of England. She was the forerunner in the race, and such an able one that her example should lead her followers on to the highest attainments with a constant cry of "Excelsior!"

What little we can deduce of Smith's personality may be found amongst the letters of condolence sent to her husband. These include comments such as: "her unconventional directness and her sparkling raillery, striking honesty of purpose and kindness of heart" (J.A. Kingdon), and "her sprightly conversation" (G.A. Macfarren). A.J. Hipkins wrote, "English music loses one its brightest ornaments", and Wilhelm Ganz said: "I am sure we all in the musical world cannot but admire her great abilities and the musical works which she has composed, they will forever remain a lasting memorial to her talent and genius."

Although Alice Mary Smith never thought of herself in terms of aiming to be a "great" composer, it is clear that she was the first of the women composers of the Victorian era to emerge from the world of the drawing-room song. I hope that the revival of her music that is just starting to take place will show that her achievements will not now go unnoticed.

Notes

1. Frederick Meadows White's obituary in *The Times* states that Alice Mary Smith was "the elder daughter of Richard Smith", and the autobiography of A.H.M. Kempe (West Sussex Record Office) mentions "a sister who had pictures hung 'on the line' at the Royal Academy".
2. Published by Chappell & Co., a review of Künstler's *Freundschaft und Liebe* in *The Press* (June 1861) states that "these pieces are far superior to the common run of pianoforte music that loads the counters of our music shops".
3. It is not clear whether the Norwich performance was of the complete lost clarinet concerto, or just the Andante. Press reviews imply that it was a concerto.
4. A second (lost) symphony by Prescott, in D Minor, was probably composed in 1896. It seems that no further symphonies appeared by women British composers until that of Dorothy Howell in the 1930s.
5. The ms is in the Royal College of Music Library, MS 5173a.
6. From an article on Alice Mary Smith in *The Boston Evening Traveller*, 12th March 1885.

After her untimely death in 1884, Alice Mary Smith, (Mrs. Meadows White) was remembered in publications in both Britain and the United States.

ALICE MARY SMITH

Works in Modern Editions

Symphonies in C minor, A minor	A-R Editions Inc. (USA), N38, ed. Ian Graham-Jones, 2003
Overtures <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> and <i>Jason, or The Argonauts and the Sirens</i>	A-R Editions Inc. (USA), N45, ed. Ian Graham-Jones, 2007
Sonata in A for Clarinet and Piano	Hildegard Publishing Co. USA, ed. Ian Graham-Jones
String Quartet in A Major	Hildegard Publishing Co. USA, ed. Ian Graham-Jones
Piano Quartet in E flat (No. 2)	Soundpost, ed. Patrick Meadows

Discography

Symphonies in C minor, A minor, and Andante for clarinet and orchestra, Chandos (CHAN 10283). London Mozart Players conductor Howard Shelley, Angela Marlsbury (cl.)

“O That we two were Maying” may be found on Upbeat Classics (URCD143), Richard Baker’s Favourite Songs and Encores.

Major works performed during Smith’s lifetime

1861	Mar.	Piano Quartet No. 1 in B ^b major, – Musical Society of London
1862	Feb.	Piano Trio in G – Musical Society of London
1862	Nov.	String Quartet No. 2 in D major – Musical Society of London
1863	Nov.	Symphony in C minor – Musical Society of London
1864	Feb.	Overture <i>Endymion</i> [I] – Musical Society of London
1864	Mar.	Piano Quartet No. 3 in D major – New Philharmonic Society
1865	Feb.	Introduction and Allegro for piano and orchestra - Musical Society of London
1865	Feb.	Operetta: <i>Gisela of Rudesheim</i> - Fitzwilliam Musical Society, Cambridge
1865	Nov.	Overture <i>Lalla Rookh</i> – Musical Society of London
1870	Mar.	String Quartet [No. 3] in A major – New Philharmonic Society
1870	Dec.	Clarinet Sonata - New Philharmonic Society
1871	Nov.	Overture <i>Endymion</i> [II] – Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts
1872	Sep.	Andante for Clarinet and Orchestra – Norwich Festival (see note 3)
1873	Feb.	Andante for Clarinet and Orchestra – Brighton Festival
1873	Feb.	Andante for Clarinet and Orchestra – British Orchestral Society, London
1878	Jul.	Overture to <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> – New Philharmonic Society
1878	Nov.	Overture to <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> – Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts
1878	Dec.	<i>Ode to the North East Wind</i> (piano acc. version) - Musical Artists’ Society
1879	Nov.	Overture to <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> - Liverpool Philharmonic Society
1879	Jun.	Overture <i>Jason, or the Argonauts and the Sirens</i> – New Philharmonic Society
1879	Nov.	Two Intermezzi from <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> - New Philharmonic Society
1880	Nov.	<i>Ode to the North-East Wind</i> (with orch.) – Hackney Choral Association
1881	May	Overture <i>Jason, or the Argonauts and the Sirens</i> – Crystal Palace concerts
1881	May	Two Intermezzi from <i>The Masque of Pandora</i> – New Philharmonic Society
1882	Sep.	<i>Ode to The Passions</i> – Three Choirs Festival, Hereford
1883	Mar.	<i>Song of the Little Baltung</i> – Lombard Amateur Musical Association
1883	Apr.	<i>Ode to The Passions</i> – Bradford Festival Choral Society
1883	Apr.	<i>Ode to The Passions</i> – St James’s Hall, London
1883	Dec.	<i>Ode to The Passions</i> – Stoke Newington and Highbury Subscription Concert
1884	May	<i>Cupid’s Curse</i> – Musical Artists’ Society
1884	May	<i>Song of the Little Baltung</i> – St Michael’s College and Queen’s College, Oxford
1884	Dec.	<i>The Red King</i> – London Musical Society

Acknowledgments

Photographs of Smith and Meadows White are reproduced by courtesy of Mrs V. Carse, with acknowledgments to the West Sussex Record Office and County Archivist.

From a leaking garden shed and empty Kellogg's cornflakes packets...

The Discovery of Alice Mary Smith

by Ian Graham-Jones

What sparked my interest in a composer whose entry in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is confined to just a few lines? It is fortunate that, owing to the foresight (or perhaps the hoarding instincts) of the family, nearly all of Alice Mary Smith's manuscripts have survived. In some cases, these include duplicate full scores and the complete set of parts used in the original performances. Only a handful of her songs, part-songs and piano pieces were published in her lifetime but, importantly, the vocal scores of Smith's last four works for chorus and orchestra were published by Novello and Co.

The Smith manuscripts were in the possession of her grandson, Rev. Humphrey Kempe, an amateur musician who, in his retirement, conducted a string orchestra in Chichester, West Sussex. On his death in 1988, the music was bequeathed (he remaining unmarried) to his goddaughter, a professional cellist. She asked me to house the collection — which arrived in a sorry state, as much of the music was kept in a leaking garden shed — and to sort and catalogue it.

After a whole lot of scraps of music, elementary

CONTINUED

The image shows the first page of a handwritten musical score for Alice Mary Smith's Symphony in C minor. The title "Symphony (C minor)" is written in the top left, and "Alice Mary Smith." is in the top right. A handwritten note in the center reads "(Traced by the Mus. Soc. of London Nov 4th 1863)". The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flauti, Oboi, Clarinetto in Bb, Fagotti, Corni Eb, Trombe, Trombone Alto, Tromba, Bassi, Timpani, Violini I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Basso. The tempo is marked "Grave" and the time signature is 3/4. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The score is written in ink on aged paper with some staining.

The first page of Alice Mary Smith's Symphony in C minor, composed when she was 24 years old. Her first orchestral work, it was premiered in London in 1863 to critical acclaim.

The Discovery of Alice Mary Smith

harmony exercises of old-fashioned species counterpoint and the like, were discarded, the collection was given to the Royal Academy of Music library. Smith herself, although not a student there, was elected a Female Professional Associate of the RAM in 1867 and became a life member of the Academy in 1880, so that institution is an appropriate place for her manuscripts to be housed.

The story of the Kempe family is interesting. Alice Mary [Smith] Meadows White gave birth to two daughters, Alice Ida and Alice Hilda in 1868 and 1869. Ida married Sir Alfred Bray Kempe, FRS in 1897. Sir Alfred was a lawyer by profession and an accomplished musician. He was a counter-tenor and a founder member of the Bach Choir, a mathematician, alpine climber, honorary treasurer and vice-president of The Royal Society, and secretary to the National Antarctic Expedition (1901-04), having both Mount Kempe and the Kempe Glacier in Victoria Land, Antarctica, named after him. Ida herself was renowned as an extravagant socializer in later life, while Hilda appears to have been a more reserved artist who died at a relatively young age.

Humphrey Kempe was the eldest child of Ida and Alfred, and lived alone. He was Secretary at the Royal Academy of Music for a while and later held two cathedral appointments in Coventry and Chichester.

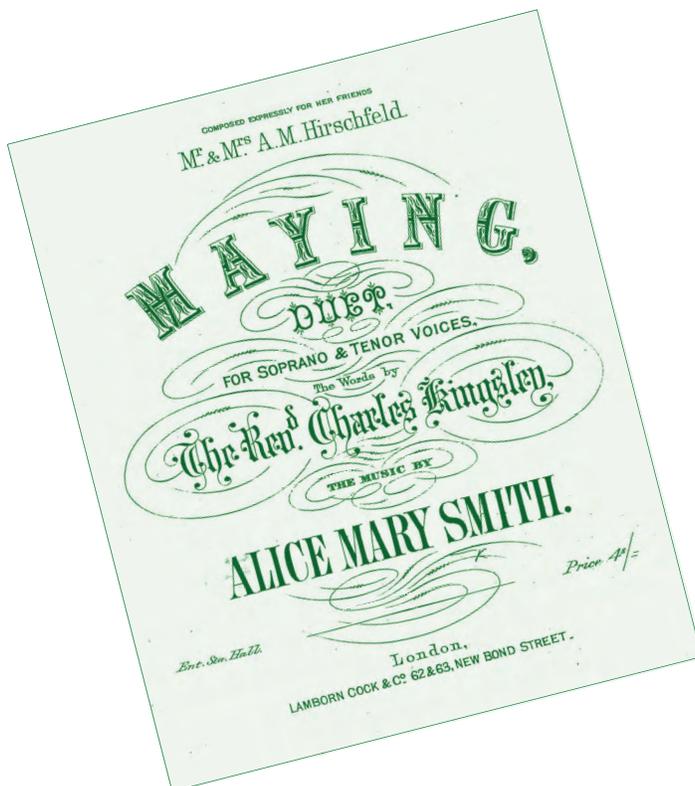
When I was cataloguing the music, my immediate assessment of it was one of competence but showing little originality, the style being clearly derivative of Mendelssohn in many places. Prior to my acquiring the collection, a number of academics had apparently viewed it at cursory visits, and the entries in the various Grove dictionaries reflect this, the 1980 edition quoting out of

context from an obituary written by the composer and writer Ebenezer Prout: "Her music is marked by elegance and grace rather than by any great individuality . . . her sympathies were evidently with the classic rather than the romantic school."

It was only on closer examination that the true worth of some of the music became evident to me and, after local trial performances of some movements of the symphonies and the Clarinet Sonata from the original parts, I got around to editing the music, seeking publishers, and looking further into the history of this fascinating composer.

With so little information about Smith's life available, it was again the hoarding instincts of the family that led me to find all of Rev. Humphrey Kempe's papers. These, including documents stuffed into empty Kellogg's cornflakes packets, were lodged by his family in the West Sussex Record Office after his death. Amongst this uncatalogued material I found a fascinating collection of letters to Smith and Meadows White from such people as the composers Ebenezer Prout, George Alexander Macfarren and Charles Gounod and from conductors Wilhelm Ganz and August Manns. I also found letters from Charles Groves and other musical personalities and critics of the time as well as publishers. Nearly all of these were in their original envelopes.

Much other interesting material relates to performances of her works, such as old programmes, newspaper cuttings of reviews, and family correspondence. From all this material, I was able to piece together the account Smith's life that appears in my article.



Maying, composed around 1870, was still in print by 1944, so enduring was its popularity. In 1883, she sold the copyright for £663 or about £307,000 in today's money or over half a million dollars.

Grace Williams — The Essence of Wales

Two weeks before Welsh composer Grace Williams died in 1977, she wrote a letter to her lifelong friend and fellow composer Elizabeth Maconchy.

Although fatally ill with cancer, there was no bitterness in her words, only gratitude that she had had the "great good fortune to be able to respond to so many wonderful things."

Grace Mary Williams, who was to become one of the most important and influential 20th century Welsh composers, was born at the stroke of midnight on February 19, 1906 in the coastal town of Barry. The eldest of three children, Grace was encouraged from an early age to pursue her interest in music.

Both parents were school teachers who loved music. Her father William was a highly regarded amateur choral director who did not believe in teaching music to his children in the traditional manner of exercise book and graded exams. Instead he simply opened his extensive library of music scores to them, an act that enabled them to explore and discover on their own and that ultimately led Grace Williams to find her own highly individual music style.

Grace often played the piano for her father's choir rehearsals, and at home she played the violin in a trio with her brother Glyn, a cellist, and her father, a pianist. She also broadened her knowledge of orchestral music through recordings, which her father collected avidly.

As a school girl, she excelled in mathematics, music, and English and developed an abiding interest in French literature which she enjoyed throughout her life. She began to show ability in composing music, and, encouraged by her teacher Miss Rhyda Jones, a former pupil of Sir Walford Davies, Grace often sat on the beach at Cold Knap in Barry composing songs and dances. The sea would always be a powerful influence and inspiration in Grace Williams' life as a composer.

In 1923, she entered University College, Cardiff on a scholarship, and while she found the social life at the school exciting, the music program was "deadly" for a would-be composer like Williams who found her enthusiasm stifled by academic exercises. After graduation in 1926, she moved to London to attend the Royal College of Music where one of her most important and influential teachers was composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, whom she called "Uncle Ralph."

Welsh Folk Music Influences

At the RCM, Grace joined several other gifted young women composers including Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-94), Dorothy Gow (1893-1982), and Imogen Holst (1907-84), the daughter of composer Gustav Holst. Encouraged by Vaughan Williams, the women met frequently to hear and criticize each other's work. In 1930, Grace Williams won the prestigious RCM Octavia Travelling Scholarship which enabled her to complete her training in Vienna with Egon Wellesz (1885-1974). Here she had the opportunity to indulge herself in the music of Wagner, Richard Strauss and Mahler and the late Austro-German Romantic tradition. Although she did not initially care for Mahler's music, it would later influence her own compositions.

After her return to London in 1931, the 25-year-old composer was music master at Camden School for Girls and visiting lecturer at Southlands College of Education. *Hen Walia*, an



Grace Williams in 1938

orchestral work based on folk tunes with the lullaby *Huna blentyn* as a centerpiece, was composed during this time and became her first work to receive frequent performances. In 1936, she composed an *Elegy* for string orchestra which contained hints of the highly individual music that she would compose years later.

Prior to World War II, she composed her most ambitious orchestral work, *Four Illustrations for the Legend of Rhiannon* based on the *Mabinogion*, and in 1941 her brilliant *Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes* (*Jim Cro; Beryn y Bwn; Migildi, Magildi; Si lwli 'mabi; Gee, geffyl bach; Csga di fy mhlentyn tlws; Yr eneth ffein ddu; Cadi ha!*) was broadcast by the BBC. It was so well received by the war-weary public in performances throughout Wales that it was recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra. The *Fantasia* remains Grace Williams' most popular work.

During the war, she composed her *Sinfonia Concertante, Symphonic Impressions and Sea Sketches*, a highly evocative five-movement work for string orchestra. By the time the war ended, the deprivation and difficulties Williams experienced trying to earn money while spending her free time composing had taken a toll on her. She was in poor physical health and hinted to friends that she might give up composition altogether. In 1947, doctors concerned about a persistent illness suggested that she return to Barry where she could be properly cared for by her parents.

The move provided the change that Grace Williams needed,

CONTINUED

Grace Williams



Pamela Blevins Photo

Sunset over Porthmadoc Wales. Grace Williams drew the natural elements of Wales into her music.

and she never returned to live in London. By the late 40s, Wales was blossoming as a center for the arts. The BBC had set up a Welsh Broadcasting Region while the Welsh National Opera, the Welsh Office of the Arts Council and a number of music festivals had been established. She began writing incidental music for radio plays and wrote scripts for BBC school broadcasts that included her own arrangements of folk songs from all over the world. In 1948, she became one of the first women to write music for film with her score for *Blue Scar*.

In 1955, Grace Williams was 49 years old. While the music she composed up to that time in her life was good, it was not original enough to lift her out of the category of "minor composer." Her compositions with few exceptions were rooted in romanticism, relied heavily on traditional Welsh melodies and images of land and sea, or had been inspired by an event in Welsh history.

Finding Her Own Musical Voice

By the age of 50, Grace Williams had found her own musical voice, one now influenced by the rhythms and cadences of old Welsh poetry and oratory, and penillion and ballad singing. With her music in greater demand, she now began receiving commissions. She was able to put aside much of the necessary busy work that had provided her with an income and devote more time to composition.

"You know," she wrote to a friend, "it was a marvelous sensation being asked to write something; someone wanting your music. Once I got going on it, the music absolutely haunted me.... Such was the elation of having a commission, the ideas flowed freely."

In the last 20 years of her life, Grace Williams composed music that marks her as a composer of importance in Wales. Her influence on younger Welsh composers was enormous, and she proved that it is possible to live in a small country and survive as

an artist. In a land with a deeply rooted choral tradition, she helped place orchestral music on a new footing, and she brought to the concert hall a distinctly Welsh musical language in works like her *Penillion*, *Ballads for Orchestra*, *Carillons*, *Symphony No. 2*, the *Trumpet Concerto* and *Castell Caernarfon*.

Grace Williams did not neglect the vocal music that is the lifeblood of the Welsh people and left some 90 settings for voice, many with orchestra. Her *Choral Suite: The Dancers* was one of her first successful vocal works and received its premier by Joan Sutherland singing solo with the Penarth Ladies Choir in 1954! Williams had an affinity for vocal writing, and over the years produced large scale choral works like the haunting *Ave maris stella* and her choral masterpiece *Missa Cambrensis*. In her song settings with orchestra, she selected a range of poets from ancient and Medieval Welsh texts to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Siegfried Sassoon, D.H. Lawrence and American poet May Sarton.

For her contributions to music, Grace Williams was offered the OBE in 1966, but she turned it down. A good performance of her music meant more to her than a decoration. On her 70th birthday in 1976, she received tributes from admirers throughout the world, and the Welsh BBC broadcast a program of her music. Her major orchestra works had been recorded.

Three months later, she experienced the first signs of what would prove to be a fatal cancer. Surgery and radiation therapy did not improve her condition and left her debilitated.

On January 25, 1977, she wrote a farewell letter to Elizabeth Maconchy to tell her "...all along I've known this could happen and now it has I'm quite calm and prepared and can only count my blessings -- that I've had such a run of good health, able to go on writing -- and just being me with my thoughts and ideas and sensitivity. From now on it won't be so good but even so there are sunsets and the sea and the understanding of friends."

Grace Williams died on February 10 just nine days before her seventy-first birthday.

FROM MAUD POWELL'S SCRAPBOOK

Jerero Carreno

Maud Powell

AND

This evening!

With my hearts best wishes for your continued success and welfare and affectionate greetings I remain always

Yours sincerely
 Jerero Carreno

1

June 20th 1899
De Keyser's Royal Hotel

My dear Miss Powell

A thousand most sincere thanks for your very kind letter and the charming invitation for Baroness von Horst's reception this evening.

I am extremely sorry that, owing to a previous engagement, I am unable to accept Baroness von Horst's

Kind

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invitation for this evening and thus am deprived of the pleasure of making Baroness von Horst's acquaintance and of being with you.

I am looking forward with the utmost pleasure to meeting you tomorrow at Miss Chuman's again after so many years that I have not had the good luck of seeing you. I do not remember my having been so fortunate as to have been able to do you a professional good turn

3

and it is more than good of you to remember any such a thing and only shows your own noble nature, that you should have such a good memory for things not worth remembering.

Kindly tell Baroness von Horst from me, that I will be delighted to be "bugged" by her and I hope that the occasion will soon present itself when I may have this pleasure. I am so awfully sorry that I cannot be with you all

Text of Teresa Carreño's Letter to Maud Powell

The following correspondence took place in London, England, where American violinist Maud Powell based herself from 1898 to 1905. Teresa Carreño was one of the greatest pianists of the day. Although born in Venezuela, she made her home in the United States. (See *Signature*, Summer 2008 for a profile of Carreño.)

June 20th 1899
De Keyzers' Royal Hotel

My dear Miss Powell,

A thousand most sincere thanks for your very kind letter and the charming invitation for Baroness von Horst's reception this evening. I am extremely sorry that, owing to a previous engagement, I am unable to accept Baroness von Horst's kind invitation for this evening and thus am deprived of the pleasure of making Baroness von Horst's acquaintance and of being with you.

I am looking forward with the utmost pleasure to meeting you tomorrow at Miss Vuman's [spelling ?] again after so many years that I have not had the good luck of seeing you. I do not remember my having been so fortunate as to do you "a professional good turn" and it is more than good of you to remember any such a thing and only shows your own noble nature that you should have such a good memory for things not worth remembering.

Kindly tell Baroness von Horst from me, that I will be delighted to be "hugged" by her and I hope that the occasion will soon present itself when I may have this pleasure. I am so awfully sorry that I cannot be with you all this evening!

With my heart's best wishes for your continued success and welfare and affectionate greetings I remain always

Yours sincerely

Teresa Carreño

The Book Shelf

There was a time — and not that long ago — when it was nearly impossible to find books about women in music. It was almost as if women didn't exist and certainly indicated that the men who wrote about music were inclined to dismiss their work as irrelevant and not worth their time. There were exceptions.

Clara Schumann was more fortunate than most. On my bookshelves I have a three early books about her: *The Girlhood of Clara Schumann (Clara Wieck and Her Time)*, by a woman, Florence May, published in London in 1912; and *Clara Schumann, An Artist's Life Based on Material Found in Diaries and Letters* in two volumes, by Berthold Litzmann, published in Germany and England in 1913. It's been more years than I care to admit since I read these books but each made a contribution to my knowledge of Clara Schumann and her times. While they might appear dated now they are still worth reading for the nuggets glowing from the text.

I also have *Camilla, A Tale of the Violin Being the Artist Life of Camilla Urso* by Charles Barnard, published in the United States in 1874 when Urso was still very much alive and contributed to the book. It is a compact volume filled with the kind of detail and color we rarely find in astringent academic books today — personal details that humanize the subject in a style that some would call “romantic” because it transports the reader back in time in an engaging way. Urso was a real trail-blazer, and the woman who inspired the violinist Maud Powell to see what she could become at a time when women could become very little.

Many years ago in a used bookshop in Boston, I found a fine copy of Arthur Elson's *Woman's Work in Music*, bound in red and imprinted in gold, and published in that city in 1903. Despite its age, it remains an old favorite. Elson's subtitle reads “Being an account of her influence on the art, in ancient as well as modern times; a summary of her musical compositions, in different countries of the civilized world; and an estimate of their rank in comparison with those of men.”

When I began my work on women composers back in the 1970s, I found Mr. Elson's book helpful mainly because it was the *only* book of its kind I *could* find! I give Mr. Elson high

marks for trying and for being willing to tread across what many of his male contemporaries regarded as a musical wasteland. He lists 16 pages of women composers (about 500 names) in Britain, America, Germany and France alone and mentions composers from other countries including Elfrida André, who is featured in this issue of *Signature*. This was no small task in 1903 and in that regard alone the book is a treasure box of names that might otherwise have been lost forever. I have to admit that I still haven't heard of most of them.

Mr. Elson even dares to attach the word “greatest” to some women composers: Amy Beach, Margaret Ruthven Lang, Alice Mary Smith (see the article in this issue), Ethel Smyth (see the June issue), Dora Bright, Liza Lehmann, Ethel Barns, Louisa Lebeau, Ingeborg von Bronsart, Eva dell' Aqua, Carlotta Ferrari, Elfrida André, Augusta Holmes, Cecile Chaminade. Some today might bristle when Mr. Elson says that “...there has been no woman composer of the very first rank, comparable to the tonal giants among men.” But he then fairly observes that “women have not been generally at work in this field until the last century, while men have had considerably more time. After all, there are not so many really great men among composers.”

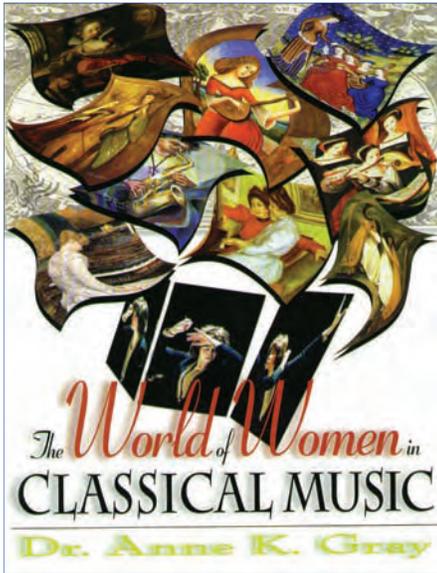
While some information in this early book is outdated, I still find it pleasant to ramble through its pages on a rainy afternoon and remind myself of how far we have come since Mr. Elson penned this pioneering little volume. There are several paperback editions now available on Amazon and various used book sites. Do check it out.

See the following pages for a few more books on my shelves. If you have books that you want to share with readers, please send a brief description and a scanned image (200 dpi is fine) to pblevins@erols.com and I will include these in future issues. There are many young women and men coming to music now who do not know the history. Some books might be out of print but are available via used book sites and Amazon so feel free to share no matter how old a book might be.

MORE



The Book Shelf

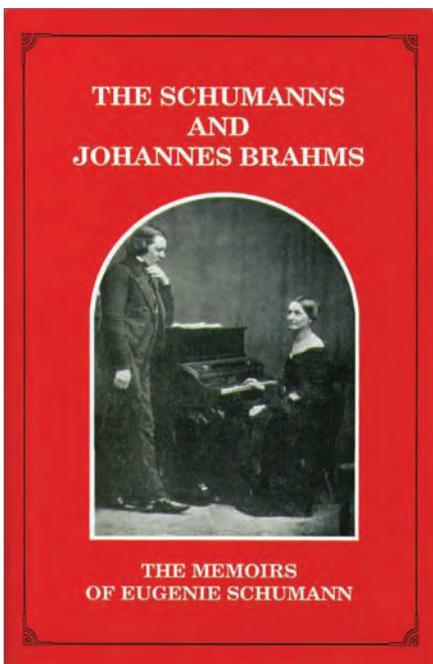


The World of Women in Classical Music, Dr. Anne K. Gray, Word World of La Jolla California 2007, paperbound, 1055 pages, \$55.

While Arthur Elson made women in music more visible in 1903, in our own time Dr. Anne Gray has produced what has to be one of the most comprehensive reference works on women in music that has come into my hands. Not only does she provide profiles on composers and performers past and present throughout the world, she includes musicologists, publishers, agents, recording company owners, philanthropists, basically women in all fields of music. *World*

of Women was a monumental task that was many years in the making. Dr. Gray's tenacity is admirable given the depth of research she undertook to make this book possible. Her profiles are engagingly written, informative and not without welcome touches of humor.

The women come alive and what makes this reference book work so well for me is that Dr. Gray is not afraid to offer personal glimpses into the lives of the many women who have dared to be different, have had the courage to pursue their dreams and who have left and are leaving an enduring legacy to future generations. Highly recommended.



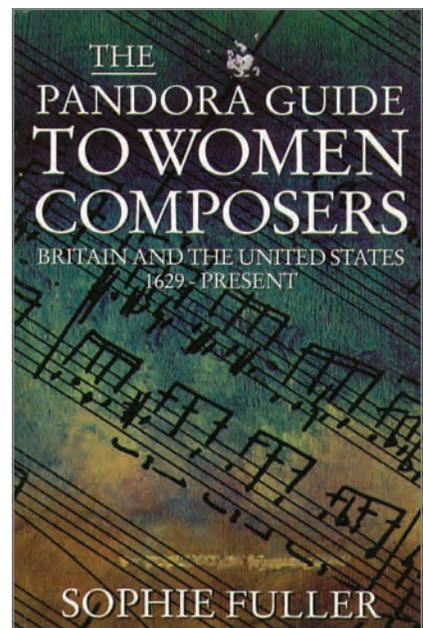
The Memoirs of Eugenie Schumann, by Eugenie Schumann, reprint by Music Book Society, Lawrence, MA

A colorful memoir that transports the reader back in time to meet Clara Schumann, her children, Brahms, Pauline Viardot Garcia and many others. Rich in personal moments and insights into a complex family, headed by Clara who juggled a major concert career with bearing and rearing eight children, struggling with her ill husband and providing financial support for her family. A very engaging and loving book written by Clara's seventh child.



Ruth Crawford Seeger, A Composer's Search for American Music, by Judith Tick, Oxford University Press, 1997

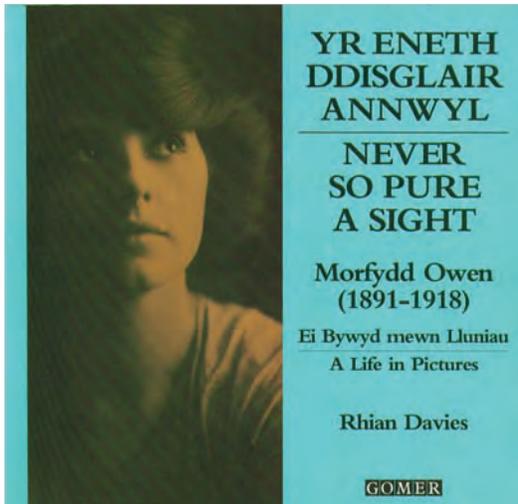
This is one of those rare biographies that made me interested in learning about someone in whom I had no interest! Or so I thought. Ruth Seeger comes alive on the page thanks to Judith Tick's warm, vivid style and the depth of her research. Tick is a good story-teller, never dull, never remote and always engaging. Her discussions of Seeger's music are clear and illuminating, no easy task given that Seeger's music is rather complex. Not only does Seeger come alive, but Tick captures the moods and rhythms of the times in which Seeger lived and worked.



The Pandora Guide to Women Composers Britain and the United States 1629 - Present, by Sophie Fuller, Pandora, 1994

I've had my paperback copy of this excellent guide since it first came out in 1994 and its pages are much worn now. Even back then it was still difficult to find biographical information about women composers easily and in one volume (the Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers came out a year later) so Dr. Fuller's collection was invaluable and remains so today. I found this book very helpful in filling in gaps in composers' lives and in alerting me to others I had not heard of. Reading it was an adventure.

The Book Shelf



Never So Pure A Sight, Morfydd Owen 1891-1918, A Life in Pictures by Rhian Davies, Gomer, 1994

Never So Pure A Sight is an unusual book and one that won't be easy to find. It is unusual because it is written in both Welsh and English, not a combination familiar to most of us. Dr. Davies is a marvelous scholar who knows how to inject drama into the life of her subject. That she managed to find so many photographs of this obscure composer is a feat in itself. In her day Morfydd Owen was regarded as the "most supremely gifted and diversely talented musician Wales had yet produced." She was a composer, a pianist and a singer whose charm, warmth and talent placed her at the center of Welsh and English artistic life. Tragically she died of appendicitis a few weeks shy of her 27th birthday. She left 180 compositions including songs, chamber music and works for orchestra and for voice and orchestra. Her legacy has yet to be recorded but some of her music can be heard in an excellent Welsh film broadcast in her centenary year. I was privileged to view this film several years ago. Dr. Davies served as associate producer. A book well worth finding.

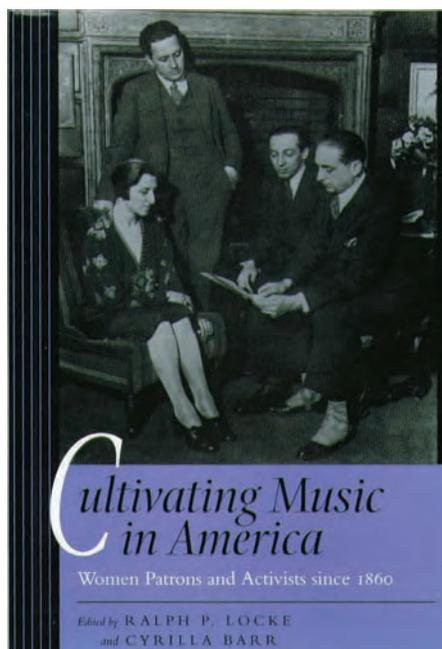
A Rebecca Clarke Reader, edited by Liane Curtis, the Rebecca Clarke Society, 2003

Liane Curtis, a long-time champion of Clarke, has compiled a diverse selection of important essays that tell us much about Clarke, often in her own words. The book is divided into three sections: recent essays about Clarke, Clarke's published writings about music and "My Mini Revival" containing gems of information about the composer/violist, her life and the people in it. Dr. Curtis also includes an helpful discography. I find it gratifying that so many scholars have developed such an appreciation of and commitment to Clarke. The discussions of Clarke's music are enlightening and I tend to come away wishing that Clarke had written more because I think she had a lot to say. The Reader offers more than a look at Clarke and her achievements — it is a history of a fluid time in music. Clarke was very highly regarded by her contemporaries, a fact that becomes obvious when one reads reviews written in her own day. The photographs spread throughout the book give readers a visual portrait of this extraordinary women. One of the most delightful shows Clarke playing Scrabble! If you haven't read this fine collection you are in for a treat.

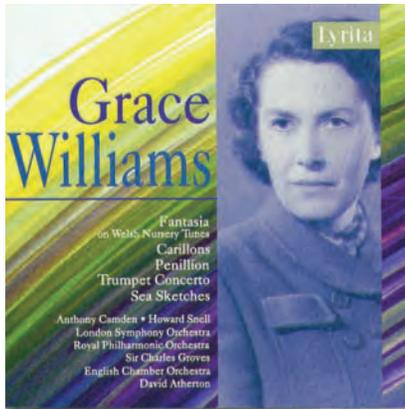


Cultivating Music in America, Women Patrons and Activists Since 1860, by Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, University of California Press, 1997

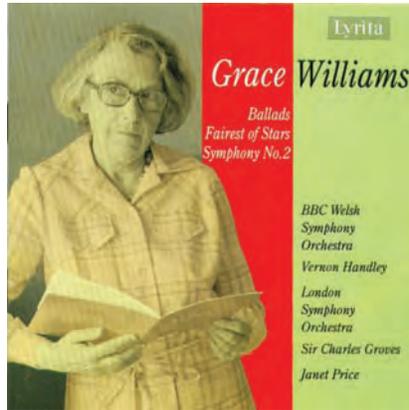
If you look at the history of music in the United States you soon realize that women were the movers and shakers, the ultimate force, in bringing classical music to the public. *Cultivating Music in America* is a must read for anyone who wants to understand how and why women were able to accomplish so much working as individuals or in groups. In earlier times these women were known as "keepers of culture" who formed music clubs, developed community concert programs and created symphony orchestras. Some like Jeanette Thurber created schools while others like Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commissioned new music while Ellen Stoeckel ran an important music festival. Women in high social positions prompted their husbands to support these efforts with their considerable money. The essay on the role of African-American activists gives a history that few people even know existed — well, it does and it is impressive. In fact this history is impressive all around.



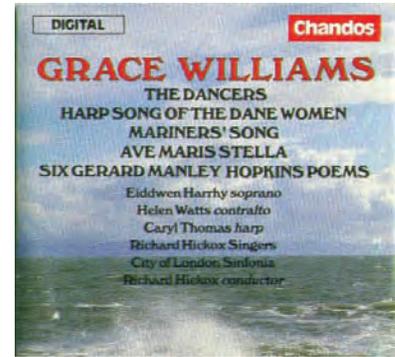
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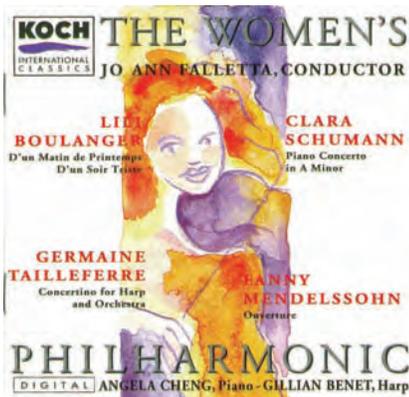
Grace Williams — Carillons, Sea Sketches, Penillion, Fantasia on Nursery Tunes, , Trumpet Concerto, Lyrita CD



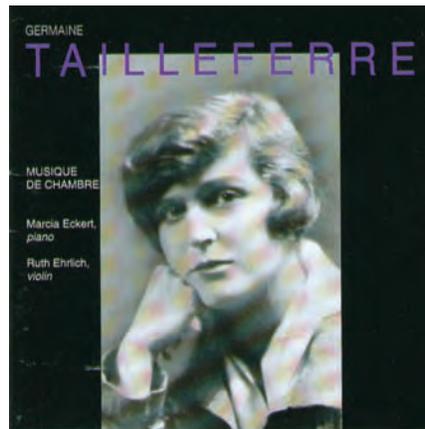
Grace Williams — Ballads, Fairest of Stars, Symphony No. 2, — Lyrita



Grace Williams — The Dancers, Harp Song of the Dane Women, Mariner's Song, Ave maria stella, Six Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems, Chandos, very rare but worth finding



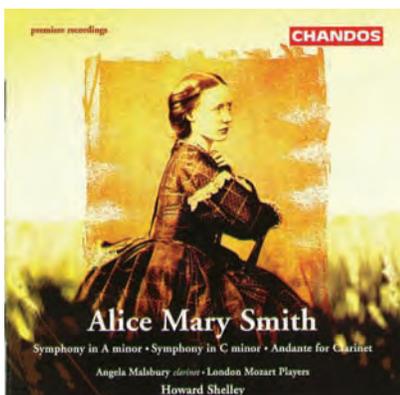
Germaine Tailleferre — Concertino for Harp and Orchestra and works by Clara Schumann, Lili Boulanger and Fanny Mendelssohn conducted by Jo Ann Falletta — Koch CD



Germaine Tailleferre — Chamber Music, including Sonatas 1 & 2 for Violin and Piano, Sonatine for Violin and Piano, works for piano, piano and oboe and piano and trumpet performed by Ruth Ehrlich & Marca Eckert — Cambria CD



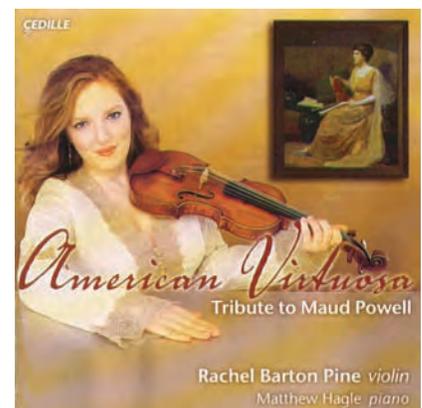
Gena Branscombe — Ah! Love, I Shall Find Thee: Songs of Gena Branscombe — Albany CD



Alice Mary Smith — Symphony in A minor, Symphony in C minor, Andante for Clarinet — Chandos CD



Lilian Elington — Out of the Mist, (also works by Elgar, Gurney, Kelly, Parry — Dutton CD



Rachel Barton Pine, Tribute Maud Powell includes works by Amy Beach, Marion Bauer & and arrangements by Powell — Cedille CD

The Children's Corner



Andrew Eccles



Rachel Barton Pine
The joy of making music

Rachel Barton Pine

Inspiring the Audience of the Future

by Karen A. Shaffer

When Rachel Barton Pine was three years old, she saw older girls wearing beautiful long dresses playing violins at her church. She knew at that moment what she wanted – not a new dress, but a violin. That was thirty years ago. Today Rachel is an internationally acclaimed violinist and recording artist who performs all over the world from Europe to New Zealand to Iceland and North America, bringing joy to others through music.

Rachel, a precocious child and a prodigy, began studying the violin in the summer of

1978 with a teacher in her own Chicago neighborhood. After the first lesson, the teacher asked Rachel's mother, "Is she always like this?" At first Rachel's mother thought she was misbehaving but the teacher explained that Rachel was doing things right away that were supposed to take months to learn!

By the time she was five, Rachel was signing her kindergarten papers "Rachel, Violinist". She had no concept of what a career in music meant.

"But I knew that I was meant to be a



Rachel at age 9, left, playing Bach during a worship service at United Church of Christ in Chicago, and at age 5 playing the Boccherini Minuet at the Steven's Point Suzuki Camp. (Photos: Courtesy Rachel Barton Pine)

Rachel Barton Pine



Rachel Barton Pine at age 11 photographed during a lesson with internationally acclaimed violinist Ruggiero Ricci. When Rachel began accepting jobs to help support her family while still very young she tried to make herself look older by wearing make-up and changing her hair style. (Photo: Courtesy Rachel Barton Pine)

musician and share my music with people,” Rachel explains. “From age five onwards, I defined myself not as someone who played the violin but as a violinist – it was the central meaning of my life.”

Rachel loved to practice the violin and wanted to play it all day. “It never felt like work,” she says. “My mom thought I was a pretty strange kid. She would ask ‘Don’t you want to put that thing down and go ride your bike?’ but Rachel wanted to practice instead.

When Rachel was nine years old her grandmother taught her how to crochet. Her mother was pleased because Rachel would finally be doing something that had nothing to do with music. Can you guess what Rachel did? She invented a crocheted violin and has never crocheted anything but

violins since. “I guess I’m terribly single-minded,” she says.

It is important for a young musician to be focused, determined and “single-minded” in order to make dreams come true and have the willpower to face and overcome obstacles that might stand in the way of those dreams.

Rachel studied violin in both private and group lessons. She completed the Suzuki Method by the time she was six years old. She made her solo debut with the Chicago String Ensemble when she was seven and at nine she started her studies at the Music Institute of Chicago.

When she was only ten years old she made her “big” debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the most important orchestras in the world. Then at

Rachel Barton Pine

eleven she joined the Civic Orchestra of Chicago an concertmaster at fourteen. By the time she was seventeen, Rachel had completed her formal music training.

There wasn't much money in Rachel's household but she obtained scholarships to pay for all her lessons. Her parents couldn't afford to buy her a violin so other people lent her theirs. She competed in local music competitions and used the prize money she won to pay all of her music expenses – to buy sheet music and pay accompanists, for example.

Rachel was home-schooled and had two younger sisters. There were times when the family was very poor so at fourteen Rachel went to work to support her family. She found jobs soloing with orchestras, playing at weddings, playing on street corners,

substituting in local orchestras and teaching — yes, teaching others when she was only fourteen. As a result of all this hard work she was able to contribute significantly towards paying household bills including the mortgage, groceries and utilities. At sixteen she played in the first violin section of the Grant Park Orchestra and that provided a steady income throughout the summer. Rachel was a very busy teenager but the time had come to think about her future career.

She was very close to her teachers Almita and Roland Vamos, who did not have the connections to help her build a solo career. They advised her to compete in international violin competitions. Rachel entered the Montreal competition and, as the youngest contestant, placed fifth. Then



Rachel at age ten showing her determination and mastery.



Cheri Eisenberg & Dan Rest

Rachel early in her career. (Photos courtesy Rachel Barton Pine)



Cheri Eisenberg & Dan Rest

in the summer of 1992 when she was 17, Rachel she entered the International Bach Competition in Leipzig, Germany. It was time to make a major decision and take a huge risk.

“Participation in the Bach Competition would require a month in Europe,” Rachel explains. “That was more time than I was allowed off by the Grant Park Orchestra. I would need to resign my position, lose the income and I would not be able to do any of my other music gigs. Furthermore, I would be running up expenses in Europe. I knew that if I didn’t win a prize I would not be able to pay the next month’s household bills.” Her father’s employment was tenuous and the family was still relying on Rachel to be the main breadwinner.



Andrew Eccles

Rachel appreciates all music, and has the ability to see the connecting threads in disparate musical forms. Here we see Rachel in different musical moods — rock, heavy metal and baroque. She is a musical ambassador who spans the ages.



Cheri Eisenberg & Dan Rest

Rachel Barton Pine

"I really struggled over whether or not to take the risk. The music of Bach has always been central to my sense of faith, and I became convinced that going to Leipzig was the right decision. In the end, I went, trusting that things would work out somehow."

And things did work out! Rachel became the youngest person, at age 17, and the first American to win a gold medal in the prestigious Bach Competition. She considers this to be her major accomplishment and one in which she takes great pride. Rachel also won top prizes in five other international violin competitions. Her career path was now open and it was clear that music would be her life's work.

But is classical music the only music that Rachel listens to, plays and loves? No! You might be surprised to learn that she likes folk, blues, jazz, "and especially rock and heavy metal!" Why heavy metal?

"Heavy metal appeals to me because of its extreme intensity combined with compositional complexity. My favorite bands give their performances everything they've got and try to fully involve the audience in the musical experience," Rachel explains. "I draw a lot of inspiration from these musicians' commitment on stage, and I try to follow their example within the more sophisticated emotional palette of classical music."

Rachel has the ability to see the connecting threads in these very disparate musical forms and this makes her the perfect bridge between generations of music fans. She sees herself as an artistic ambassador, introducing the pleasures of classical music to legions of new listeners. In the process, she has broken through every possible stereotype people might have of a modern classical musician.

Rachel is also very committed to education. When she is not on stage, she can often be found visiting schools across the United States, sharing her enthusiasm for the violin with the next generation.



Andrew Eccles

"Initially, it was the sound of it I loved," she recalls. "Its voice spoke to me as if this were preordained somehow. By age five, I knew this is what my life would be about: I was already defining myself by my instrument."

Rachel Barton Pine

"I love going to schools and talking to the kids," she says. "I always try to be accessible, from responding to fan emails to hanging around after my shows to sign autographs, and this is an extension of that. I attach visual images to the feelings of the music, using pieces like *Vivaldi's Four Seasons*. Or I'll play something and ask them to guess the story line, or ask them to make up their own stories using memories and emotions. The idea is to get them thinking about what the music moves them to feel. I've been doing this since I was a teenager because it's important to inspire the audience of the future."

Rachel also keeps up with pop culture, "the latest music and what's happening online and that helps me bridge the gap. If kids hear that I've hung out backstage with bands they like and then I tell them that those guys are into classical, that puts it on a whole new level."

Rachel's passion for guiding the future of music has led her to create the Rachel Elizabeth Barton Foundation, a charitable

organization founded in 2001 to expand awareness of and appreciation for classical music. Current projects include an instrument loan program, grants for education and career, and the String Student's Library of Music by Black Composers, a supplemental curriculum featuring music by composers of African decent from around the world. Rachel gives master classes everywhere she travels and serves on the boards of various schools including the Music Institute of Chicago. She recently received the prestigious Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award for her work in music education.

"Playing the violin is my greatest joy and the best way I can help make the world a better place," Rachel observes. "I will maintain the highest possible artistic quality while constantly striving for artistic improvement, enrich the lives of as many people as I can with music, find meaningful ways to help educate and support young musicians, and use my music to help support diverse charitable causes."



Andrew Eccles



Be sure to visit Rachel's website at
<http://www.rachelbartonpine.com/>

Rachel's Scrapbook



Rachel & students of the Apostolic Church of God in Chicago.



Rachel's violin case



With a young violinist in Indiana.



With rock violinist Mark Wood.



Trio Settecento



All photos courtesy Rachel Barton Pine



With husband Greg Pine on a holiday cruising around South America where they saw icebergs.

More pages from Rachel's Scrapbook



With a young violinist in West Virginia



With an audience member at the Music Institute of Chicago gala.



Rachel places flowers on the statue of Maud Powell in Peru, Illinois.



Rachel with violinist Patrick in Dayton, Ohio



Rachel with members of the Red Hat Club, Amelia Island, Florida





Rachel's Violin
and the story of the violin

The Violin

by Karen A. Shaffer

No one knows who invented the violin. It is unlikely that one person is responsible for creating the instrument. The first violins combined the features of several well-known instruments that were in use around the year 1500.

The first famous violin maker was probably Andrea Amati, (c.1511–c.1580), who is believed to have originated the present form of the violin, viola and cello in his workshop in Cremona, Italy.

Some of the world's best violins were

made between the late 1600s and the mid-1700s by Italian violin makers who worked in cities throughout Italy. Here are some examples:

Cremona -- Amati, Guarneri, Stradivari

Brescia -- Maggini

Milan -- Grancino, Testore

Naples – Gagliano

Piacenza – Guadagnini

Venice – Gofriller, Montagnana

Bologna – Tononi

Look at the map below and find these cities



The Violin

Here are some of the most famous early violin makers:

Amati – a family of violin makers in Cremona, Italy, headed by Andrea Amati, who was one of the earliest violin makers. His sons Antonio and Girolamo carried on the family tradition. Girolamo's son Nicolo Amati (1596–1684) was the teacher of almost every important master of violin making in the late 1600s, including Andrea Guarneri (c1626–98) and Antonio Stradivari.

Guarneri – Giuseppe Guarneri “del Gesù” (1698-1744) was the most famous of the five members of this family of violin makers.

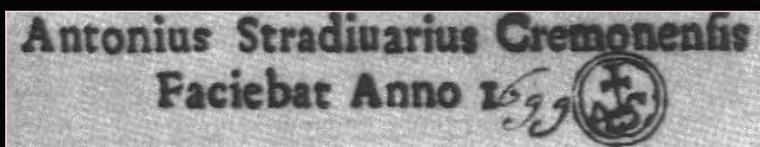
Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737) is generally conceded to be the greatest of all violin makers.

Each violin bears the name of its maker. Usually, you can look through the left *f* hole and see the maker's signature on a label inside the body of the instrument and the city and year in which it was made. The violin makers used the Latin form of their names so that “Stradivari” is “Stradivarius” and “Guarneri” appears as “Guarnerius” on their labels. Rachel Barton Pine plays a violin made in 1742 by Joseph Guarneri “del Gesù.” To emphasize the divine inspiration he felt, Joseph Guarneri signed his violins with the initials IHS (Jesus Hominum Salvator) or “del Gesù”, giving homage to his Savior, Jesus.

The sound of every violin is unique. Experienced listeners can sometimes tell who made a violin by the quality of its sound. While both Stradivari and Guarneri violins produce tones of extraordinary beauty, some would say that a Stradivarius violin has an ethereal quality to its tone while the tone of a Guarnerius is often described as a bit more earthy. No two violins look alike or handle alike.



Venice, above, and Naples, right, both were centers for violin makers.



A label from a Stradivarius violin.



The Violin

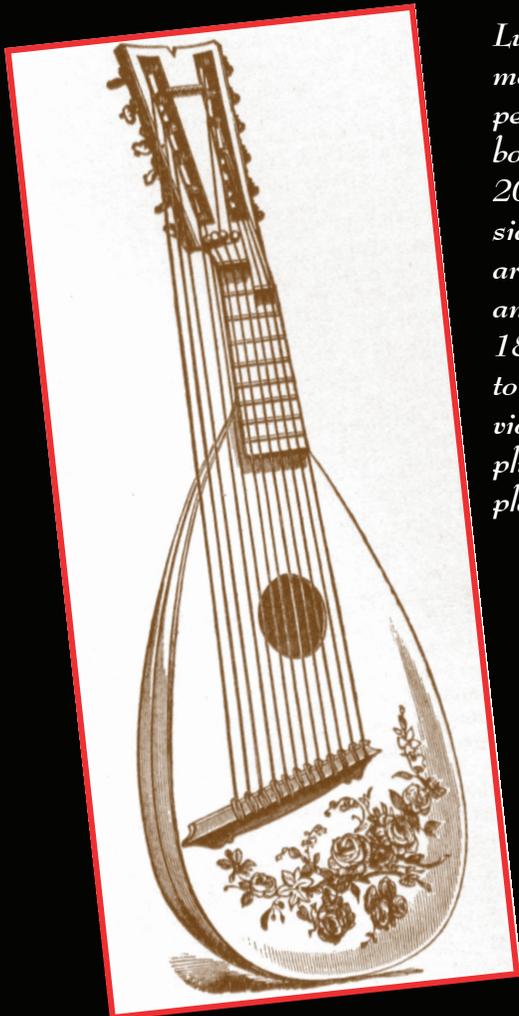
Stradivari altered the form of the violin from the Amati models and crafted his instruments with artistic perfection. Some say that a Strad is more temperamental to play than a Guarneri, which is more forgiving, perhaps in keeping with Guarneri's more rugged craftsmanship.

There is a great debate about the role of the varnish and various qualities of the wood used to make a violin on the tone quality of the violin. The violins of both these makers are among the most coveted in the world today.

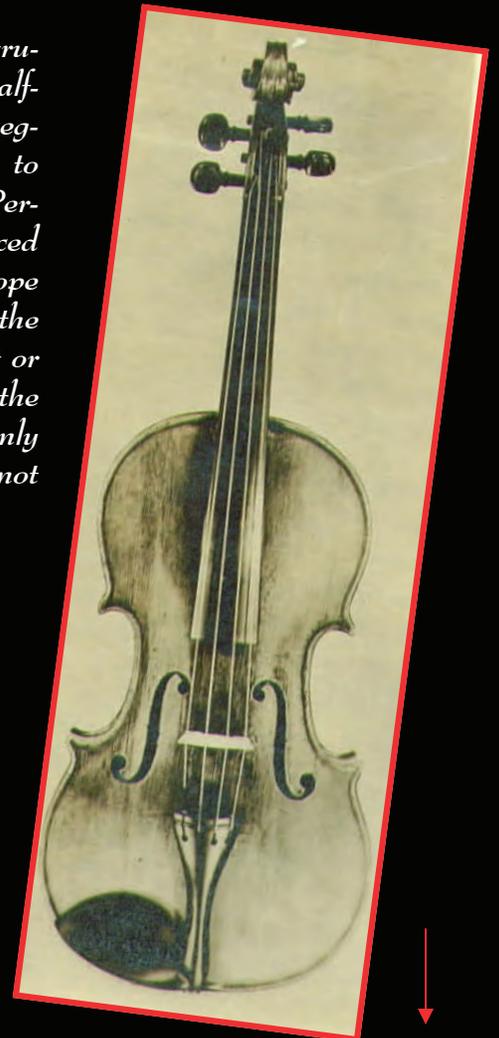
A violin bow is just as important as the violin itself in creating a beautiful violin

tone. The French bow-maker Francois Tourte perfected and standardized the modern violin bow in the late 18th century. There were and are many wonderful bow makers as well as violin makers, both men and women, working today in almost every part of the world.

Violin makers are often called "luthiers." Why? "Luth" is a French word for "lute". The first violin makers were often the same craftsmen who made lutes, a popular instrument in the 1500s and 1600s. The name "lute-maker" or "luthier" simply stuck even after violin makers stopped making lutes!



Lute – a plucked stringed instrument with a body shaped like a half-pear, fretted finger-board, and peg-box bent back. Dating back to 2000 B.C. and of Arabic or Persian origin, the lute was introduced around the 8th century to Europe and was extensively used up to the 18th century as a solo instrument or to accompany a singer. Unlike the violin, the lute strings are only plucked with the fingers and not played with a bow.



Rachel's Violin

Violins sometimes are given the name of a famous violin player who once possessed the instrument. For instance, Rachel Barton Pine's Guarnerius violin is known as the "ex-Soldat," named for the extremely talented musician Marie Soldat (1863-1955).



Tully Potter Collection

Soldat (later Soldat-Röger) became a member of the composer Johannes Brahms's inner circle and a regular chamber music partner. Their friendship continued throughout his life.

Soldat was widely considered one of the greatest violinists of her day. She studied

the Brahms Violin Concerto with both Joseph Joachim, the great violinist to whom it is dedicated, and Brahms, and it became her signature piece. She introduced it to many European cities, including Vienna in 1885, with Hans Richter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic. She gave it its second performance in Berlin, with Joachim conducting.

Brahms selected this violin for Soldat in 1897 and arranged for a wealthy Viennese businessman to purchase it and loan it to her for her lifetime. Rachel likes to think that Brahms chose this violin, in part, because its voice represents most closely what he envisioned for his concerto. *The Strad* magazine, in 1910, remarked that "...[it] bears most of the characteristics we have learnt to associate with this maker in a remarkable degree. The tone is of extraordinary beauty, and suits the violinist's virile style admirably.... The tone is full and rich, and noticeably deep on the G string. All the outlines of the fiddle seem to breathe life and strength."

After Marie Soldat passed away, her violin was bought by a collector and not heard in the world for many years. Rachel has been using it since 2002 when she recorded the Brahms and Joachim Violin Concertos with the Chicago Symphony. Rachel says: "It is a great privilege to have such a magnificent instrument as my musical partner and it is a great joy to share its voice with you."



Andrew Eccles



Diana Ambache

Diana Ambache is a pianist, Orchestral Director, musicologist, broadcaster and writer. In 30 years of giving solo and chamber music concerts, she has performed in 33 countries, on five continents, frequently under the auspices of the British Council. She specializes in the music of Mozart, and has recorded 10 of his Piano Concertos, plus numerous chamber works. She has made nearly 20 CD recordings.

Ambache is the only woman in Britain to found and direct her own classical chamber orchestra, The Ambache Chamber Orchestra (www.ambache.co.uk). Their pioneering work reviving music by women composers makes them the most equal opportunities musical group in the UK. They also have a uniquely collaborative way of working, through the interaction of the team. In 1997 she was Artistic Director of the women composers CD series produced by Carlton Classics.

Ambache's work reviving music by women composers of the last 300 years was recognized by her being short listed for the European Women of Achievement Awards in 2002. She has given 45 premières and made several recordings of concertos and chamber works by these women. She has published some of her discoveries through the Internet, Hildegard Publishing and Emerson Editions. Her work has been written about in the *Times* (who described her as 'an elite musical gumshoe'), the *Independent* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

Diana Ambache has made numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, Radio 4, and the World Service. She wrote and presented the Classic fm special 100th Anniversary program 'A Woman's Touch - Clara Schumann and her circle'. BBC Woman's Hour has broadcast three series of features on European women composers, on American women, and on piano music which Mozart wrote for women.

Since 1987 Ambache has applied principals from the Arts to the business world, and taught creativity on the Senior Executive Programme at the London Business School, and on the Evening MBA Programme at the City University Business School. For ten years she was a specialist lecturer for Martin Randall Travel.

Over the last 15 years Ambache has been commissioned to write articles for the *Grove Dictionary*, the *BBC Music Magazine*, *Classic fm Magazine*, *Piano Magazine*, the American magazine *Reflections*, and the *Independent*. She is the author of the website www.womenofnote.co.uk.





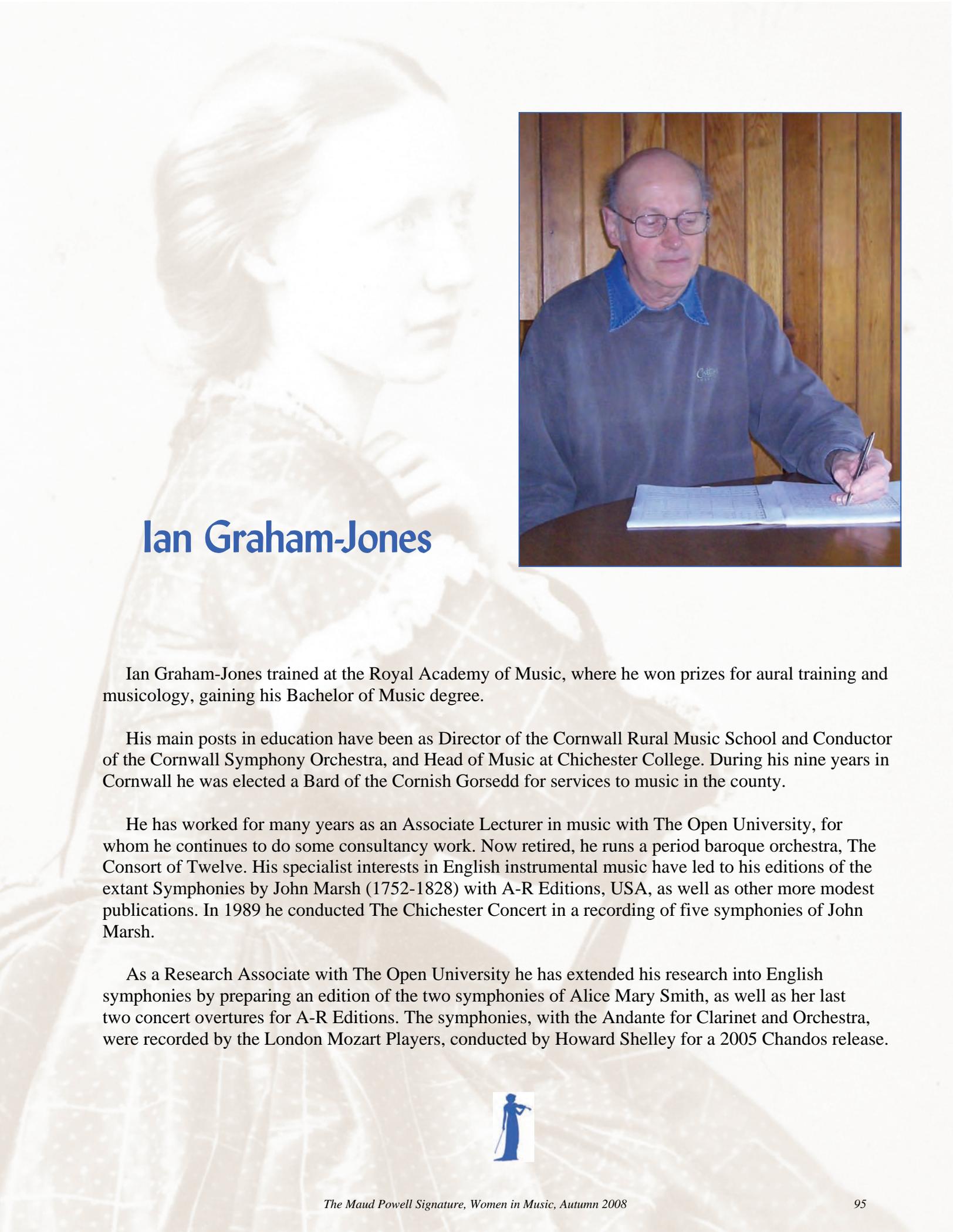
David J. Brown

David J. Brown has been an enthusiast for 19th and 20th century British music all his adult life. He was Secretary and subsequently Chairman of The Havergal Brian Society from 1974 until 1992, in which capacities he was involved with a number of performances and recordings of Brian's works (including his Symphonies 1 *The Gothic*, 2, 3, 4 *Das Siegeslied*, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 25, 31 and 32, music-drama *The Cenci*, and Violin Concerto) as well as editing 100 editions of the Society's Newsletter and other publications. The HBS website is <http://www.havergalbrian.org/>.

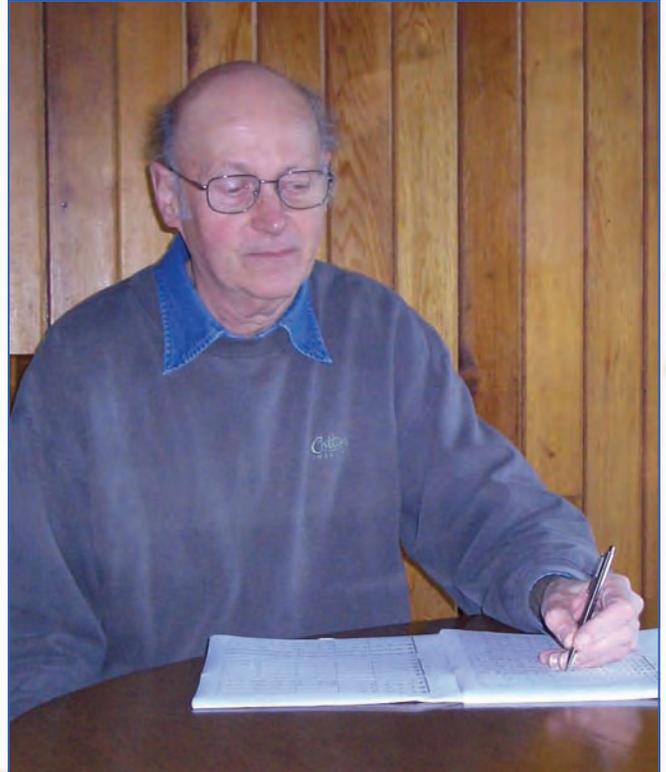
Since moving to Massachusetts in 2004 to marry Vicki Joseph (a good move!) it has become increasingly clear to him that the U.S.A. is just as guilty of neglecting cohorts of excellent native composers as is the U.K

His "day job" is Editor of *The Arup Journal*, a high-quality, full-colour technical magazine carrying articles on cutting-edge building and infrastructure projects and research, published three times a year by the global built environment consultancy Arup (<http://www.arup.com>).

He is also the author of *How They Were Built* (Kingfisher, 1991), a children's history of building and architecture, and for adults, *Bridges: Three Thousand Years of Defying Nature* (Mitchell Beazley, 1993; rev 2005; published in the U.S. by Firefly).



Ian Graham-Jones



Ian Graham-Jones trained at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won prizes for aural training and musicology, gaining his Bachelor of Music degree.

His main posts in education have been as Director of the Cornwall Rural Music School and Conductor of the Cornwall Symphony Orchestra, and Head of Music at Chichester College. During his nine years in Cornwall he was elected a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd for services to music in the county.

He has worked for many years as an Associate Lecturer in music with The Open University, for whom he continues to do some consultancy work. Now retired, he runs a period baroque orchestra, The Consort of Twelve. His specialist interests in English instrumental music have led to his editions of the extant Symphonies by John Marsh (1752-1828) with A-R Editions, USA, as well as other more modest publications. In 1989 he conducted The Chichester Concert in a recording of five symphonies of John Marsh.

As a Research Associate with The Open University he has extended his research into English symphonies by preparing an edition of the two symphonies of Alice Mary Smith, as well as her last two concert overtures for A-R Editions. The symphonies, with the Andante for Clarinet and Orchestra, were recorded by the London Mozart Players, conducted by Howard Shelley for a 2005 Chandos release.





Elizabeth Juliana Knighton

Elizabeth Juliana Knighton recently completed a Master of Arts degree in Music History at the University of Washington, Seattle. Her research interests focus on the involvement of American women in instrumental performance at the beginning of the twentieth century, and her masters thesis was the first primary source research to investigate the biography of Mary Davenport Engberg.

Elizabeth earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance and Music History from the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music, where she was named a Presser Scholar in 2005.

With Madame Engberg, Elizabeth shares a love of violin playing, orchestral conducting, and teaching.

Anya Laurence



A writer, teacher and classical pianist, I have had three books published, as well as many articles in various magazines and newspapers. I studied piano in New York with Rudolf Firkusny and at the Landowska Center in Connecticut with Denise Restout. I was on the music faculty of the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. I gave my debut recital in Carnegie Hall, New York, in 1978.

The winner of the “Amicus Poloniae” award from *Poland Magazine* for the prize-winning article about harpsichordist Wanda Landowska and the St. Cecilia Medal for music, I have also received the National Music Clubs Award for the book *Women of Notes, 1,000 Women Composers Born Before the Year 1900*, my first book published by Richards Rosen Press, New York, 1978.

My second book was *The House of the Bass Clef*, an educational manual for piano students. My latest book, *Love Divine: The Life of Henry Ward Beecher*, was published in 2005 by iUniverse Press. Other topics I have covered in my writing include biography, music, women’s studies, New England history, humor, New Age, health and others. ”

I am blessed to have had the opportunity to travel extensively, and I really love to write about all I have seen and experienced. Now a resident of Canada, for many years I lived in New York and New England and absorbed as much of the regional culture as I possibly could!

Susan Pickett



Susan Pickett, violinist and musicologist, is a native of Los Angeles. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Occidental College, holds an M. M. degree from Indiana University in Violin Performance, and a Ph. D. in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University. Her violin teachers have included John Browning, Sr., James Buswell, Franco Gulli, and James Barber. Dr. Pickett joined the faculty of Whitman College in 1981. In 1996 she was appointed Catharine Gould Chism Professor of Music.

During the past two decades, Dr. Pickett has uncovered the music of several hundred women composers from the 17th–20th centuries, collected over 30,000 pages of music by them, and she has published more than 30 editions of music by classical and romantic-era women (Hildegard Publishing Company and G. K. Hall). She also has contributed three chapters to volume 8 of *Women Composers: Music Through the Ages*.

With her ensemble, Donne e Doni (Women and Gifts) she has performed over 50 recitals in the Northwest and California. Donne e Doni released two CDs (privately) which include music by Isabella Leonarda, Anna Amalie, Clara Schumann, Marion Bauer, Amy Beach, Gwyneth Walker, Mathilde von Kralik, and Elfrida Andrée. Gwyneth Walker composed *An American Concerto* for Dr. Pickett, which she premiered in 1996 with the Walla Walla Symphony; a CD recording of the work (live-performance) with the Mid-Columbia Symphony was released in 1997.

In 1998 the Walla Walla Symphony performed Elfrida Andrée's *Concert-Ouverture*, a work reconstructed from manuscript by Dr. Pickett, which was subsequently performed in 1999 by the Swedish Broadcast Orchestra for Swedish television. She is currently writing the first biography about the composer Marion Bauer and the music critic Emilie Frances Bauer. Dr. Pickett's research has been featured by the Associated Press, Chronicle of Higher Education, "Voice of America," numerous NPR stations, as well as a special segment on ABC's "Good Morning America."





Annemarie Vogt

Dr. Annemarie Vogt, musicologist and violinist, lives and works in her hometown Berlin, Germany. Due to extended studies in various European countries she gained a profound knowledge of occidental music history. As a public relations officer and author, she worked for several German orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic.

In 2002 she received her Ph.D. degree in musicology at Technical University in Berlin with a doctoral dissertation on the history of the Berlin Philharmonic, focusing on its repertoire and concerts during the second half of the 20th century (“Warum nicht Beethoven? Repertoire und Programmgestaltung des Berliner Philharmonischen Orchesters 1945 bis 2000”).

In addition she is the editor of two books about music and arts in Finland (“Sibelius und Deutschland”, “Schweigen in Kommunikation und Kunst”). Currently, she is working on a new project to make music more accessible to parents and children. As a violinist she is presently concentrating on teaching young children.