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Eleanor Everest Freer: Her life and music

Eversole, Sylvia Miller, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1992

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ELEANOR EVEREST FREER: HER LIFE AND MUSIC

by

SYLVIA M. EVERSOLE

Part I: The Life

Part II: The Music

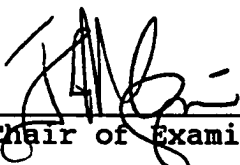
A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York

1992

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

September 23, 1992
Date


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Abstract

ELEANOR EVEREST FREER: HER LIFE AND MUSIC

by

Sylvia M. Eversole

Adviser: Professor H. Wiley Hitchcock

Eleanor Everest Freer (1864-1942) was a musical prodigy born in Philadelphia to musical parents. She played the piano, sang, and composed at an early age, and was taught at home until 1883 when she began studying voice with Mathilde Marchesi in Paris. She gave up a career as a concert singer in order to become the first qualified teacher of the Marchesi method in the United States. After teaching privately in Philadelphia and at the National Conservatory in New York, she married the wealthy Chicagoan Archibald Freer in 1891. The Freers returned to Chicago with their young daughter in 1899 after seven years in Germany, and in 1901 Freer began studying composition with Bernhard Ziehn. By the end of her life she had written and published 137 songs, eleven works for vocal ensemble, eleven chamber operas, and nineteen piano pieces. These works reflect her European training and background, displaying the colorful chromaticism of the late nineteenth

century. An advocate of opera in English, she founded the Opera in Our Language Foundation, which later became the American Opera Society of Chicago. Her tireless efforts for recognition of the American composer included the establishment of the David Bispham Memorial Award, which motivated the composition and performance of new operas. She was a prolific writer, and produced numerous articles and editorials championing American teachers, performers, composers, American musical training, and the performance of American works.

PREFACE

Studies of women in music, whether performers, composers, or patrons, have occupied a primary place in musicology during the past decade. This dissertation examines the life and music of Eleanor Everest Freer (1864-1942), a twentieth-century American composer of nineteenth-century musical training and background. Freer's life as an active composer in Chicago at the turn of the century was dominated by her determination to create an American tradition of opera and art songs using the English language. Besides composing, she founded the American Opera Society of Chicago (AOSC), a group dedicated to sponsoring performances of opera in English. In conjunction with the David Bispham Memorial Medal Award, also established by Freer, the AOSC was instrumental in motivating American composers to write new operas. Throughout her life, Freer persevered in her efforts to create national confidence in American composers and performers. She is an example of a woman who not only dared to compose in a socio-musical situation not favorable to that activity, but also motivated others, both men and women, to compose.

While occupied with the research necessary to write Freer's biography, I gradually became aware that certain nineteenth-century sociological attitudes toward the position of women shaped her parents' and her own decisions about her future as a musician. The place of women in society, the education of women, and general expectations about the careers women might "properly" choose governed Freer's entire life. The small musical forms in which she composed, the poetry she chose for her songs, and her apparent acceptance of the intimate situations in which her music was performed perhaps also developed from these gender-related conditions.

Sheltered and educated in an upper-class home by musical parents, Eleanor was exposed at an early age to musical discipline, and as an accompanist shared daily responsibilities in her father's voice studio. She played and sang the German, French, and Italian literature that formed the basis for vocal study. Among her father's friends and associates were many performers, and she heard them speak of their European training and of their lives as touring concert artists. She was present at social occasions where her mother, a fine singer, performed before wealthy Philadelphia socialites for the benefit of cultural institutions or philanthropic ventures. How would this talented young woman spend her life? As a public school teacher? As a private teacher? As the wife of a wealthy

man who would or would not allow her to develop her talent? What was expected of her in each case? These many themes are inextricably intertwined in the dissertation.

Sources, Research Method, and Objectives

The bibliography Women in American Music provides a list of Freer's music and two important but scanty primary sources for information about her early years. Her brief autobiography, Recollections and Reflections of an American Composer, (published around 1927), describes her parents' lifestyle and the famous friends who visited their home. Recollections and Reflections is characteristically modest, saying little about personal accomplishments in composition, but highlighting in great detail the philanthropic efforts she and her husband undertook during World War I and later--fund-raising affairs for the benefit of hospitals and other war-relief projects that were apparently expected of a woman in her social position. Agnes Greene Foster, a poet, author, and friend during the Chicago years, wrote the biography Eleanor Everest Freer, Patriot, and Her Colleagues. The latter supplies information about the Everest ancestors and duplicates much of Freer's own narrative about her early life in Philadelphia. Foster's biography is obviously the result of many conversations with Freer, expanding certain events

of the Philadelphia and Paris years. The most valuable information in Eleanor Everest Freer is found in the quotations of prominent musicians and critics who reviewed her scores and performances, and commented on her quest for recognition of the American composer. Both books stress Eleanor's objections to foreign rather than American vocal study, and relate in detail the nationalistic fervor that made her decide to become a voice teacher rather than a concert singer.

Mathilde Marchesi's book Marchesi and Music mentions several performances given by Eleanor (and other Americans) at special soirées in Paris during the mid-1880s in the presence of Verdi, Liszt, and other recognized composers. The importance Freer placed on these experiences, particularly a program in which Liszt accompanied her, is shown by detailed descriptions in both Foster and Freer. The subsequent information about the period of Eleanor's life in Chicago is far from complete. Dates of programs, identification of newspaper and journal reviews and articles, and other documentation important to a synthesis of Freer's life are often lacking. To gain an adequate understanding of this remarkable woman and her energetic undertakings, a much wider area of study was necessary.

Since teaching public-school music was perhaps the foremost career choice for musically-talented women in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, I decided to make a survey

of the status of that profession at that time. This information would provide a fitting introduction to the biography of a woman whose talents far surpassed the demands of such a career, and whose artistic sensitivity would not survive the compromises required of a public-school classroom teacher. I was astonished at the vast amount of factual material on music education in the scrapbooks of Simon Gratz¹ at the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia. Gratz's newspaper clippings and concert programs give an invaluable history of the addition of music to the Philadelphia public school curriculum; they illustrate not only the condition of music education in Philadelphia during the 1860s and '70s, but also the social controversy and the bureaucratic problems accompanying its implementation. Additionally, the collected articles include public and official commentary on the sexually discriminatory pay scale for teachers, and the judgments by which women were or were not advanced to administrative positions. Here were the first of many written and unwritten sociological implications facing the Everests and their daughter, which became an important, if underlying, part of my work.

¹Gratz was a school board official in Philadelphia during the period of Cornelius Everest's tenure at Girls' Normal School. He was apparently a supporter of the addition of music to the public school curriculum, and also in favor of equalizing teaching salaries for men and women. Information on both issues is compiled in his scrapbooks.

Cornelius Everest's name appears often in Gratz's clippings as a conductor of the Girls' Normal School chorus. Information about this teacher-training institution for women was also available at the Historical Society. Committee reports on the qualification of teachers, textbooks used in all areas of study, and examples of examinations as well as concert programs provided an in-depth look at Everest, an industrious and highly-respected musician. At the Library Company of Philadelphia I located textbooks and other publications of Everest's, and so acquired a sympathetic understanding of this person of unusual gifts, and of a modest but knowledgeable parent faced with preparing a suitable future for a talented daughter too precocious for exploitation in the public school arena.

Eleanor's marriage to the wealthy and socially prominent Archibald Freer brought her into a considerably different situation. There was no private teaching schedule to maintain: her husband provided the necessary income. There were many social expectations, and soon the experiences and responsibilities of motherhood became part of her life. She was, nevertheless, a trained musician fluent in French, German, and Italian when she arrived in Chicago. A few glimpses into the Freers' personal and family life in Chicago at the turn of the century were gleaned from journal or newspaper interviews and articles; mostly,

however, such articles presented a chronological picture of Freer as composer. Issues of Music News, Musical Leader, and Musical America were rich sources of information on her publications, programs and reviews of her music, performers, and places of performance. The notices in these journals led to others equally informative about Freer's projects in translation (texts of her own songs as well as dramas by Italian playwrights) and opera in English: Music and Letters published translations of German art songs at her instigation, The Musician occasionally published one of her own works, and Freer regularly wrote the column on opera for the Bulletin of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Chicago newspapers of the period also noted performances and contained reviews: the Chicago Tribune, the Herald Examiner, and the Evening American published articles that were often reprinted in Musical America and Music News.

At the Newberry Library in Chicago, I examined the scrapbooks of the Opera in Our Language Foundation and the American Opera Society of Chicago. These primary sources provided original photographs of Freer, programs on which her music appeared, and many of her letters and articles written during the battle for opera in English. This material was often not dated, and the pages in the scrapbooks were not arranged chronologically. Important documents of both groups were included, however, as well as

information about the David Bispham Memorial Award and its recipients. Freer's colleagues in the AOSC continued to compile information about their founder, her music, and composers who received the Bispham award even after Freer's resignation. The last documents among the collected letters and clippings were her obituary in the New York Times and the memorial program of her music given immediately after her death.

Two other sources at the Newberry Library were essential to this dissertation. Karleton Hackett's scrapbooks preserved his own articles on music in Chicago, and contained reviews of Freer's music. In his writings, the critic often revealed his bias against women composers, particularly as he reported on the beginnings of the Opera in Our Language Foundation. The papers of Helen Rudolph Heller, a student of Bernhard Ziehn and a friend of Freer's, were my best source of knowledge about Ziehn as a teacher and mentor. While Ziehn's own theoretical treatises and piano books showed his pedantic but thorough teaching methods, the letters Heller received from him while a student, and her many exercises in compositional techniques, showed Ziehn to be a caring and fatherly person, supremely interested in his pupils.

Freer's own manuscripts at the Library of Congress, as well as the published versions of her music collected there, were an unexpected source of personal as well as

musical information. Letters to and from her publishers were often attached to manuscripts. Her instructions for publication of a song in two different keys were often handwritten in the margins. Brochures advertising her works and citing reviews of her operas or song cycles were occasionally scattered among or clipped to the handwritten scores. The Library of Congress also provided handwritten letters from Freer to Carl Engel, to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and to Irving Schwerké. All were helpful in discovering Freer's thoughts and feelings about her music and her work in American opera. Occasionally, a fact about her family life appeared in this correspondence.

A variety of other unpublished sources available at the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Music Division, gave important scraps of information: the records of public meetings held by the New York Manuscript Society listed New York programs on which Freer's songs appeared; David Bispham's scrapbooks showed souvenir invitations to musicales "at Mrs. Freer's" as well as printed programs of concerts on which he had sung works by Freer and other American composers; Jeannette Thurber's scrapbooks led to information on her National Conservatory of Music and its faculty; the scrapbooks of the Metropolitan Opera included clippings detailing and reviewing performances of American operas presented during the early part of the twentieth century.

The collection at the main branch of the New York Public Library provided published records describing the activities of the Chicago women's social clubs and the problems that beset the Chicago Opera from its beginnings. The clubs provided a correct and socially approved outlet for Freer's talents as a musician and writer, while the vagaries of the opera and its directors in regard to American performers and works strengthened Freer's initiative in her fight against European cultural domination. I felt that research into these cultural forces was necessary to show the temper of the times regarding modern music, modern art and poetry, and--most important to Freer's cause--opera in English and the degree of public esteem for American composers, particularly women composers.

Much remains to be discovered about Freer, her personal life, and especially about the many unknown colleagues who performed her music in Chicago and smaller cities across the country. The names of female conductors, singers, actors, and poets in the National Federation of Music Clubs and other cultural organizations--artistic women of professional caliber who had chosen the safe, secure road of marriage and family instead of the concert artist's peripatetic existence--are scattered throughout the dissertation. Research into the lives and activities of these women would add another dimension to the social and

professional world of Freer's time, and might uncover additional knowledge about Freer herself.

A number of performance projects might be undertaken: Freer's best songs or portions of the cycles could be revived for special programs or recordings of music by women. Since no orchestrations for the operas or other works have been found to date, arrangements for chamber music groups might be prepared, not only for the operas, but for groups of songs from the cycles. Freer's songs and piano pieces would be an interesting addition to programs of works by American composers. This dissertation represents only the beginning of knowledge about a remarkable woman and her music.

Acknowledgements

I am pleased to acknowledge the many colleagues in both research and performance who participated in the completion of this dissertation. My adviser H. Wiley Hitchcock, who strongly supported the topic from its inception, read innumerable drafts of separate chapters. His careful editing and critical comments were an invaluable aid in improving clarity and conciseness in my writing style. John Graziano's suggestions for organization, structural format, and theoretical analyses were unerringly helpful in dealing with the two separate parts of the dissertation and

the large body of information I felt it necessary to include. Siegmund Levarie offered many excellent suggestions for describing the theories of Bernhard Ziehn, and consistently supported my attempts at completing the work. My sincere thanks also are due to Barbara Hanning, who read the entire dissertation with great care, and whose thoughtful comments on the text greatly improved the final product. Bruce Saylor and Rolf Meyersohn were willing to read my work and to serve on the examining committee in spite of extremely crowded schedules; their thought-provoking suggestions for future work on Eleanor Everest Freer, her music, and her social milieu will continue to present new ideas.

In the process of gathering information about Freer, I performed in public concerts and lecture-recitals thirty-six of her works, including songs, arias and duets from the operas, and piano solos. For these many successful programs, I was fortunate to have the help of four fine professional singers, whose enthusiasm and expertise I gratefully acknowledge: Donna Jeanne Schutz, Gordon Myers, Dale Livingston, and Agnes Dickinson. Their willingness to work on these difficult songs, to share ideas for their interpretation, and to travel to various places to perform them again and again was an important factor in my own understanding of Freer's often-elusive music.

My initial introduction to Freer came from Adrienne Fried Block, whose work on women composers was (and continues to be) a model for my own research. Otto Luening graciously granted me an interview from which I gained a clear picture of Chicago's position in the arts during the 1920s; Luening's recounting of his personal experiences with Freer and opera in English was a delight to hear and a pleasure to add to my ever-mounting pile of information.

Three fellowships aided my research: I express thanks to Adele Bahn, director of the Mellon Community Colleges Project, who encouraged me to apply for this prestigious award; to Paul Gehl and Richard Brown of the Newberry Library, who granted me a fellowship to examine the papers of Freer's "foundation child," the American Opera Society of Chicago; and finally, to the CUNY Women's Research and Development Fund for supporting a four-concert project that allowed me to present Freer's music in conjunction with works by other American composers.

Scholars, composers, conductors, librarians, and performers across the country, working on projects in music, poetry, language, history, literature, and sociology were important models for all facets of my work, and consistently stimulated and supported my research, writing, and musical performance: Frances Anderson, Valerie Capers, David Evitts, Al and Jean Fossner, Marta and Dinu Ghezzo, Roberta Graziano, Evelyn Haller, John Hamell, Beth

Henreckson-Farnum, Harriet Hall, Rafela Hernandez, Richard Hoyt, Estelle Kissel, Orly Krasner, Robert Long, Allen Lott, Douglas Miller, Harriet Myers, Dorothy Priesing, Lucy and Scott Porter, Larry Rivellese, Jeanne Royston, Jack and Jo Sacher, Jerry Sala, Wallace Sokolsky, Helen and David Stephenson. These many friends and colleagues also listened patiently to innumerable rehearsals, presentations, and conversations about Eleanor Everest Freer, and believed unquestioningly in the successful completion of this dissertation. Their support and encouragement, along with the continuing interest of my students, provided the necessary nourishment for the ensuing pages; I give to all my heartfelt thanks.

In Memoriam:

Jennings H. Miller (1900-68)

Viola R. Miller (1900-84)

LaVerne S. Miller (1919-89)

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PART I

CHAPTER I

PHILADELPHIA: 1860-1885

Education and Careers for Women

When Eleanor Everest was born in Philadelphia in 1864, her father Cornelius Everest was a professor of music at Girls' Normal School, a state-supported teacher-training institution for women. At that time, teaching was one of the few professions considered respectable for a woman, and many bright young girls began preparing themselves for such a career before graduating from one of the city's secondary schools. Training for a teacher's license required three more years of study after high school, and the students who subsequently completed that work at the Normal School were required to pledge that they would teach only in the Pennsylvania public schools, thereby repaying the state which had provided their education.

The goal for many of these teaching aspirants was to become principal of a primary or grammar school. Secondary school principals were usually, by established custom, male, but if a woman did achieve this position, one of her

many tasks was to prepare interested female students for entry into Girls' Normal School. According to the Principal's report, the examinations for admission were difficult enough to weed out approximately fifty per cent of the applicants each year.¹

Girls and boys were segregated at all three levels of public schooling, the usual practice in most large cities during the nineteenth century. The position of principal at any one institution commanded a higher salary than that of an ordinary teacher, hence the competition to become such an administrator was keen. A woman desirous of becoming a school principal had much to overcome, since most of her competitors were of the sex favored by tradition. Still another negative factor, perhaps unknown to many young aspirants, was an unjust salary scale determined by sex. In an unidentified newspaper article dated 16 September 1873, the following information is given:

Male principals of Grammar Schools receive \$1,815.00 per year, and female principals receive exactly one half that amount, or \$907.50.²

The financial future looked bleak indeed for any woman who chose the "respectable" career of teaching and "advanced"

¹Philadelphia Normal School, Annual Report of the Principal for 1849-50 (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1850), p. 10.

²Simon Gratz, comp., Scrapbooks Vol. 1, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

to a principal's position. The article continued with an explanation for this discriminating pay scale:

There are few good men and a great many women, probably in the proportion of 50-1, capable of taking charge of a public grammar school. Salaries should be regulated by the supply and demand of the article required. Moreover, women seeking such positions are usually married, and therefore do not need as large salaries as men do who have families.

Mid-century society as a whole apparently condoned this manner of thinking about the "proper" remuneration of women who were considered capable of shaping the minds and talents of their children. Young girls often escaped such questionable judgments by being educated at home, either by parents or private tutors, sheltered from the realities of the outside world and its male-dominated philosophies.

Music Teaching in the Public Schools

While music had been implemented in the curriculum at Girls' Normal School since the founding of the institution in 1848, the city-supported public schools of Philadelphia did not add the subject to the regular course of study until 1870. The Board of Controllers, however, had begun to pave the way for this progressive decision as early as 1860, when the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, that a Special Committee of five members be appointed to report upon the State of Musical Culture in our Public Schools, the number of teachers who can play upon the Pianoforte, and other such

information, bearing upon the subject, as may be interesting and useful for future reference.³

The resulting committee report showed that "the whole number of Pianos in the [323] public schools does not exceed twelve." Some vocal instruction, the report said, was being given sporadically in schools fortunate enough to have a teacher who could teach songs. Of the Newton Girls' Grammar School, where a piano was a proud possession, the report observed, "Music has added to the character and stability of the school; the scholars take a great interest in it." The Special Committee concluded its work with following recommendation:

Resolved, that the Councils be requested to make an appropriation to furnish each of the Grammar and Secondary Schools of the First District [Philadelphia] with Pianofortes, and a Teacher whose duty it shall be to give half-hour sessions in Singing, twice a week, to the pupils.

The Committee backed its recommendation with quotations from the Psalms of David, Homer's Iliad, Shakespeare's plays, and John Moore's Encyclopedia of Music (1854), in an effort to show the important status music had held throughout history.

In the interim between the Committee's recommendation and the official adoption of music into the curriculum, the

³Thomas Fitzgerald, Chairman, Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Board of Controllers on the Subject of introducing Vocal Music into the Public Schools of Philadelphia, (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1860), p. 2.

music education of any given Philadelphia public school student depended upon the musical ability of the teachers encountered in primary and grammar school and on the amount of time the teacher could devote to a subject that was not as yet required. Very few of the regular teachers were capable of teaching singing or any other musical skill, so a number of young scholars left the secondary schools without exposure to the disciplines and delights of the art. Subsequently, the girls who entered the Normal School to become public school teachers arrived there with whatever musical background they might have been fortunate enough to acquire on their own, or with none at all.

In 1870, when music finally became a required subject, the Board of Controllers appointed a Superintendent of Music, whose duty it was to insure the homogeneity of music instruction in the 323 schools of the First District. The initial report of the Superintendent to the Board of Education, published two years later, detailed an organizational plan in which twenty-six teachers, currently teaching, who already had some training in music, would receive additional instruction in music theory and sight-singing from the Superintendent himself.⁴ By the fall of 1871, the Board had approved their appointee's own text for teaching the teachers, who then used the same materials for

⁴Jean Louis, Superintendent of Music, Music in the Public Schools of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: E. C. Markley and Son, 1872).

the students in their classes. This Manual of Music Lessons, divided into two parts, contained all rudiments of music through the construction of seventh-chords. It also introduced some musical terms for tempo and dynamics (e.g., allegro, accelerando, forte), simple formal structures, and principles of transposition. Included in Part II were fifty vocal exercises, and a number of part-songs arranged for two, three, or four voices.⁵ After 1870, the mandatory musical training received in primary and secondary schools provided the future teachers at Girls' Normal with knowledge of music fundamentals and a little experience in reading music and singing.

Cornelius Everest, Musician and Teacher

As the only beginning theory and vocal instructor at the teacher-training institution, Cornelius Everest had the difficult responsibility of developing various levels of musical skill found among his students without making the necessary drill distasteful. The girls also had to be molded into a large, homogenous chorus capable of performing at musical programs throughout the school year. Especially important were the twice-yearly commencement ceremonies held at Philadelphia's prestigious Academy of

⁵Jean Louis, Manual of Music Lessons for Primary and Grammar Schools in the First District of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Lee and Walker, 1874).

Music. These programs were attended by huge audiences that included parents, school administrators, newspaper critics, and prominent figures in Philadelphia society.

The full curriculum at the Normal School, established by its founders in 1848, left little time for practicing sight-singing skills and drilling the chorus in new music. The first published report of the Principal at Girls' Normal describes the course of study required at that time for the future teachers:

[The first year] courses are orthography, definition of words, art of reading, English grammar, history of the U.S., geography, arithmetic, penmanship, history of England, exercises in composition, rhetoric, etymological analysis of English words, algebra to quadratic equations, drawing, vocal music, and principles of education.⁶

Second-year courses, according to the report, added world history, astronomy, philosophy, chemistry, school government, physiology, and the art of teaching. Practice-teaching was done in the third year.

For basic instruction in music theory and sight-singing, Everest had written and published two "method books" which were in use at Girls' Normal School. Both contain vocal exercises and the rudiments of music, practice drills in writing and singing, and interesting music for both solo and chorus. Everest wrote a number of these pieces himself, and also made special choral arrangements of

⁶Philadelphia Normal School, Annual Report of the Principal for 1849-50 (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1850), p. 21.

familiar melodies from grand opera and the art song repertoire for his students (see Fig. 1).

Subsequent reports of the Principal present the examinations given in every subject; the tests in musical proficiency show that Everest insisted on thorough knowledge of music fundamentals.⁷

Everest's success as a teacher (and also as a man of character) is documented by the following excerpt from a newspaper article reviewing a choral performance at the Girls' Normal School commencement on 1 July 1872:

. . . having had personal knowledge of Professor Everest for many years, of his high integrity and gentlemanly bearing, we deem it but just to say the whole superior work is due to Professor Everest's devoting the entire term to the teaching of the music.⁸

The 2 July issue of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin reported on the music presented:

⁷According to the Report of the Committee on Qualification of Teachers in the Graduating Class of the Girls' Normal School for the term ending 30 June 1881, Everest's written test included the following questions, among others:

1. Write a major and minor triad with E for the lowest note of each.
4. Write major scales with key signatures of four flats and four sharps.
5. Write harmonic and melodic scales of C# minor with the proper key signature.
8. Write a measure in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and one in $\frac{6}{8}$. Include a tie and a triplet.

⁸The Age, 3 July 1872, in Simon Gratz, Scrapbooks, Vol. 1.

THE MUSIC TEACHER.

AN ORIGINAL THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL COURSE OF.

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION IN VOCAL, MUSIC,

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TO WHICH IS ADDED

A COLLECTION OF BEAUTIFUL PIECES ARRANGED AS TRIOS, DUETS AND SOLOS,
FOR RECREATIVE AS WELL AS FOR INSTRUCTIVE PRACTICE.

BY

C. EVEREST,

ORGANIST, AND PROFESSOR OF MUSIC IN THE GIRLS' HIGH AND NORMAL SCHOOL OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY LEE & WALKER, 922 CHESTNUT STREET.

WM. H. BOKER & CO., 1101 CHESTNUT STREET.

1867.

Andante. **BEAUTIFUL MOON.** *c. EVEREST.*

German lyrics:
Herr - li - ches monn, thou queen of night, Beam - ing with thy pla - old light;
Herr - li - ches monn, though sin - ners' high, Roll - ing fast in yon - der sky;
Herr - li - ches monn, so mild and bright, Mid - lines hall thy cheer - ing light;

English lyrics:
Like the bright stars that night - ly shine, Speak - est thou a pow'r di - vine.
Beaming a - broad, far, far a - way, Un - til but in light of day.
Won - der - ful truth is told by thee, Thou art el - e - gant to me.

Allegretto. **HARK, HARK! HOW SWEETLY.** *SCHEUBERT.*

German lyrics:
Hark, hark! how sweet - ly sings the lark! At break of eve - ly
The night, the dear be - lov - ed night, With all its twink - ling

English lyrics:
morn - ing stars, When light is stream - ing o'er the land, And sow's the fields a -
Looks for - ward to the morn - ing light, When an - tares bright ap -

Fig. 1: Title page and two musical excerpts from The Music Teacher, an original song and a translation of Everest's (Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.)

The musical part of yesterday's commencement was a great stride in advance of any former performances. Under the painstaking labors of Professor Everest . . . the choruses, by no means easy ones, were sung with spirit and precision and accuracy of expression most gratifying.⁹

The Age of 3 July added the following comment:

The choruses, selections from [Giuseppe] Concone, Rossini, and Mendelssohn were beautifully rendered, and by far the finest of any previous commencement. Five hundred girls sang the words as one voice . . .

By June of 1875, the commencement programs list Everest's name as Director of Music, a position he had not held earlier. The Superintendent of Music, who had been Everest's superior, could no longer carry out both his teaching and supervisory duties, and the choral work at the school was left completely to Everest. With the new responsibility came the added one of conducting the orchestra in the school concerts. Programs from the following years show that Everest used his distinctive skills of arranging and composition to bring many kinds of music to his students and to the public. Proficient at French, German, and Italian, he translated into English many well-known European masterpieces, thus exposing his singers and their audiences to the great masters and their respective historical styles.

Works of American composers also appeared frequently on Everest's programs. In an all-city musical presentation

⁹Simon Gratz, Scrapbooks, Vol. 1.

given on 20 December 1879 at the Academy of Music to honor General Ulysses Grant, the chorus selections included John Knowles Paine's (1839-1906) Centennial Hymn, a setting of verses by the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, and American Hymn by Mathias Keller (1813-1875), a Boston composer and poet.¹⁰ An American work heard on an earlier concert was Gloria in Excelsis by Luther Orlando Emerson (1820-1915), a native of Maine who was an organist, hymnologist, and composer.

"In All the World" and "Memory's Power," two of Everest's own compositions for solo voice and piano, appeared on several concert programs at Girls' Normal. Both of these short songs were published in another "method book" entitled Everest's Vocal Instructor (1861). A private voice teacher as well as a classroom professor, Everest had obviously written teaching materials for his own vocal students before he joined the faculty of Girls' Normal School in 1864. The book's preface reveals Everest's preference for a methodical voice-training procedure, and also helps to explain his rather unusual choice of a melody by the Italian singing master Giuseppe Concone (1801-1861) for the 1872 commencement program described above:

After a careful study of this method, the use of

¹⁰Simon Gratz, Scrapbooks, printed concert program.

Concone's Vocalises is recommended, thus forming a complete and progressive school for the pupil.¹¹

Everest's best-known published work, The Sabbath, is a collection of over a thousand hymn-tunes and chants, which, like the other publications, includes his original melodies. The volume was put together for use by choirs and singing schools and contains a brief but complete section explaining the rudiments of music.¹² The author's purpose is announced on the title page: his book was to be "the most complete collection of music for choirs and singing schools ever published."

Cornelius Everest's hard work and dedication to excellence is thoroughly documented by his published method books and music collections, and by the concerts he presented during his 21-year tenure at Girls' Normal School. Improved music-teaching in the public schools after 1870 may have made his work slightly easier by bringing better-prepared students to his theory classes, but his textbooks, his arrangements of special music for women's chorus, and his careful programming show that he maintained a high standard of excellence continued throughout his teaching career. When he died in 1885, the students of Girls' Normal School adopted a Preamble and

¹¹Cornelius Everest, Everest's Vocal Instructor (Boston: Oliver Ditson and Co., 1861).

¹²Cornelius Everest, The Sabbath (Philadelphia: Lee and Walker, 1873).

Resolutions which was printed and sent to the family. The most revealing statement in this document says, in part,

" . . . his uniform kindness and courtesy, his patience and untiring effort in our behalf, have served to endear him in the memory of all."¹³

The Philadelphia Bulletin of 17 November 1885 published on its editorial page a eulogy which documents the prominence and esteem Everest had gained in the city, and corroborates the complimentary statements about him in the articles quoted above:

Besides his labors there [Girls' Normal School], Professor Everest has long held a foremost position as a trainer of amateur and professional vocalists. Numerous noted actors as well as singers gratefully acknowledge the benefits derived from his instruction, and in the restoration of worn or ill-taught voices he was unequalled.¹⁴

The Everest family crest (see Fig. 2) bears the motto "Festina lente," an ancient maxim variously translated as "Make haste slowly," or "Hasten with caution."¹⁵ Untiring patience, continued effort, and commitment to the highest possible development of personal skill were obvious tenets of Everest's philosophy. As a music educator, composer, arranger, church musician, linguist and vocal pedagogue, he contributed his knowledge and ability to his family as well

¹³Agnes Greene Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, Patriot, and Her Colleagues (Chicago: Musical Art Publishing Co., 1927), pp. 25-6.

¹⁴Eleanor Everest Freer, Recollections and Reflections of An American Composer, n.p., n.d., p. 22.

¹⁵Fairbairn's Book of Crests, (Baltimore: Heraldic Book Co., 1968, reprint of the 4th edition).

as to his admiring public. Eleanor Everest inherited her father's industrious scholarship, his inexhaustible energy, his strength of character, and his passion for the arts.

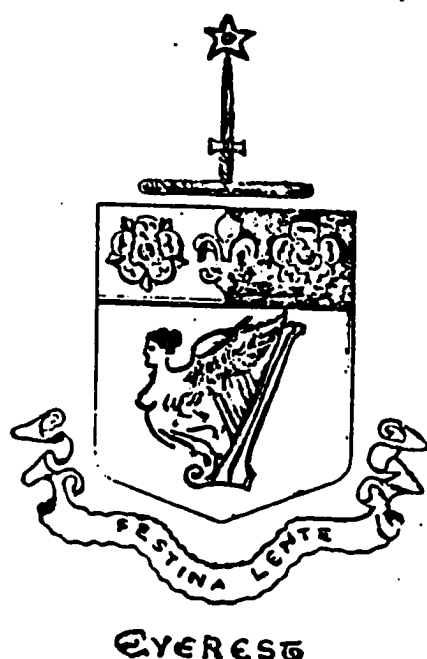


Fig. 2: The Everest family crest
(Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, Patriot)

CHAPTER II

ELEANOR EVEREST: 1883-91

The Everest Family

Cornelius Everest and his wife Ellen Amelia were the parents of two children: DeWitt Clinton, born 1861, and Eleanor Warner, born 1864. The family lived at 1004 Pine Street in Philadelphia, and Everest maintained a music studio on Spruce Street where he taught voice and diction lessons to private students. Both Everests were New Englanders and could trace their prominent forebears back to 1650. Cornelius's father was a clergyman in Windham, Connecticut, and his mother was the daughter of General Benjamin Gold, who had won honors in the War of 1812. Ellen's father, John Clark, was mayor of New Britain, Connecticut; her brother was an editor of the Hartford Courant.

When Everest first came to Philadelphia in 1850, he supported himself by establishing a jewelry business, a continuation of the silversmith's trade he had learned as a teenager. Music was his first and foremost interest, however, and he pursued it on his own with great passion to prepare himself for a musical career. When his store was

destroyed by fire in 1856, he began supporting himself and his new wife by teaching private students in voice, organ, and piano, and by serving as organist and choir director in a nearby church. He became known for the beautiful improvisations with which he closed each service; the congregation, entranced, would remain seated until the music ended.

Mrs. Everest sang in her husband's church choir and for other religious services in the city on special occasions. Although her family and her social duties kept her from pursuing a full-time concert career, she was in great demand for performances at the many musicales held in the homes of wealthy Philadelphians during the concert season. Her husband's skillful coaching kept her voice consistent in its beauty and line; she sought no other teachers. Like Everest, "she had an industrious nature, and carried on her artistic activities, plus her housewifely duties, with system and quiet."¹ She was interested also in helping young musicians achieve success in artistic endeavors. There were always several music students in residence at the Everest home during the winter season.

In March of 1884, the Everests hosted a benefit concert for the Pennsylvania Museum. Sponsored by "Mi-Carême," a Philadelphia Arts Club, the event featured Mrs. Everest as vocal soloist in Mozart's "O dolce contento" with flute

¹Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 21.

obbligato. The newspaper review several days later gave a glimpse of the singer's ability:

["O dolce contento"] was most artistically given by Mrs. Everest, and in a manner which . . . recalled that world-known vocalist, Mme. Anna Bishop. [Bishop (1810-1884), a well-known singer, had recently died.] . . . The same ease and naturalness of vocalization, the same bird-like quality of voice, and winning grace of manner . . . charmed all . . .²

Of her mother, Eleanor Everest Freer later said, "She was a rarely gifted woman, not only in music but as a painter."³

The Everest home was a kind of musical center; students, friends, and colleagues were constant visitors, and the children were exposed early to the discipline and perseverance that the fine arts demanded. Their father spent many hours in his Spruce Street studio, where he worked with prominent singers of the day, among them David Bispham (1857-1921) and Clara Louise Kellogg (1842-1916), who had already made careers in Europe.⁴ Another close friend of the family was Anna Dickinson (1830-1886), the

²Philadelphia Ledger, 20 March 1884, quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 28. "O dolce contento" is a showpiece for flute and voice, arranged from a Mozart melody by the French flutist Louis Drouet (1792-1873).

³Freer's Recollections states that her mother was still painting at the age of seventy.

⁴David Bispham, in A Quaker Singer's Recollections (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), does not mention the Everest family. In writing of his early years, however, the singer states (p. 51) that "there were a number of musicians in the social circles of Philadelphia who had a marked influence on my career."

Quaker feminist, orator, and playwright. Her three plays, Anne Boleyn, Marie Tudor, and Aurelian were among the written works which Everest helped revise and edit for publication. He also coached Dickinson in the correct use of the voice for her many speaking engagements. Everest was well-known for his expertise in the technical aspects of good vocal production, so that actors as well as singers frequented his studio.

The children were gifted in music; DeWitt Clinton played the violin, and Eleanor, nicknamed "Nellie," imitated in her childish voice all her mother's songs, with perfect intonation and melodic recall, long before she was a teen-ager. Nellie was accustomed to meeting her parents' famous friends,⁵ and a number of musical associations later provided an outlet for her precocious talents. She played the piano at age five; no one ever really knew when or how she learned. She accompanied herself, her mother, her brother, and later many distinguished singers.

When Anna Dickinson's play Aurelian was performed in Philadelphia in 1878, the audience heard an orchestral

⁵Freer relates in her brief autobiography Recollections and Reflections, p. 25, her introduction to General Ulysses Grant while the family was vacationing in Atlantic City. She was pleased when told by the famous American that his own daughter was named "Nellie." When Grant was honored by the city of Philadelphia in 1879, Nellie Everest watched her father direct a special musical program at the Academy of Music, featuring his chorus of young women from Girls' Normal School.

overture played before the first act. This music, the Aurelian March, was a composition by Eleanor Everest, then aged fourteen.⁶ A year earlier, she had composed a "Polka Facile" for piano, which was published by her father's old friend, Oliver Ditson.⁷ The Ditson family had befriended Everest years before, when the prominent publishing firm printed Everest's Vocal Instructor, a book of singing exercises that formed part of Nellie's musical instruction. Ditson also owned Lee and Walker, the Philadelphia house that had produced The Sabbath. When the Everests returned to the New England area for family weekends at the home of Mrs. Everest's sister, a trip to Boston to visit the Ditsons was always included in the schedule.

Nellie's brother taught her to play the banjo. During his early teens, young Everest organized an orchestra of 80 banjos and guitars and wrote light, pleasant music for the group to entertain family and friends. The boy attended Faires Classical Institute of Philadelphia while continuing

⁶Dickinson's play told of the Roman emperor Aurelian, who, during the Third Century A.D., conquered Palmyra and made its Queen Zenobia his mistress. Zenobia came to love the emperor, and ultimately gave her own life to save him from assassination.

⁷Neither the manuscripts nor the publications of "Polka Facile" or "Aurelian March" have been located.

his violin study.⁸ DeWitt Clinton Everest died in 1899 at age 38; at this writing, nothing more is known of him.

When the famous German soprano Therese Tietjens (1831-1887) visited America in 1874, Eleanor was ten years old. She sang for Mme. Tietjens during a post-performance visit at the Everest home. Impressed with the young girl's musical talent, Tietjens offered to take Eleanor to Europe and train her to be a singer. The Everests refused this exceptional offer, believing that their daughter should be reared at home in the most natural way possible. Her only music teachers were to be her mother and father, who made every effort to shield the precious talent while it was developing.

Finally, at age 19, with her parents' sanction, Eleanor did accept the opportunity of going to Europe to study. Christine Nilsson (1843-1921), the famous soprano who had met the Everest family during her first American tour in 1870, watched young "Nellie" grow into a musician of wondrous potential, with a voice worth training. A Philadelphia resident, George Childs, known for his patronage of the arts, heard the girl sing at Nilsson's request. Childs's enthusiasm was immediately aroused, and

⁸DeWitt Everest later played for Benjamin Godard when he visited his sister in Paris. Eleanor's Reflections (p. 27) states that her brother studied the music of French composers with Godard, who was also a violinist. DeWitt's ability was praised by the composer: "Rarely have I heard so beautiful a tone proceed from a violin, as under your brother's bow."

he offered financial assistance to send Eleanor to Europe for vocal study. The parents agreed, and arrangements were made.

In the 1870's it was not unusual for talented American musicians to begin training for a concert career on the other side of the Atlantic. David Bispham (1857-1921), the Quaker baritone who respected Everest's musicianship and coached with him when in Philadelphia, had studied in Italy with Luigi Vannuccini (1828-1911) and in England with William Shakespeare (1849-1931). Emma Abbott (1850-1891) was a student of Mathilde Marchesi (1821-1913) in Paris and made her operatic debut in Covent Garden. Lillian Nordica (1857-1914), though she had studied voice in Boston with John O'Neill and had even toured the United States as soloist with Patrick Gilmore's (1821-1892) band, was not able to achieve a career in opera until she could boast of having studied with Italian and German teachers. Opera companies in the United States at that time hired mostly foreign-born and foreign-trained singers. For the talented Everest daughter, European study was a necessity if she wanted a career as a singer.

Nilsson, who had been a Marchesi student and greatly revered her teacher, chose the École Marchesi as the best place for Eleanor to train. A protégé of the famous vocal pedagogue Manuel Garcia (1805-1906), Marchesi maintained a music school in Paris where many famous singers of the day

had studied.⁹ Although excited at the prospect of seeing France, Eleanor found it difficult to leave her family and friends who adored her. It seemed to her that the teaching she had received from her father could not be surpassed. Surely she could be accepted as a singer in America without having to go abroad. She resolved that she would work hard to learn all the "secrets" of the European teachers and bring them back to America for the benefit of others. Perhaps she could help to make the world realize that her own country had fine musicians and teachers as well.

With these unspoken resolutions, Eleanor left home in 1883 in the company of a chaperone, Mrs. Johnson, Johnson's daughter Marie, and niece Frances.¹⁰ She knew of her parents' personal sacrifices to give her this opportunity; she realized that without Mr. Childs' monetary assistance, they would not have been able to withstand the financial burden of the journey and the foreign education. A short stay with the Ditsons in Boston preceded her sailing. A letter of Ditson's to the Everests praised Eleanor's pleasant personality and musical talent:

. . . we have fallen dreadfully in love
with her. She is a perfect sunbeam. . . . I

⁹Among Marchesi's famous pupils were Etelka Gerster (1855-1920), Nellie Melba (1861-1931), Emma Eames (1865-1952) and Sybil Sanderson (1865-1903).

¹⁰Marie Johnson, also a Marchesi student, later became the famous singer Marie Decca.

really don't know which pleases me most, her playing or her singing.¹¹

Referring to the then-prevalent idea that a singer could be a "success" only with foreign training, Eleanor later described her feelings as she left the United States:

Silently, but none the less certainly, did I resolve to fight the system which reflected no credit on America but rather acknowledged a want of national pride of talent, which should be universal and not confined to any country.¹²

Eleanor desired no great career for herself. It was clear that her aim was a much broader one: to learn all the methods that would enable her to teach young American singers as well as any teacher in Europe. These artists must be taught to sing not only in the foreign languages of traditional opera and art song, but in English, the language of her own country. This was a goal that went far beyond the teaching of vocal technique; it was a desire to expand an established tradition.

Her father's linguistic ability had taught Eleanor the value of familiarity with other tongues. Because of his translations, his students and the large audiences who heard his choruses were exposed to the great music of European opera and art song in a language they could understand. Everywhere in America audiences were made up of people who might have had no opportunity to study

¹¹Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 30.

¹²Quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 46.

languages other than their own. These concert-goers were often denied the understanding of operatic recitatives and arias, of art songs and oratorio texts. Shouldn't America have her own opera and art song tradition? Surely there were many American composers capable of writing operas and songs in English. How could they be encouraged to do so?

Good American voice teachers could develop fine singers who would perform with confidence any opera or other work, either foreign or native, in all languages including English. Opera companies must be convinced that American singers and conductors had as much talent as those brought from Europe. More American operas and art songs must be written; more American teachers must be recognized. It was time that America acknowledged the musical talent within her own borders. These thoughts were uppermost in Eleanor's mind as she arrived at the Marchesi studio in May of 1883, a moment that signalled the beginning of work toward achieving her goal.

The École Marchesi

In the presence of Mathilde Marchesi and the entire faculty of the École, Eleanor was given an audition with a number of other singers who enrolled in the school at the same time. Here there were no private lessons or auditions; even new students were heard in groups, listening to each other and to the verdicts of success or

failure. Marchesi indicated some exercises she wished Eleanor to sing, and then required that they be transposed. The teaching of her gifted father and the calm confidence inspired by her mother were now put to the test. Marchesi was impressed by the effortless performance, the ease of transposition, and the vocal quality Eleanor displayed. Emma Nevada, an American singer who had recently made her Paris Opera debut as Zora in Félicien David's (1810-1876) La perle du Brésil, said of her friend's voice, "Nellie has a timbre seldom found in the human throat, even if it is of small compass."¹³

The studies began. Marchesi spoke in French, and she expected that her students speak the language also. Although Eleanor had learned some French from her father and from accompanying and singing French art songs in the home studio, she needed a teacher to help improve her understanding and conversational facility. She arranged to study with Charles Marchand, the head of the French Institute at the Paris Academy. When Eleanor finished her work in Paris three years later, Marchand signed a certificate showing that she possessed "Les connaissances nécessaires en Prononciation, Grammaire, Syntax, Composition, et Littérature."¹⁴

¹³Quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 51.

¹⁴Certificate de capacité, pour la langue française, given to Eleanor by Charles Marchand of the Paris Academy (Music Division, Library of Congress).

At the École, there were three types of classes:
(1) beginners' class, which dealt with tone formation and placing, (2) concert class and (3) opera class. Each singer in a group of eight to fifteen was allotted twenty to thirty minutes. In addition to these lessons in vocal technique and performance, everyone studied French, German and Italian diction, plus acting. Those students in the opera class who needed or desired additional work in operatic repetitions (scene rehearsals) hired an accompanist for the purpose. The work went on from 9:00 to noon and from 2:00 to 5:00 every day.¹⁵ Marchesi demanded that every line of a song or opera be translated; the study of languages consumed a great deal of time.

In order to be certified to teach the Marchesi method, a student was required to study at the École for three years, including the summer months. While Marchesi was on tour, she expected language study to continue, and translations of operatic and art song literature were to be done for the succeeding winter term. Eleanor also studied theory and composition with Benjamin Godard (1849-1895), and at various times was coached in French art song repertoire by Godard, Charles Widor (1844-1937), Herbert Bemberg (1859-1931), and Jules Massenet (1842-1916).

¹⁵Sara Hershey Eddy, "Madame Marchesi: Her Personality and Methods of Work," an interview in Music Review 12 (May-Oct. 1897): 677-691.

Godard was so taken with his pupil that he dedicated a song from his cycle Chansons des mois to the young singer from Philadelphia.¹⁶ Eleanor's birthday 14 May was the appropriate occasion for selecting "Chanson de mai" (see Fig. 3).

Expenses at the Marchesi school when Eleanor began her work there in 1883 were approximately \$200 per month. Vocal study captured the largest portion at \$70. Room and board, heat, and light totalled \$60, languages \$30, and acting and opera work \$40. As mentioned above, an accompanist was often paid extra by those individuals who wanted more coaching.¹⁷ Language lessons outside the school, such as Eleanor had, also required additional fees.

Early in her stay at the École, Eleanor showed her ability as a pianist and accompanist, to the amazement of everyone, including Marchesi. When the regular accompanist was late one day for the concert class, Marchesi suggested, after waiting an hour, that they should give up the day's session, but Eleanor requested permission to play for her classmates. It was given, and she accompanied arias and art songs at sight as she had done many times in

¹⁶The writer Eugene Solenière in Notules et impressions musicales (Paris: Librairie Sevin et Rey, 1902), refers to Godard as a "musician of sentiment" and praises as "jewels" the songs in Chansons des mois (p. 122).

¹⁷Eddy, "Madame Marchesi," p. 281.

*Homage musical a ma chère
interprète et charmante élève
Mademoiselle Nellie Everest.
(Chanson de mai)*

Andante.

Le ciel est bleu, tout est vert et gai
Comme les fleurs de mai sous le soleil;
Le bon soleil nous réjouit, ma mi-grosne, / Et au printemps
Mon cœur s'abandonne: Viens, ma belle
Me, viens sou-rire à l'a-mour.

Benjamin Godard
Paris 14 mai 1886.

Fig. 3: "Chanson de mai," meas. 1-23, by Benjamin Godard,
dedicated to Eleanor Everest by the composer
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

her father's studio at home. Marchesi admiringly expressed a desire to be able to play as well.¹⁸

There were many soirées given at the Marchesi school to honor musical and literary personalities who visited Paris. Marchesi's best students were always presented on these programs, and Marchesi later wrote about one such presentation:

While at Paris, Verdi . . . expressed a wish to hear some of my pupils sing, "but none of Verdi's music, I beg you." When two American girls, Rose Stewart and Eleanor Everest, sang the duet from Così fan tutte, . . . Verdi was charmed with the delivery of these pupils . . .¹⁹

Marchesi recalled that Verdi "expressed the hope that [the girls'] passion for music would always remain the same." A footnote in Marchesi's book adds the following information:

Verdi's hope has been fully realized. Miss Everest and Rose Stewart are now singing teachers, the former at Philadelphia, the latter at Boston.

There was much more than music to be learned from Marchesi. She was always punctual, carefully groomed, courteous. Her endurance at teaching and working was remarkable; her mental activity never ceased. But, as Eleanor recalled in her later writing, "had one visited the classes of Cornelius Everest at Girls' Normal School in Philadelphia, he would have met the same conditions."²⁰

¹⁸Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 53.

¹⁹Mathilde Marchesi, Marchesi and Music (London and New York: Harper & Bros., 1897), Ch. 23, p. 245-6.

²⁰Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 52.

On 18 October 1885, the young singer learned of the death of her father. She had just begun her final term with Marchesi, and hoped to attain the certificate that would allow her to teach the Marchesi method in America. Amelia Everest advised her daughter to remain in Paris and complete the work, although with Everest's death financial support was far less than needed for this task. Eleanor, now 21, sheltered and protected all her life, was for the first time thrown upon her own resources.

Marchesi came to the rescue by permitting her talented pupil to teach the younger students who came to the École as beginners. As Marchesi's assistant, Eleanor gained experience for the part of her life that was to follow--that of replacing her father in his teaching studio. She also copied music, accompanied opera classes and vocal lessons, and used her versatile musicianship to good advantage. She even gave a French girl lessons on the banjo, but was too busy to teach others who requested similar instruction.²¹

Another source of income was performing, and her Paris teachers were able to provide a number of professional opportunities. She had already received good notices for her singing at the Marchesi recitals and soirées. The annual concert at the Salle Érard, for Marchesi's American pupils, drew this review on 22 March 1886:

²¹Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 85-6.

Among the noteworthy items on the program may be mentioned a romance "Qui donc vous a donne [sic] vos yeux" charmingly sung by Mlle. Everest in a flexible soprano, admirably fitted for a concert room . . .²²

Marchesi described another concert given 3 May 1886 for "Charitable Institutions of Montmartre under Liszt's (1811-1886) patronage, with the assistance of Saint-Saëns (1835-1921). My pupils sang, almost without exception, Liszt's compositions."²³ Reminiscing with her biographer many years later, Eleanor recalled this concert at which the great composer was her accompanist:

I was to sing "Es muss ein wunderbares sein." I was well-nigh paralyzed with fright, and my singing was somewhat cool and immature. . . . Liszt turned to me and said, "A little more warmth, child."²⁴

A musicale honoring Liszt and Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) was given by Marchesi on 9 May 1886. Present were composers Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Leo Delibes (1836-1891), Saint-Saëns and Godard. Eleanor and her colleague Stewart were accompanied by Delibes in the famous duet from Lakmé. A Paris newspaper wrote, "The vocal honors of the evening certainly fell to the lot of Mme. Marchesi's American pupils, Mlles. Everest, Stewart, and [others]."²⁵

²²Quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 84; the source of the quote is not given. The song "Qui donc vous a donné . . ." is by Godard.

²³Marchesi, Marchesi and Music, p. 243.

²⁴Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 75.

²⁵Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 28.

On 11 September 1886 Eleanor sailed for the United States. Her arrival was heralded by several Philadelphia papers, among them the Philadelphia Ledger, whose Paris correspondent reported the following:

Miss Nellie Everest, the young Philadelphia vocalist who has made such a sensation abroad, is about to return to her native city . . . She has been praised by the greatest masters and Marchesi declares her vocal skill wonderful; . . . ²⁶

Eleanor carried with her the precious Marchesi certificate (see Fig. 4), handwritten and signed by Marchesi herself. It attested to the fact that Eleanor Everest "a étudié pendant trois ans le chant chez moi," that she possessed "une jolie voix de Mezzo Soprano, ainsi qu'une belle diction," and that she was "une bonne musicienne." Marchesi also verified Eleanor's status as a teacher of singing under her (Marchesi's) supervision. Three years of hard work had brought the young woman to the next step of her professed goal--teaching.

Philadelphia and New York, 1886-91: A Voice Teacher

With the prestige of the École Marchesi behind her, Eleanor established herself as a vocal teacher in her home

²⁶The Philadelphia Ledger, 23 August 1886. Also quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 90.

Certificat

Je certifie que Mademoiselle
Eleanor Everest a étudié pendant
trois ans le chant chez moi, qu'elle
possède une jolie voix de Mezzo-
Soprano, ainsi qu'une belle diction,
qu'elle a travaillé avec autant
de zèle que d'assiduité et qu'elle
est bonne musicienne.

Mademoiselle Everest a donné
à Paris pendant quelque temps
des leçons de chant sous ma
direction

Mathilde Marchesi

Paris, Juillet
1886

Fig. 4: The Marchesi certificate, authorizing Eleanor Everest to teach the Marchesi method in America (Music Division, Library of Congress)

city, determined to continue her father's work. She felt confident that in the near future her efforts would help to provide sound musical training on American soil. Before long she was teaching sixty lessons each week in her father's old studio, playing accompaniments for her students and following the Marchesi method she had worked so hard to learn. She did not take Everest's place as choral director at Girls' Normal School; her training was for private voice teaching and coaching only.²⁷

Eleanor arranged recitals for her students and accompanied them, and continued to perform occasionally as a solo singer herself. One such performance occurred at the Ditson home in Boston, an evening musicale at which she and two other young musicians recently back from Europe presented a musical program. The colleagues who joined Eleanor in the presentation were Ethelbert Nevin (1862-1901) and George Whiting (1840-1923). Guests at the affair included the conductor Wilhelm Gericke (1845-1925), the composer George Chadwick (1854-1931), and the violinist-composer Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935).²⁸ This particular social occasion inspired Chadwick to write his

²⁷In Simon Gratz, *Scrapbooks*, Vol. 2, programs from the commencement ceremonies held after Everest's death show Marcia Wilson as director of the chorus. The orchestra was conducted by a different person at each concert in succeeding years.

²⁸Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 57.

song "A Bonny Curl," which he dedicated to "Miss Eleanor Everest, Philadelphia" (see Fig. 5).²⁹

The wish to study again with her old teacher, and the desire for a change of scene after a year of hard work, prompted Eleanor to sail again for Paris in the spring of 1887. On board ship she once again met Loeffler, who introduced her to his traveling companion Archibald Freer, a young medical student from Chicago. This chance meeting began a close friendship that later deepened into a permanent relationship. Freer came from a wealthy, socially prominent Chicago family. He was the son of Lemuel Covell Paine Freer (1813-1892), an avid abolitionist who had participated in the emancipation movement with Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. L. C. Paine Freer, as he was known, was a man of many abilities. He had operated successively several businesses of his own, specialized in real estate and grown quite wealthy.³⁰ Archibald Freer inherited his father's versatility, first studying medicine, then successfully continuing the real estate investments he had inherited. Eleanor later wrote modestly of her meeting with Freer, describing her

²⁹Eleanor later mentioned this song and its dedication in a letter to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge 10 October 1933, referring to Chadwick and his music: "one of his lovely songs, written on his honeymoon and dedicated to me." (Freer to Coolidge, in the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress).

³⁰Paul Gilbert, Chicago and Its Makers (Chicago: Felix Mendelssohn, 1929), p. 619.

To Miss Eleanor Everest. Philadelphia.

A bonny Curl.

Words by Amelle Rives.^{*)}

G. W. Chadwick.

Alla scozzese.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo/style marking is 'Alla scozzese.'.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):
Vocal: I have a curl, a bricht, brown curl, a
Piano: Accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

System 2 (Measures 5-8):
Vocal: bonny curl o' hair and close to my heart it
Piano: Continuation of the accompaniment.

System 3 (Measures 9-12):
Vocal: nestles warm. But its brithers dinna ken its there I
Piano: Continuation of the accompaniment, ending with a final chord.

Fig. 5: Chadwick's "A Bonny Curl," m. 1-8, in Lyric Fancies, (Boston, A. P. Schmidt, 1919)

immediate attraction to his dignified bearing and pleasant attitude. She must have been pleased to find that he also wrote poetry, some of which she eventually set to music. The two young people met frequently upon their return to the United States and became close friends. Eleanor's continued teaching and performing and Archibald's medical studies delayed their marriage for four years.

In 1889 Eleanor was invited by Jeannette Thurber (1851-1946) to teach at the National Conservatory of Music of America at 126-28 East Seventeenth Street in New York City. Thurber had founded the Conservatory in 1885, and had also organized the American Opera Society, a group which toured the United States giving performances of opera in English.³¹ Considering the position that New York held in the arts, the establishment of the National Conservatory was surprisingly late. Oberlin Conservatory had opened its doors in 1865, Boston's New England Conservatory in 1867, Peabody of Baltimore in 1866, and the Cincinnati College of Music in 1878.³²

The National Conservatory was not begun as a money-making institution but as a sort of musical high school where pupils could prepare themselves for concert, church,

³¹Mrs. Francis Thurber, compiler, American Opera Co. Scrapbooks, 1885-1892 (Music Division, New York Public Library, Americana Collection)

³²Merton Robert Aborn, "The Influence on American Musical Culture of Dvořák's Sojourn in America" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1965).

or opera careers, or as solo or orchestral players. The cost of enrollment was nominal, and if a student was extremely talented he studied without paying for lessons or for admission. There were forty or more teachers on the faculty, and an 1890 bulletin lists a distinguished group of people, including Eleanor Warner Everest. Concerning the vocal department, the bulletin stated:

In voice: Signor Sapio, the principal of the vocal class, . . . tries . . . to unite what is best in modern French and German methods with what is best in Italian methods. Signor Sapio's associates, Miss Eleanor Warner Everest of Philadelphia, Madame Elena Corani, and Mr. Christian Fritsch, are all most capable professors.³³

Among prominent colleagues teaching in other areas at the Conservatory during this period were Victor Herbert (1858-1924), cello; Rafael Joseffy (1852-1915), piano; and Henry T. Finck (1854-1926), music history.

The young Marchesi expert traveled to New York twice weekly until the spring of 1891.³⁴ Teaching consumed most of her time, but there were still occasions for solo performance. Eleanor's autobiography describes an occasion in Ogonzt, Pennsylvania, where she was invited to present a

³³"Something About the National Conservatory of Music of America," Harper's Weekly 34:1773 (Dec.13, 1890).

³⁴According to Aborn, "The Influence of Dvořák's Sojourn in America," in that year Thurber received verbal consent from the Czech composer Anton Dvořák, whom she had invited to become director of the National Conservatory. Dvořák did not actually sign a contract for the position until 1892, so it is likely that Eleanor never met him. Her writings do not mention the National Conservatory, her colleagues, or her work there.

program of French songs at a special musicale honoring the French actor Benoit Coquelin (1841-1909), then touring in Philadelphia. Coquelin subsequently visited the Everest home where he again listened to Eleanor's voice and coached her in French diction.

Eleanor's continued teaching in her Philadelphia studio and at the National Conservatory gradually brought results. She became known for her expertise in the Marchesi method, attracting students not only from Philadelphia and New York, but from outside the urban areas as well. Among those who came to discover Marchesi's concepts was Celeste Massey Heckscher (1860-1928), a pianist and composer who was active in Philadelphia musical affairs and was also president of the Operatic Society.

The hard work and constant travel to which Eleanor subjected herself had worn down her health. She resigned from the Conservatory just prior to her marriage, which took place 25 April 1891 at St. George's Church in New York City (see Fig. 6). Now she temporarily ceased all musical activity; the continuous strain of study and self-support in Paris, followed immediately by her obligations as a teacher and performer, had been too much for her. Her marriage gave her a sorely-needed opportunity to rest and gather energy to begin afresh.

The newly-married Freers moved to Chicago, where they began their new life; there is no record of Eleanor's activities during this period. A year later, on 14 August 1892, Dr. Freer's father died, and immediately thereafter the couple traveled to Germany, where the young doctor continued his medical studies. At leisure for the first time in many years, Eleanor devoted her time to the study of languages and literature. Leipzig had much to interest her. The Gewandhaus concerts conducted by Carl Reinecke (1824-1910) and later Arthur Nikisch (1855-1922), and the boys' choir at Thomas College presented wonderful opportunities to hear great music. The Freers were in a position to meet many people of prominence in science and politics, and they were impressed with the professional expertise demonstrated by Dr. Freer's German colleagues. Contact with people in fields of activity other than the arts created a new environment for Eleanor, and she used it to advantage by becoming fluent in German.

On 3 April 1894 Eleanor and Archibald Freer became the parents of a daughter, Eleanor. When the child reached her fifth birthday, the family returned to Chicago after having been abroad for seven years; both parents were desirous of an American education for the little girl. As a wife and mother and an experienced European traveller fluent in German, French, and Italian, Eleanor opened a new chapter

in her life. Her autobiography expresses her feelings for her own country and its people:

. . . On reaching the Statue of Liberty
I cried for joy; our country may have its
faults, but it is my country and I love it.³⁵

Later, she spoke of her experiences in Germany, and said emphatically:

. . . We came back stimulated by what we had
seen and heard, but not reluctant to return
to the United States. Everything I had
learned in Europe I could have gotten at home
. . . For half a century we have exaggerated
the value of study abroad and belittled our
advantages here.³⁶

Freer's time in Europe had totalled nearly eleven years. Her early, unshakable belief in America's wealth of good musical talent and training had been verified. The return to Chicago was the beginning of a lifelong campaign for world-wide recognition of American music and American composers.

³⁵Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 60.

³⁶Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 99.

CHAPTER III

ELEANOR EVEREST FREER: CHICAGO, 1901-18

A Composer in High Society

The large house at 1420 Lake Shore Drive, owned by the Freer family, became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Freer for the ensuing 25 years. Neighbors and friends of the couple were leaders in Chicago society: the Potter Palmers, whose financial position enabled them to support urban artistic endeavors such as the Art Institute of Chicago; Harold and Edith McCormick, both of wealthy parents and both lovers of the arts, who later funded the organization of the Chicago Grand Opera; the Marshall Fields, who owned the most successful department store in the Midwest; and Helen Birch Bartlett (1884-1925), a composer and poet.¹ Both the Birches and the Bartletts had long been supporters of the arts in Chicago.

As a trained musician, and with a husband whose family name had been among those in the upper echelons of Chicago society for two generations, Eleanor Freer was immediately

¹Bartlett's works include "The Wanderer," song with verses by Maurice Baring (N.Y.: Schirmer, 1915), and Capricious Winds, a book of her own poetry, (Boston and N.Y.: Houghton-Mifflin Co., Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1927).

taken up into a social circle of wealthy women who worked through city clubs and state organizations to promote cultural events in Chicago. She became a member of the elite Fortnightly Club in 1902. This group consisted of artistic, intellectual professional women who met every second week for lectures, music, plays and literary discussions. Freer was seldom, if ever, a performer herself, but she acted as chairman for many of the club's musical activities, and created or directed special musical events for particular occasions. One account describes a Christmas program presented by Freer and the "Fortnightly children" in 1905 (Freer's own daughter would have been eleven then), and detailed another special meeting in 1907 in which Freer "appeared in tandem with Elia Peattie (1862-1935)."² Peattie was a Chicago poet well known for her children's poems and stories, as well as other writings.³ Freer's biographer cites a program in which Freer sang a group of songs by the composer Helen Bartlett:

A professional singer was sent for but failed to interpret the songs satisfactorily and the musicale seemed in danger of failing when Mrs. Freer offered to sing them. Those who heard her that day have never

²Muriel Beadle, The Fortnightly of Chicago: The City and Its Women (Chicago: Henry Regnery & Co., 1973), p. 94.

³These include Angel With a Broom (Chicago: R. F. Seymour, 1915), The Shape of Fear (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1904), and Love of a Caliban (Wausau, Wis.: Van Echten and Ellis, 1898).

forgotten the glorious manner in which she sang them, nor the wonderful quality of her voice.⁴

Unfortunately the passage neither gives a date nor specifies that this program took place during a Fortnightly meeting. Since Bartlett enjoyed membership in other Chicago organizations which also included Palmer, Peattie and Freer, her songs quite possibly were performed in various club musicales on more than one occasion.

An important function of the Chicago club women was to raise money for charitable institutions, hospitals, foreign and domestic Red Cross organizations and the like. Mrs. Potter Palmer and Freer were responsible for bringing the composer Richard Strauss to Chicago for a concert of his music in 1906. Palmer provided the funds for the participating musicians and guest of honor; Freer arranged the program and handled the publicity. The proceeds were given to the Russian Red Cross.⁵

In 1902, in addition to her busy life as a wife, mother, and social organizer, Freer began to study composition and theory with Bernhard Ziehn (1845-1912), a

⁴ Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 100.

⁵ Ishbel Ross, Silhouette in Diamonds (New York: Arno Press, 1975) is an informative book on the life of Mrs. Potter (Berthe) Palmer. Although Freer is never mentioned by the author, the description of Palmer's activities in the Chicago cultural clubs provides insight into the lives of wealthy women during the last two decades of the 19th century, and also details various activities sponsored by the organizations. The Strauss program is mentioned by Foster in Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 101.

German theorist living in Chicago at the time. Her colleague Helen Bartlett, a Ziehn student, may have been influential in Freer's decision to contact him. Ziehn had come to Chicago in 1868 and supported himself and his family mainly by teaching theory, composition, and piano privately. Many of his students, like Bartlett, were talented progeny of wealthy families. A notorious recluse, Ziehn was a brilliant scholar and author, devoting his non-teaching hours to writing and to the study of music and other scientific fields which interested him. He had been offered a teaching position in theory and composition at the University of Wisconsin, but had refused, preferring the life he had chosen for himself in Chicago.⁶

As a student of Ziehn, Freer joined a select group of musicians, some of whom became well known as composers and performers. Among these were John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951), Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler (1863-1927), and Thorvald Otterström (1868-1942). The critic and pianist Glenn Dillard Gunn (1874-1952) and the organist Wilhelm Middelschulte (1863-1943), who were later involved in performances of the Freer compositions, numbered among the Ziehn pupils, along with many lesser-known individuals of talent who never achieved the fame of some of their

⁶Otto Luening, personal interview, New York City, 13 Dec. 1983. It was Professor Eugene Luening, Luening's father, who offered Ziehn the position.

contemporaries.⁷ Archibald Freer's admiration for Ziehn's wide interests and his expertise in areas outside of music summarizes the opinion of all who knew and worked with him: " . . . literature, music, botany, science, history--it was all the same to him."⁸

Freer's first works with her new mentor were three short studies for the piano. These were Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, dedicated to Ziehn (see Fig. 7), Souvenir! and Andante, all published in 1903 as Op. 1 by the Kaun Brothers of Berlin and Milwaukee, a firm with which the composer dealt for many years. Harmonic-Rhythmic Study may have been inspired by Bach's Prelude in C Major from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I; it is a chordal work of similar pianistic style, but with 19th-century rhythmic figurations and harmonies. Two other groups of piano works followed immediately: the Rondo and Lyric Intermezzo,⁹ and the Nine Lyric Studies, Op 3. Later the critic F. W. Riesberg was to write, "Mrs. Freer might have become a

⁷Other students of Ziehn included Kenneth Bradley, Adolph Brune(1870-1935), Grace Chadbourne, Ellen Crosby, Oscar Deis, Arthur Dunham, Julius Gold (1884-1957), Eric DeLamarter (1880-1953), Hugo Kaun (1863-1932), Muriel and Foster McCormick, Winfred Merrill, Antoinette Middelschulte, Helen Rudolph Heller, Louis Gerard Sturm, Regina Watson, Mortimer Wilson (1876-1932) and Otto Wolf.

⁸Freer, Recollections and Reflections, p. 75.

⁹These two pieces have not been located; presumably they are Opus 2, since they appeared on published lists that included the piano pieces of Opus 1 and the Lyric Studies, Opus 3.

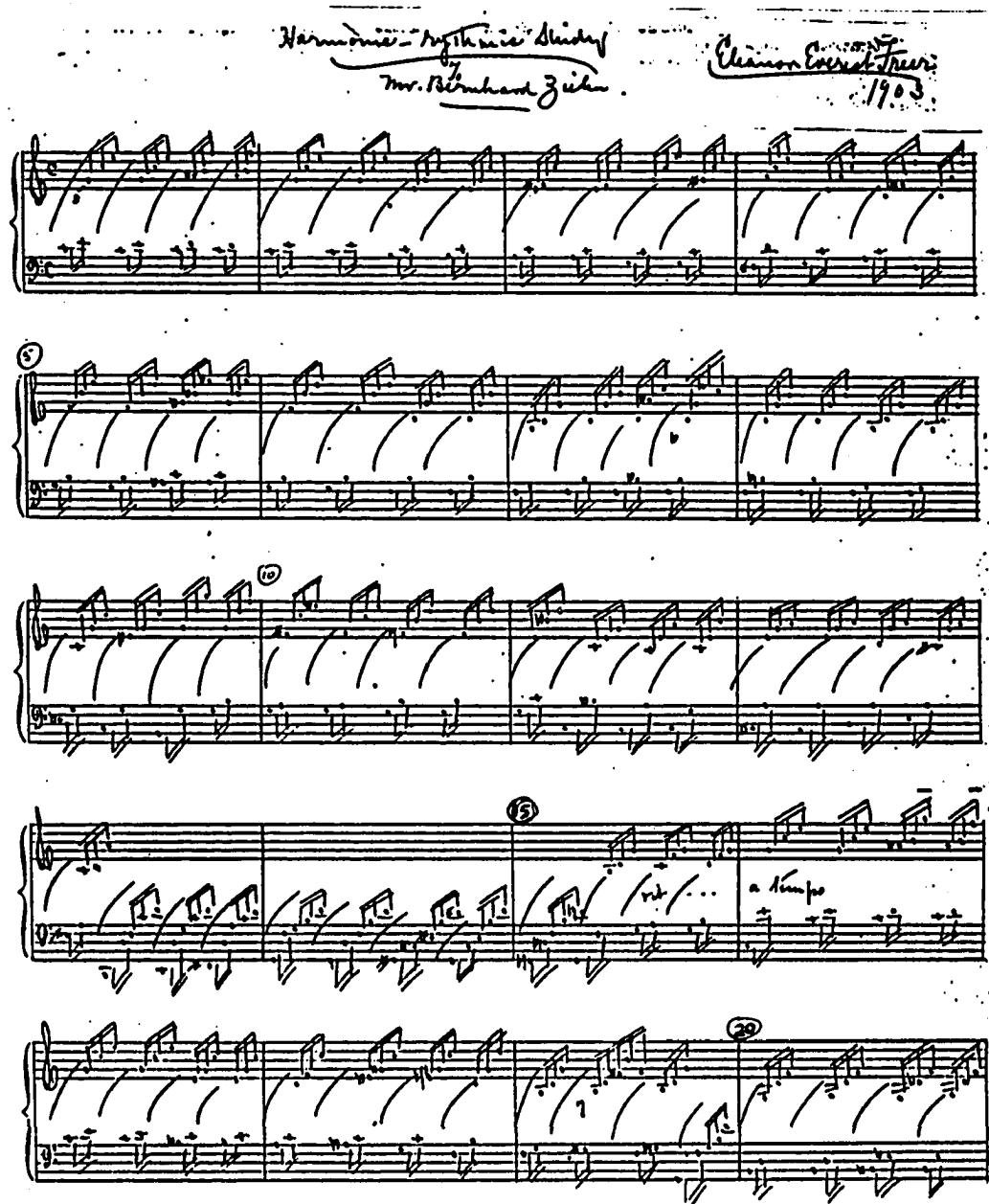


Fig. 7: Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, m. 1-20, Freer's
original manuscript
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

great composer of piano music. All she writes is extremely pianistic--what the Germans call klaviermässig."¹⁰

In spite of her early days as a piano prodigy, composing her own Polka Facile, Freer was not destined to write music for the piano. Her training as a singer and her love of poetry joined with her wish to establish a wider appreciation of art song in America by setting to music poems in the English language. Her first attempts toward accomplishing that desire were the nine songs of Op. 4. In this collection are settings of verses by John Donne (1572-1631), Robert Browning (1812-1889), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) and other English and American poets. In 1904, Kaun published these pieces in a single edition, A Book of Songs. Freer dedicated each song to an individual who was important to her, and for whom the text or music seemed especially appropriate, a practice she continued throughout her life.¹¹

¹⁰Hartford Daily Times, 5 October 1912, quoted in Music News, IV/16 (30 Oct. 1912):23.

¹¹From several of the dedications it is possible to glimpse Freer's personal feelings at the time. The first setting in Op. 4, William Blake's (1757-1827) poem "Cradle Song," was written for her daughter Eleanor. The third and fourth songs are dedicated to Archibald Freer, and are settings of his own verses "When is Life's Youth?" and "Like a Shooting Star, Love." No. 8, "Cherry Ripe," is for Blanche Marchesi (1863-1940), the daughter of Mathilde Marchesi and also a singer. With the ninth song, "Time of Roses," the composer honored her former Marchesi classmate Emma Nevada (1859-1940).

Freer continued working with Bernhard Ziehn until 1907, producing many more songs with English texts in accordance with her desire that America should have an art-song tradition. In autumn of that year she suffered a serious illness which interrupted her studies. The nature of the malady is not identified either by Freer or her biographer Foster, but apparently there was a long convalescence which prevented much activity. In Musical Courier of 11 March 1908, a brief notice states that "Eleanor Everest Freer, who has been seriously ill since last autumn, is convalescing, and is reported will soon take up her work again."

By 1907, Freer had already published 43 songs, including two cycles, Five Songs to Spring, Op. 6 and Six Songs to Nature, Op. 10. "An April Pastoral," Op. 6, no. 5, was also published separately, and much later (1932) it appeared in a collection of songs for mixed voices. The songs of the "Nature" cycle, Op. 10, are unified by a motive identified as "the Nature theme." This melody is written on the cover page of the original manuscript (see Fig. 8). The songs in the previous cycle have no musical unification, but are related only by their poetry.

Handwritten title and subtitle:
Six Songs to Nature
(A song cycle for medium voice)

Handwritten list of songs and composers:
The World Beautiful (Milton)
Before the Rain (Aldrich)
After the Rain (Aldrich)
The Biennial Theme (Longfellow)
My Garden (Brown)
To the Western Wind (Henrich)

Handwritten text:
Arranged by
Eleanor Everest Frier
Apr. 10

Handwritten musical notation for "Nature Theme":
Center
Nature Theme

Handwritten signatures and locations:
Richard Kummer
Berlin, Germany
Pittsburgh
H. A. Kummer Music Co.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Fig. 8: "Nature Theme" from the cycle Six Songs to Nature,
original manuscript.
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

Five Songs to Spring, Op. 6, published in 1905, represented both English and American poets, among them John Milton (1608-1674) and William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870). In a review of new books and music in 1909, the cycle was finally mentioned as follows:

Mrs. Freer's latest Song Cycle . . . has all the characteristic style and super-refinement we have been taught to expect in her work. [The cycle] ought to find much use in vocal studios generally and in refined song recitals especially.¹²

The cycle Six Songs to Nature was sung by David Bispham at Chicago's Music Hall in December of 1905. Freer inscribed a published copy of this work "to David Bispham, in remembrance of his splendid rendition."¹³ On the same program Bispham sang Five Triolets in Song, an unpublished cycle of five brief songs set to poetry of Austin Dobson (1840-1921).

During this fruitful period Freer became a member of the New York Manuscript Society, an organization devoted to the performance of works by American composers. The records and concert programs of the Society's meetings for 7 January 1906 and 22 January 1907 document performances of twelve of her songs. The earlier concert was given at the National Arts Club, Aeolian Hall, West Thirty-fourth Street, New York. The songs performed were "The Ideal,"

¹²Music News 1 (15 January 1909): 17.

¹³This volume is at the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Americana Collection.

"Apparitions," and "A Vagabond Song" from Op. 9, sung by Eleanore Marx, soprano, with Johanna Hess-Burr, accompanist. On the second program the following January, the same singer, accompanied by F. W. Riesberg, performed "The Shepherdess," Op. 5, no. 1 and "The Dancers," Op. 12, no. 2. The latter, with its clever text by Michael Field (see Fig. 9), is one of only a few songs originally written for high voice. Others included in the group were "She Is Not Fair to Outward View" and "I Have Done, Put By the Lute" of Op. 14. The singer ended with "Cherry Ripe" from Op. 4, and later in the concert once more presented the four songs from Op. 9 which had been heard the preceding year.¹⁴

In June 1907, Jessie Lynde Hopkins, a prominent Chicago contralto, sang three Freer songs at the Groff-Bryant Institute. She presented the two songs of Op. 14, and "August Night" and Galloping Song" from Op. 12. A review of this program praised Freer's work:

¹⁴New York Manuscript Society, Programs of Public Meetings, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Seasons. The New York Manuscript Society was formed in 1889 by musicians Gerrit Smith, Addison Andrews, Louis Dressler, and Joseph Harrison. The objectives of the Society were to advance musical composition in America, to collect original manuscripts, and to give annual performances for the interpretation of new works. Smith wrote a brief history of the organization in The Looker-on, Vol. 1 No. 2, (1889): 185.

Vivace

1

dance and dance! An - oth - er faun, A black one

dan - ces on the lawn. He moves with me, And

when I lift my heels his feet di - rect - ly shift:

Fig. 9: "The Dancers," Op. 12, no. 2, m. 1-9
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

Mrs. Freer's songs are not for the immature musician, but appeal to the cultured artist who can find pleasure in their interpretation. Of most modern invention, they have the charm of melody which much of the ultra-modern composition lacks. In "August Night" Mrs. Freer has done some of her best work.¹⁵

The song to which the critic referred was a setting of an intensely passionate text by Hester Bancroft, describing the loneliness of lost love. The music matches the mood of the poetry (see Fig. 10) with its restless chromaticism and dark tonal coloring. "Galloping Song," dedicated to David Bispham, is a surging, energetic outburst of romanticism (see Fig. 11) with text by the Chicago poet Sara Hamilton Birchall.¹⁶

An earlier article about Freer's music in the Musical Courier of 5 December 1906 (p. 52) reported two opposing views: (1) "She has technic but no melody," and (2) "She is tuneful and catchy." The critics making these comments were not identified in the article; both reviews had been written after the publication of the Book of Songs, Op. 4 and Two Songs, Op. 5.

¹⁵Musical Courier 55 (5 June 1907): 26.

¹⁶Freer delivered a paper "Our Chicago Poets" at the Arts Club, 18 Nov. 1915. The talk included short vignettes about each poet, and she described her discovery of Birchall ten years earlier, then working as a proof corrector in a publishing house. Freer, upon reading the girl's poetry, encouraged her to seek publication. In 1909 Birchall's Songs of St. Bartholomew were published by Bartlett of Boston.

Lento.

A - long the rip - ened grain the full moon lies in

p

splen - der on the wide-spread yel - low fields, And clos - er Heav - en

poco rall.

arch - es round the earth. The rich - ness of the har - vest, as it dies, Seems

colla voce

The image shows a musical score for the song "August Night". It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The first system is marked "Lento." and includes the lyrics "A - long the rip - ened grain the full moon lies in". The piano part has a dynamic marking "p". The second system continues the lyrics "splen - der on the wide-spread yel - low fields, And clos - er Heav - en". The third system is marked "poco rall." and includes the lyrics "arch - es round the earth. The rich - ness of the har - vest, as it dies, Seems". The piano part in the third system has a dynamic marking "colla voce".

Fig. 10: "August Night," m. 1-5 (Music Division,
Library of Congress)

Andantino.

Gal - lop and sing, gal - lop and sing!

With the o - pen road be - fore, And my good

horse lay - ing his hoofs to the ground As I ride

Fig. 11: "Galloping Song," m. 1-6 (Music Division,
Library of Congress)

A project Freer apparently began before her illness was a setting of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (1806-1861) Forty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese. These were completed and finally published by Kaun in 1910 as Op. 22. An earlier (1909) edition had included only the first eleven songs from the cycle; this may have been the first of four intended volumes, or she may not have originally planned to complete the entire cycle.¹⁷ The period of convalescence, when she was not studying, was used for yet another time-consuming work: Freer used her gift for languages and her love of literature to good advantage by translating ten Italian dramas into English (see List of Works), and wrote French and German versions of many texts she had used in her own compositions.

There is no record of Freer's continuing to study with

¹⁷A letter from Freer to the Library of Congress (1929) states:

. . . There are a few printed copies of this first [complete] edition (1910) . . . I also have in manuscript the complete orchestral accompaniments (including voice parts) . . . this publication would be prohibitive for me . . .

The purpose of this letter was to inform the Library that a fire had destroyed the plates for the Sonnets at Raynor and Dahlheim, the company who owned them, but that fortunately she herself would be able to provide one printed copy of the first edition in answer to a request from the head of the Music Division, Carl Engel. At that time the Library was in possession of the original manuscript only. At this writing, no orchestrations for the Sonnets have been found. Later issues of Music News announced that these orchestrations and those for the operas and several of the songs were available from the American Rental Library of Chicago. Music News 19 (1927) published this notice in all numbers.

Ziehn after her recovery from illness. She must have continued to send him manuscripts, however, as his appraisal of the Sonnets appeared on the first complete edition of 1910, as well as on subsequent journal advertisements listing the Freer compositions:

This is a colossal work. I know of nothing that could with justice be placed beside it . . . it is a musical setting of the highest order.

Another favorable comment in Ziehn's handwriting is seen on the title-page of Op. 25, no. 2, a setting of the poem "Jenny Kiss'd Me" by Leigh Hunt (1784-1859):

Diese Op. 25-2, ist wirklich ein famoseres Ding: wahrer Humor, kein künstlich hergestellter.¹⁸

This short piece was published by the Willis Music Company of Cincinnati in 1912, the year of Ziehn's death. If Freer did not again study with Ziehn after her recovery in 1908, she either completed works at least through Op. 25 before the onset of her illness in 1907, or she completed them during her convalescence and sent them to Ziehn for his comments. Unfortunately she dated very few of her early manuscripts, but nearly always wrote the date of publication of each work on the title-page.

Freer did write music between 1908 and 1912, whether or not she continued studying. A post card sent to her father's old friend David Bispham, dated 17 February 1910,

¹⁸"This Op. 25 is really a splendid thing, real humor, no artificial substitute." (Writer's translation).

describes a new song:

Here is something no one has seen, it is so new.
I want you to have it in manuscript, as it may not be
published for some time. It is a glorious poem of
Shelley's. You will pour out your mellow tones like an
organ, in it.

The card was signed familiarly with the initials E. E. F.¹⁹
The only poem of Shelley's (1792-1822) used by Freer in her
entire oeuvre is "I Fear Thy Kisses, Gentle Maiden," Op.
23, no. 1. The song was published in Paris by Henri
Lemoine in 1920, ten years after the completion of the
manuscript. (The publication may have been delayed by
the onset of World War I and Freer's subsequent
philanthropic work). Other projects were underway, as
well: the orchestrations for the Sonnets were being
prepared, and Freer had begun making a singable French
translation of the Barrett-Browning poems.

Freer's advantageous social position allowed her the
opportunity to meet many performers; her years of study and
work in music had given her confidence enough to strive for
both publication and performance. Her husband's wealth
provided funds for private editions when necessary or
desirable. The musical periodicals of the time, especially
Music News, Musical Leader, and Musical Courier announced
and reviewed an increasing number of performances of

¹⁹Freer to Bispham, post card dated 17 February 1910,
New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Americana
Collection.

Freer's music. Her new publications were always given favorable comments, particularly by Music News.

On the musical page of the Chicago Tribune, 19 December 1909, pianist-critic Glenn Dillard Gunn featured his colleague Freer in an article entitled "About Chicago Composers."²⁰ Gunn praised many things about the Freer songs: " . . . there are some songs by Mrs. Freer that find their standard of comparison only in songs by Hugo Wolf and Johannes Brahms . . . ," and "In harmonic resource Mrs. Freer seemingly knows no limitations." Gunn also expressed the opinion that "The difficulty of Mrs. Freer's songs is doubtless responsible for their somewhat tardy recognition by singers." In referring to the publications of Op. 5 and Op. 6, Gunn stated:

[Mrs. Freer's] style has a remarkable capacity for expressing details of feeling, wherefore the whimsical, the elusive, the delicate and intangible are the very essence of the idiom. It is no exaggeration to describe it as highly original.

The critic continued with the reminder that this music "is difficult and demand[s] the resource of the expert technician as well as the artist of feeling and imagination." Performances of Freer's songs had already found their way to recitals in New York, Boston and Milwaukee. The critic Willy Jaffe wrote in the Milwaukee Sentinel 28 April 1907:

. . . in Chicago is heard the voice of a mighty

²⁰Also cited in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 126.

songstress, a voice so commanding and full of truth that it will make itself heard. This voice belongs to Eleanor Everest Freer. . . . She has astounding inventive ability, and clothes her lyrics with charming poetic tenderness. . . . there is a realism and elementary power about them . . .

David Bispham, who frequently presented songs by American composers, programmed a number of Freer works on his 1910 season's concerts. He performed her setting of Christina Rossetti's "When I am Dead, My Dearest," Op. 19, no. 1 in his many recitals throughout the United States. Chicago audiences heard his interpretation of this song in an Orchestra Hall concert of 19 March 1910.²¹ Another Freer song that appeared frequently on Bispham concerts was "The Old Boatman," Op. 23, no. 1. The baritone performed this work in Carnegie Hall, New York, 30 October 1910, where it received excellent reviews. The Musical Courier of 2 November 1910 reviewed the concert, providing an appraisal of Freer's work:

Mrs. Freer's song, with its southern Negro themes, proved a revelation in the line of composition in this genre, and the audience would have liked to hear it a second time . . .

The following year, on 4 October, Bispham again performed at Orchestra Hall (Chicago) in a program sung entirely in English. It was Bispham's practice to use available translations of French and German art songs for his

²¹David Bispham, Comp., Collection of Programs and Clippings, 1910, New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Americana Collection.

concerts, and then to introduce new songs by American composers in the second part of the program. For this concert Freer herself accompanied Bispham in his singing of five of the Sonnets from the Portuguese, the only notice of a program on which she appeared as a pianist. The reviewer made no mention of the new works, and instead complimented Bispham on his use of translations for the Schubert and Schumann heard earlier in the program.²²

In a Boston recital mentioned by Freer's biographer (undated and the place of performance not given), Bispham sang four songs from Opus 11: "Roseleaves," "A Tear," "Circe," and "A Greek Gift." These songs were never published, perhaps because of their brevity. No reviews of this program have been found, nor has a printed program been located.

Freer's daughter Eleanor at age fourteen was developing into a singer and poetess herself. Three songs from Op. 21, "A Valentine," "A Carol," and "Arachne," the last a lyrical meditation on the Greek legend,²³ were settings of young Eleanor's poems. "Arachne" is musically the best of the three. The accompaniment is Schubert-like in its

²²Karleton Hackett, comp., Music in Chicago, Scrapbooks, 1910-1912 (Newberry Library, Chicago). This newspaper clipping is not dated; all reviews and articles preserved in these scrapbooks were written by Hackett.

²³Arachne was changed into a spider by Athena, when the goddess saw that the girl's tapestry was more beautiful than her own.

depiction of the monotony of the spinning-wheel, and in its frequent modal changes (see Fig. 12). This lovely piece was first published in a private edition by Raynor and Dalheim of Chicago;²⁴ it later appeared in Musicians' Magazine of 22 July 1927.

Andante

Deft

spin-ner, in thy dew be-sprin-kled net Pa-tient thou sit - test, or when some rude hand, Care-less-ly tears the lace that

Fig. 12, "Arachne," m. 1-8
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

²⁴The poem "Arachne" was published in 1915 in Tipyn o'Bob, the literary magazine of Bryn Mawr College, where Eleanor graduated the same year with a B.A. in French and Latin.

The copyright entry for "A Valentine" is 1909; the publication date entered on the manuscript is 1911. This first public edition, by the Willis Music Company of Cincinnati, has a whimsical format. "A Valentine" was published on stiff cardboard instead of ordinary paper, to be sent to friends as a Valentine keepsake. A garland of hearts and flowers held aloft by smiling Cupids adorns the top of the card, the left bar-lines for the three-voice system are printed as arrows with heart-shaped points, and the brace for the accompaniment's two staves is a Cupid's bow (see Fig. 13).²⁵

²⁵One of these Valentines, with Freer's signature, is among the personal papers of Helen Rudolph Heller, a Ziehn student and a friend of Freer (Newberry Library).

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A Valentine

ELEANOR FREER ELEANOR EVEREST FREER, Op. 21

And .e-ven when the sun grows pale, And

Adagio

darkness spreads o'er hill and dale, 'No hatred shall e'er

-spread a veil 'Twixt you and me! —

poco rall. pp

poco rall. pp

Fig. 13: "A Valentine," Op. 21, no. 3 (Music Division, Library of Congress)

"Arachne" and the "Our Mother Tongue," are both numbered Op. 21, no. 3 by the composer. The text of the latter, published later with a different group of songs, is by Richard Monckton Milnes,²⁶ praising the beauty and strength of the English language--a perfect emphasis of Freer's own feelings.

Op. 21, no. 4 is a setting of a poem by Cornelius Everest,²⁷ and the final song in the collection is "A Farewell," its text by the English poet, author and clergyman Charles Kingsley (1819-1875). This song, like "A Valentine," is extremely brief, consisting of only ten measures. It was published in 1912 by the Willis Music Company as the third of Three Short Songs, an edition that included "A Carol," Op. 21, no. 2 and "Jenny Kiss'd Me," from Opus 25. Music News reviewed this publication soon after it appeared, with complimentary phrases: "unpretentious, refreshing . . . deft harmonic touches that give Mrs. Freer's songs their interesting individuality . . . unconventional harmonic progressions that stamp the work as highly modern and individual . . ."²⁸

²⁶The English poet Richard Monckton Milnes Houghton (1809-1885) was a member of the famous "Apostles," which included Alfred Tennyson and Henry Arthur Hallam. His interest in American poets brought Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings to the attention of the England's literary public.

²⁷"Oh Tell Me, Little Spark of Life", a poem written when his daughter Eleanor was six weeks old.

²⁸Music News 5 (10 January 1913): 29.

In 1913 Willis published Four Songs, which grouped together Milnes's poem "Our Mother Tongue" with the songs "To A Dreamer," Op. 27, no. 1, "Outward Bound," Op. 24, no. 3, and "During Music," Op. 20, no. 2. The other poems were, respectively, by Agnes Lee (1860-1939) and Harriet Monroe (1860-1936) of Chicago, and by Arthur Symons (1865-1945), the British poet and critic.²⁹ The Symons poem, "During Music," is the most introspective of the group, describing the power of love transmitted through music. Freer closes the song with a 36-measure coda for the piano alone; the instructions on the manuscript suggest to the performers that the poem might be read while this music is being played.

About Freer's Op. 24, no. 1, "An Old Love Song," with its sentimental text by William Gerard Chapman, Gunn wrote in the Chicago Tribune: "[it has] quaintness and simplicity, haunting suggestion of folksong--not Teutonic, not Celtic, not Slavic, not Latin. Can it be perhaps

²⁹ Lee and Monroe were Chicagoans close to the Freers. The former was married to Otto Freer, a brother of Archibald. She had come to Chicago from Boston, where her poetry was published by North American Review, Collier's, and New England Magazine. Both her poems and Monroe's appeared in The Chicago Anthology, a popular volume compiled by Charles Blanden and Minna Mathison in 1916. Monroe, also an art critic and a member of the Arts Club, was responsible for the publication of Poetry, a magazine which introduced its subscribers to poems by Carl Sandburg, Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound, along with other modern poets whose work was not widely known in America. Symons had recently published his essay "Plays, Acting, and Music," and was famous for his extensive work on the Symbolist poets.

distinctively American, like the verse?"³⁰ This comment must have warmed Freer's heart, as she so much wanted America to have an identifiable musical idiom in art song. In the same article, Gunn gave high praise to the song "Golden Eyes," translated from the Greek of Rufinus by Andrew Lang:

This song is worthy to rank with the best of Richard Strauss, for its melodic inspiration is joined to a command of the technic of the art quite as complete as that evidenced by that master in the smaller forms.

These two songs were published by Church, Paxson, and Co. of New York in 1912.

On 9 May 1912, at a public meeting of the New York Manuscript Society, Marguerite Barnes Lovewell sang a group of four Freer songs: "Sweet and Twenty," "She is not Fair to Outward View," "The Old Boatman," and "Who has Robbed the Ocean Cave?"³¹ In a review of programs presented by the Manuscript Society during the previous season, F. W. Riesberg wrote in the Hartford Daily Times of 5 October 1912:

The Freer songs displayed the extra-ordinary [sic] gifts of this composer in a fresh light. "Sweet and Twenty," one of Gadski's recent successes, is simplicity itself, contravening the idea that Mrs. Freer cannot write simple melody in square-cut rhythm. "She is not Fair" is simple and pretty throughout. "Who

³⁰Reprinted in Musical Courier, 5 Feb. 1913.

³¹New York Manuscript Society, Programs of Public Meetings, 1913.

has Robbed" is Schubert-like in melody and construction.³²

The New York Manuscript Society again presented a program of music by women composers on 10 May 1913. Musical America reviewed the concert without listing the songs:

Gertrude Gugler, who had made her Aeolian debut a few weeks ago, did splendid work in four harmonically interesting songs by Eleanor Everest Freer of Chicago.³³

The Freer songs performed by Gugler, as listed on a printed program in the records of the New York Manuscript Society, were "Our Mother Tongue," "To a Dreamer," "Outward Bound," and "During Music," the collection of four songs recently published by Willis Music Company.

Several weeks before the New York concert, baritone René Lund had performed "Fate's Decree," Op. 18, no. 3, "Old Love Song," Op. 24, no. 1, and "On the Need of Drinking," Op. 15, no. 5, at the Whitney Opera House in Chicago. The last of the group was a setting of a text by the Greek poet Anacreon, translated by Thomas Bourne. The music was energetic and robust for both singer and pianist, and made a fine ending for the singer's recital. Music

³²"Sweet and Twenty" is dedicated to Johanna Gadske (1872-1932), the famous contralto. According to a notation in Freer's hand on the original manuscript (Music Division, Library of Congress), Chicago concert-goers first heard Mme. Gadske perform the song on 9 October 1919, seven years after she had added it to her repertoire. This is the only Shakespeare text Freer chose to set to music.

³³Musical America, (10 May 1913): 32.

News reprinted the Herald Examiner's review of the program, in which special attention was given to the closing number:

He made his best impression in a group of songs which contained three selections from the pen of Eleanor Everest Freer, a Chicago composer. These songs are among the finest examples of her compositions and were very favorably received. "On the Need of Drinking" with its humorous ending brought Mr. Lund's performance to a fitting climax.³⁴

In May, a Music News critic reviewed another performance of Freer songs:

This writer had the privilege of hearing some great American songs the other day, [performed by] Lorraine Decker-Campbell and Mildred Marsh Henderson. Their presentation was just about ideal, and will long remain in memory as an artistic experience.³⁵

The program included some of Freer's most often-performed songs, among them "When I Am Dead," "She Is Not Fair," "To A Dreamer," and "Evening Song," the last a beautiful poem by the American Sidney Lanier (1842-1881). The critic praised both the texts and the music:

The texts are real poetry with literary merit; tonal settings are music of artistic significance. The songs possess great simplicity, but it is the simplicity of great art.

Freer wrote many articles advocating the performance of American music. Most appeared as letters or special features in nearly every issue of Music News, the journal consistently supporting American composers and performers.

³⁴Music News, 5 (25 April 1913): 23, re-printed from the Chicago Herald Examiner, 18 April 1913.

³⁵George Mortimer Brush, "Eleanor Everest Freer," Music News 5 (23 May 1913): 13.

In one of her editorials Freer criticized the Amateur Musical Club of Chicago for doing only foreign works:

If we are doing good work then we must cultivate more patriotism (new works must first become known in the land of their birth). Our duty is to praise the good and condemn the worthless. Let us hope our texts will be of a higher order than some of the foreign plays and operas--morally.³⁶

With the onset of World War I in August 1914, Freer's efforts turned to the organization of projects to help the wounded. Her friends in France, with whom she and her husband had kept up correspondence, wrote heart-breaking letters describing conditions brought about by the war. Archibald Freer sent monthly gifts of money, and his wife was actively engaged in committee work for such projects as the Franco-American Corrective Appliance Committee, two special hospitals in Paris, the American Ambulance Fund, and the Paris-Chicago Hospital Foundation, to name only a few listed by Freer in her autobiography. The Foundation supported two memorial rooms in Paris hospitals, one for the men blinded in battle, and one for service to women and children. The money raised through Freer's philanthropic work exceeded \$80,000. She herself was decorated by the Belgian and French governments, and her husband received the Order of Leopold in appreciation for his monetary gifts. Time for composing was severely limited, indeed. Performances of Freer's songs, however, were consistently

³⁶Music News 5 (14 Nov. 1913): 3.

noted and favorably critiqued. The first four songs of Op. 27, "To A Dreamer", "A Child's Quest," "The Flowers of France" and "For the Freedom of All Nations" were published in 1915. The latter, inspired by the events leading to World War I, was a setting of Freer's own text which appeared in a brochure with her photograph and a brief critique by Devries (see Fig. 14). Another five songs, bringing the total number in Op. 24 to nine, did not appear until 1917: "Walls of Doubt," "The Stealer," "Hymn," "Etude Realiste" and "To His Lyre."

The Musical Courier of 3 March 1915 reviewed a program at the Bush Conservatory, sung by Lorraine Decker-Campbell, whose presentation had been so highly praised two years before. The songs "To A Painter" and "To A Dreamer" were again singled out for special commendation, the reviewer praising both singer and songs. An important comment in this article provides information about yet another activity of Freer's: "The name of Mrs. Freer appears with increasing frequency on programs, and now that some of her best-known songs are obtainable in German texts, one finds them on programs sung in Germany." Freer had several years earlier undertaken the challenge of translating several of her songs into German, writing the texts not only in the musical score, but including a copy of the translated



Eleanor Everest Froer

Mrs. Eleanor Everest Froer, known from Chicago to Paris as an American composer and patriot, has poured her patriotism and her talent into a stirring war-song, which she has called, "For the Freedom of All Nations." It was planned by Mrs. Froer to serve as an inspiration and stimulant to the patriotic spirit of all Americans, the verses containing concrete "reasons why we are at war."

The melody is singable, with a musical rhythm easily learned by even the unmusical. It should serve as a rally song in all patriotic demonstrations of the day.

The proceeds of the sale of "For the Freedom of All Nations" go to the national surgical dressings committee. Will Rooder, the publisher, has donated 2000 copies.

HERMAN DEVRIES,
(Chicago American July 30th)

"FOR THE FREEDOM OF ALL NATIONS"

For the Freedom of all Nations
We are on our way to France,
And to fight against oppression
God has given us this chance,
Who can e'er forget the anguish
Of the women in the waves,
As the Lusitania's masthead
Sank, to please the Prussian knaves.

To attack our fellow-beings
On pursuits of peaceful aim,
Did a foe arise, in anger,
And without a lawful claim
Rob the freedom of all nations -
England, Belgium, Russia, France -
To avenge them is our duty,
And Old Glory must advance.

Shall we see our homes demolished
As in Belgium and in France,
Women taken into slav'ry,
For their children not a chance?
Not a moment must we tarry,
Shoulder knapsack, gun or lance,
Victory must be our watchword,
As we're marching on thro' France!

Words and Music by
Eleanor Everest Froer

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"THE CHICAGO PUBLISHER"

**Fig. 14: Publicity brochure attached to the manuscript of
"For the Freedom of All Nations," Op. 24, no. 4
(Music Division, Library of Congress)**

poem on a separate page inserted in the manuscript. When in 1913 the songs "To A Painter" and "When I Am Dead, My Dearest" had been published with German translations, Music News reported, "The translations into German are splendid and go to prove Mrs. Freer's idea that anything worth translating can be translated."³⁷ Freer engaged a German friend, Gertrude Walter, to assist her in the task of preparing more translations. All the songs of Op. 4 and those in the cycle Six Songs to Nature were eventually completed.

The numerous music journals that supported Freer by printing her letters and articles continued to review performances of her works and her new publications. Information about the composer's personal life was often noted in a particular article when appropriate. The unidentified Courier critic who pointed out the availability of the German translations mentions in the same article, "It is interesting to note that [the composer's] only child, Eleanor Freer, a senior at Bryn Mawr College, is said to inherit her mother's gifts as singer and poet." In the summer of 1915, following her graduation from Bryn Mawr, the Freers' daughter announced her engagement to Russell Willson, whom she married in April of 1916. By the following year, Freer was a grandmother.

³⁷Music News 5 (5 Sept. 1913): 8

The Chicago Clubs and Their Social Importance

By 1915, at age 51, Freer had written over 130 songs to English texts, and had published most of them. She had many performances of her works to her credit; her name had appeared often in newspapers and music journals. Her position of prominence in the Chicago women's clubs added to her general prestige. As the number of her publications increased and her music continued to be favorably reviewed by knowledgeable editors and critics, she continued to write hundreds of letters and articles emphasizing the need for recognition of the American composer and performer. She read avidly, scanned music publications of every kind, and contributed her opinions on the performance of new music, opera in English, and women composers. She particularly deplored the Chicago Opera's consistent use of foreign singers and conductors. The high cost of this unnecessary investment was not her only objection; as always, she insisted that opera companies throughout the country should recognize the talent immediately around them. Music News published many of her letters denouncing the current policy:

If the director of an American opera company goes to Europe to make extended contracts for this country on the foreign system we in the United States are tacitly admitting that the [our own] exponents of art--the composer, poet and musician--have nothing to offer the musical world . . .³⁸

³⁸Music News 13 (June 1921): 36.

The cultural clubs and their activities were an important aspect of Freer's life as a composer; they provided opportunities for her to have her works heard and reviewed. In 1915 the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) declared her an honorary member. Three years earlier, this group had announced a first annual competition for American composers, offering monetary prizes and performances for the best works. As judgments were made at the state level before the national prizes could be awarded, this venture became a mammoth undertaking. Freer acted as state chairman for Illinois and organized committees to appoint adjudicators, schedule rehearsals and performances, and oversee the area chosen for the competition. The opportunities the NFMC presented for talented young musicians created a consistent round of future American performers, trained by American teachers. During this period Freer also wrote the "Opera Column" for the NFMC Journal.

In addition to the NFMC and the active Fortnightly Club, Freer also devoted time to the Chicago Women's Club, the Friday Club, the Melodists, and the Arts Club of Chicago. These cultural organizations were thought of by many as a way of passing time for rich, idle women, or simply as "gossip groups." A survey of their activities and purposes provides positive proof that they did indeed benefit musicians, artists and writers by exposing them and

their works to interested patrons, and perhaps on a smaller scale, to the general public.

In an article "The Place of Music in American Life," published in The Etude in 1906, Henry T. Finck wrote of women's clubs:

[these] are a peculiarly American institution, and their own members perhaps hardly realize what an important role they play now, and are destined to play in the future, helping to give good music a fixed place in American life and culture.³⁹

Another favorable comment about such social organizations was written by David Bispham in his autobiography:

Here let me record my obligations to the many women in America who have helped me in carrying out my ambitions, and to whom we may all be thankful for the growth of music throughout the country. It is indeed interesting to me to look over any musical journal at the present time and see the names of so many enthusiastic and artistic business women, with whose musical beginnings I was associated, and whom I have to thank for so much in my career.⁴⁰

According to one author, there were about 10,000 women's clubs in the Chicago area, of which the Fortnightly and the Friday Club were the most prestigious and also quite successful in their efforts.⁴¹ Both organizations met to hear lectures or concerts given by talented members or by prominent people in the professions. The Friday Club

³⁹Henry T. Finck, "The Place of Music in American Life," The Etude 24 (1906): 490.

⁴⁰David Bispham, A Quaker Singer's Recollections (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), p. 314.

⁴¹Arthur Meeker, Chicago with Love (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 168.

was especially civic-minded, and no local person in the creative arts was omitted from its roster of participating performers. Art, music, sculpture, interior decoration, poetry, novels and drama were included in lectures, panels and discussion groups. These were combined with exhibits and musical performance when the occasion called for them.

Members of the Friday Club heard Freer present her paper "Our Chicago Poets" on 18 November 1915. In her presentation, the composer spoke of the poets whose texts she had already set to music: Sara Birchall, Elia Peattie, Agnes Lee, Agnes Foster and Harriet Monroe. She extolled the value of poetry as a fine art, speaking eloquently of its relationship to music. She read from the works of those mentioned above and quoted other lesser-known writers in the area. A group of the songs mentioned in the talk were performed to illustrate the presentation. This kind of lecture-recital was typical of the activities featured at the club meetings.

The Chicago Woman's Club, one of the older organizations in the city, was divided into the six departments of Home, Education, Philanthropy, Reform, Art and Literature, and Philosophy and Science. Music came into this group in a number of ways: (1) musicales were given to provide monies for various urban projects, (2) approximately three mornings each year were devoted to music study, as part of the club's education department.

The records for the 1907-8 season include a description of four musicales, and reports for the music study mornings included lectures and/or performances of song cycles, ballads, and descriptive music.⁴² Since most meetings of these organizations were held at the homes of women members, printed programs were hardly ever prepared, and newspaper or journal notices about the sessions seldom listed the musical works that were performed. Often only the organization, time, and place for a specific musicale or other event were announced, usually with the names of guest performers. In Freer's own written contributions to monthly organizational publications such as the NFMC Bulletin and the Illinois Women's Athletic Club Bulletin, she was able to report on performances of her own and other American compositions given at such meetings.

The Arts Club of Chicago perhaps reached the general public more readily than other organizations through regular exhibitions of paintings by local artists as well as shows brought from other cities. This group's activities included the famous "September Morn" affair in 1913,⁴³ and the exhibit of the New York Armory Art Show, an

⁴²Annals of the Chicago Woman's Club, 1876-1916 (Chicago: Chicago Woman's Club, 1916).

⁴³Emmett Dedmon, Fabulous Chicago (N.Y.: Random House, 1953), pp. 56-58. Paul Chabas's painting, "September Morn," showing a nude woman stepping into a chilly lake, was received with offended dignity by Chicago viewers. Was seeing the unclothed female figure a spiritually debasing or an esthetically elevating experience?

advent into modernism which brought to Chicago the controversial "Nude Descending a Staircase" of Marcel Duchamp. Both art shows caused much amusing comment in journals and newspapers (see Fig. 15). Although Freer was not directly involved with

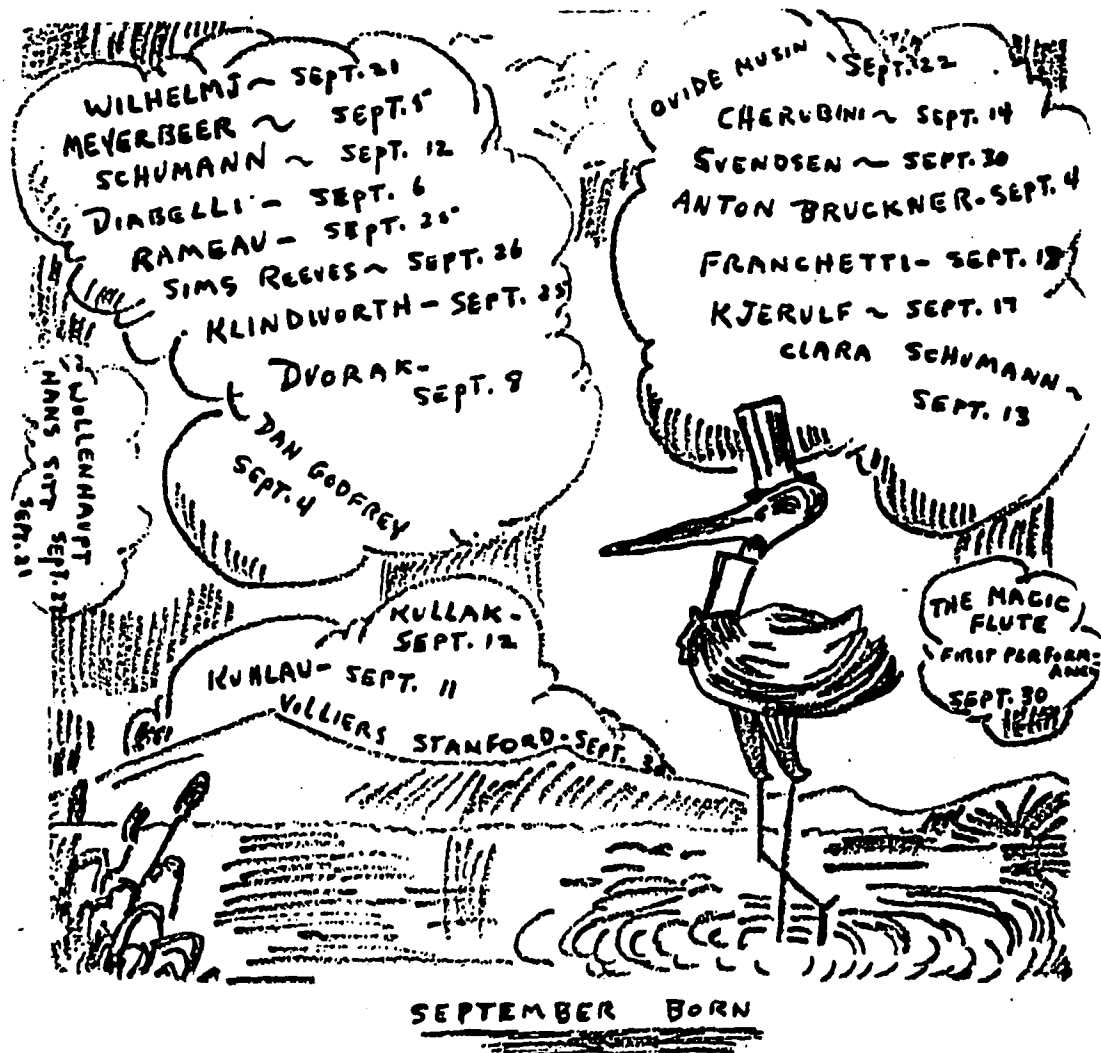


Fig. 15: "September Born," satirizing the Arts Club "September Morn" scandal.
Musical Courier 57 (17 September 1913)

either of these special events, two of her colleagues were caught up in the artistic controversies which ensued.

It was Rue Carpenter, wife of composer John Alden Carpenter and a nationally-known interior decorator, who extended the Arts Club into a gallery and showcase for modern art. Poet Harriet Monroe, assigned by her paper (the Chicago Tribune) to cover the Armory show, had declared "September Morn" "harmless," but referred to the Duchamp work as "a pack of brown cards in a nightmare," and "a dynamited suit of Japanese armor."⁴⁴ As a friend and Arts Club colleague of Freer's, Monroe had been honored earlier by a setting (1910), of one of her poems, "Outward Bound." The text is simple and straightforward, both subject and rhyme scheme quite commonplace (see Fig. 16).

Let time and the waves roll by
To their haven over the sea,
My bark is my home, say I,
My love is my life to me.

Freer set none of Monroe's later verses, which were more contemporary in style.

The Melodists, a group devoted exclusively to musicians, had a large roster of performers and composers.

⁴⁴Harriet Monroe, A Poet's Life: 70 Years in a Changing World (N.Y: Macmillan Co., 1938), p. 212. Since Monroe herself was at that time seeking alternatives to traditional patterns in poetry, just as Duchamp was rebelling against conventional artistic traditions, she subsequently reflected and repented of this criticism, later referring to the episode as "one of the most interesting of my journalistic career."

Outward Bound

Harriet Monroe

Eleanor Everest Fier.
Op. 24, no. 3

Lento a molto ampliato

Let time with the waves roll by To their ha - ven or the sea -

My task is my home, say I, My

love is my life - al,

a tempo

Rit.

Fig. 16: "Outward Bound," Op. 24, no. 3, m. 1-9
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

Club members, as well as special guests, presented concerts of both old and new music, introducing to their own colleagues and to the public experimental works which might not have exposure elsewhere. It was during Freer's tenure as president of this group that many new American compositions were first heard, among them Otto Luening's Sextet as well as his Sonata for Violin, songs by John Alden Carpenter, and piano pieces and songs by Freer herself.

A more detailed description of all clubs to which Freer belonged is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Great numbers of wealthy women in high social positions found an outlet for their creative energies and for their intellectual curiosity in these organizations. Here composers, performers, poets, and artists found kindred spirits who received their efforts with interest, and who were willing to be exposed to new and often iconoclastic ideas. Freer's contributions as a composer were perhaps looked upon both by members and outsiders as just another "woman's club" activity.

Freer and the "Woman Composer" Question

The expectations placed upon Freer by her social position as the wife of a wealthy doctor/real estate investor may have prevented her from seeking a larger audience. She was a talented, energetic musician whose

time and place were not particularly favorable for creative women, especially women who composed music.

An example of the prevailing attitude toward women composers at the turn of the century appeared in Music, August 1896: Author Leo R. Lewis suggested that "women cannot compose because they cannot sing bass." This inability, according to Lewis, "comes about because women's means of musical expression is limited to a single instrument or voice. Men have an advantage because of their wider experience in orchestras, quartets, and bands." In the following issue (September) of the same periodical, Jessie L. Gaynor, a composer of piano pieces and method books for children, responded, "I really cannot see why it is any more difficult to sing melody and think bass than it is to sing bass and think melody . . . "

By 1913, such attitudes were not much improved, according to the following quote from a letter received by the Musical Courier:

. . . [Cécile] Chaminade has been made a member of the French Legion of Honor. They have their institution there to honor women composers in France. The American Academy of Arts and Letters seems to be for fun! Perhaps we may turn to . . . the New York Manuscript Society to "red button" such women as Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, Eleanor Everest Freer, Celeste Heckscher and others.⁴⁵

The Courier editor who received this letter and reported its contents informed his readers that the handwriting on

⁴⁵Musical Courier, 57 (10 Sept. 1913): 23.

the letter "was not feminine." After quoting the correspondent, he added, "The point is well-taken, and if our women composers are content to be rewarded with buttons, then, by all that is fair, they ought to have them." A by-line for this article was conspicuously absent.

Freer was not an aggressive feminist, but she advocated recognition for all American composers and performers, whatever their sex. In 1912 she wrote an editorial for Music News:

In a recent issue of "The Nation" it mentions the clergy as the worst-paid profession. It seems to us that the American composer could easily head the list. . . . Let us drop the [sexual barrier] and have the work, not the sex, be the only test. Let the public at large demand [American] artists for their entertainment, all vocal music to be rendered in the vernacular. Let the successful publisher recognize the American composer.⁴⁶

Freer, apparently more concerned with achieving her original goal of having American musicians heard in America than with her own status as a composer, continued her determined efforts to promote the excellence of American musical training. In a letter to the editor of Musical America, she wrote, "It is time now for the American students to remain and be taught at home, where their advantages (and even 'atmosphere') are as great as

⁴⁶Music News, 4 (18 Oct. 1912): 2.

elsewhere."⁴⁷ All of the composer's subsequent writings passionately insisted that only by performing opera and art song in the English language could America develop a national art. By the war's end, a project of great importance related to that continued effort consumed her time and energies, and proved to be an outstanding contribution to American music: the organization of the Opera In Our Language Foundation in 1921 provided a much-needed impetus for American composers to write new operas with English texts. Freer herself was among those who took up that challenge.

⁴⁷Eleanor Dawes Peters, comp., American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks, (Newberry Library), letter from Freer to the editor of Musical America, original typewritten copy.

CHAPTER IV

TRADITIONAL OPERA VERSUS OPERA IN ENGLISH: 1910-26

Opera in Chicago and the "Opera in Our Language" Foundation

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the question of opera in English and new operas by American composers became important issues in prominent music journals and newspaper articles. When Eleanor Freer returned to the United States in 1899 after seven years in Leipzig, well-known editors and researchers were expressing their views pro and con, often taking a definite position.

"In opera far more than in absolute music we have remained a European colony," wrote Oscar G. Sonneck in the Music Review. "The orchestra is European; the conductors are European; most of the singers are Europeans; the words are sung in European languages, and the repertoire is European."¹ Sonneck concluded his long article with the question, "Are there no American operas worth producing? . . . give our young composers a fair and repeated chance, do not turn the cold shoulder upon them after one or two failures. Honor your American masters, and throw off all European influences." These words echoed the feelings that

¹Music Review, 19 (Jan. 1901): 220-25.

Eleanor Everest had experienced as she left her home in 1883 to study in Paris. Having confirmed her belief in the worth of American talent by her experiences abroad, Freer was now (1915) in a position to attempt to convince the public that America had an untapped supply of composers and performers just as good as those in Europe. American composers must be motivated to write operas with English texts, and their operas must be produced. American audiences would more readily accept opera as an art form if they could understand its language. Opera in English became a vital issue for Freer and her co-workers in the cultural clubs. The opera situation in Chicago and elsewhere in America was not conducive to composing or performing new operas.

Some writers who expressed opinions on the question of opera in English often confused two separate matters--traditional opera performed in English translation and presentation of new operas originally written with an English libretto. Lawrence Gilman in his book Nature in Music discussed both. His comments against translations were emphatic:

. . . there is no such thing as a satisfactory operatic translation--some are less heinous than others. Music which is made to express a particular set of words cannot be made to express quite a different set of words.²

²Lawrence Gilman, Nature in Music (N.Y.: John Lane Co., 1914), Chapter 4, "The Question of Opera in English," pp.135-52.

Gilman then spoke in favor of new operas by American composers: "No one who is interested in the growth of a native musical art but would rejoice to see operas by American composers, sung in the vernacular." Some new operas by American composers, however, had been criticized as being "un-American," implying that a true American musical idiom had not appeared. No one seemed to know exactly what constituted "American" opera. Herbert F. Peyser's comment in Musical America of 26 July 1913 issue expressed this uncertainty:

American Opera today is still a hypothetical institution; everybody has theories about it but no one can tell what it actually is or define its distinguishing traits.

In the same article, Peyser wrote, "Cyrano of [Victor] Herbert, Mona of [Horatio] Parker, and [Frederic] Converse's Pipe of Desire, all were un-American operas by Americans." In spite of the American Indian subject matter used by Converse, Peyser obviously felt that American composers generally were still writing in the European style rather than creating an original idiom.

One of the strongest arguments against translated opera was the belief that English could not be sung intelligibly because singers were not trained to sing in English. An American tenor who sang with the Metropolitan Opera wrote against this concept:

. . . neither in France nor Italy does the public understand each word. The people come to the opera having first studied carefully the libretto. They do

not expect to understand each word, and they do not.
. . .there is no reason why English-speaking singers
should not be able to sing [English] intelligibly and
with effect; . . . ³

Chicago could not boast its own opera company, English or otherwise, until 1910. Before then, companies from other cities brought their touring troupes, including several which performed in English. Among these were Col. Henry Savage's Castle Square Opera Company of Boston and Jeannette Thurber's American Opera Company. Wealthy Chicago opera-lovers, who travelled to New York for glittering nights at the Metropolitan, were determined to give their city a permanent opera company. Edith McCormick, a club colleague and close friend of Freer's who was also an avid supporter of opera in English, joined her personal funds with her husband's to accomplish this. The moment was fortuitous: in New York, the Metropolitan and a troupe led by Oscar Hammerstein I had for some time provided audiences with two flourishing opera companies in direct competition with each other. In 1910 Hammerstein's company was forced to suspend operations due to financial difficulties. McCormick and her husband seized the opportunity to garner from the Hammerstein company such famous singers as Luisa Tetrazzini (1871-1940), John McCormack (1884-1945), and Mary Garden (1877-1951). With

³Riccardo Martin, "Grand Opera in English,"
Music News 4 (January 1912): 13.

them as a nucleus, the McCormicks founded the Chicago Grand Opera Company.⁴

Edith and Harold McCormick were both millionaires; Harold was the grandson of Cyrus Hall McCormick, Edith a daughter of John D. Rockefeller. They loved opera (they were amateur musicians themselves), and put up the money for their company's opening season. Under the direction of Cleofonte Campanini (1860-1919), the season began with a traditional opera, Aida, on 3 November 1910. Of course, the performance was sung in the original Italian; the name Freer was absent from the list of opera benefactors.⁵

Mary Garden appeared on 17 November as Mélisande in Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande. The Debussy work was already difficult for audiences accustomed to the aria-recitative style of opera, and the French text further obscured the strange plot. When Garden subsequently sang (in German), danced, and acted the part of Salome in Strauss's controversial opera several performances later, Chicago opera-goers revealed the same Victorian attitudes that would later be seen in the controversial exhibitions of contemporary art. In this case the German language was a secondary issue. The semi-clothed eroticism that Garden

⁴Ronald Davis. Opera in Chicago (N.Y.: Appleton-Century, 1966): 70-87.

⁵Chicago Concert and Opera Programs 1910-1914 (Newberry Library).

displayed horrified the conservative Chicago opera-goers.⁶ "Traditional" opera was apparently what they wanted; the city was torn by operatic controversy. With a brand new opera company at hand, backed by people so wealthy that money was not a consideration, Chicago was in an excellent position to attempt performances of new works and traditional ones in translation. Great care had to be taken to choose carefully plots that were "moral" or "acceptable" in the minds of Chicago audiences, otherwise the seats would remain empty.

Edith McCormick had already engaged critic Charles Henry Meltzer of the Chicago Tribune to translate a number of foreign operas.⁷ Meltzer was a passionate believer in opera in English and also wanted to see new American works performed. In a letter to the Tribune, Meltzer wrote:

⁶This performance elicited from Chicago's police chief the famous comment "It was disgusting; Mary Garden wallowed around like a cat in a bed of catnip." Quoted in Davis, Opera in Chicago, p. 88, and in Edward Moore, Forty Years of Opera in Chicago (N.Y.: Horace Liverwright, 1930), p. 74.

⁷Esther Turkington, in her final report as President of the American Opera Society of Chicago, 1946, listed the following translations by Meltzer: Carmen, Pagliacci, Louise, Falstaff, Andrea Chenier, Tosca, Cavalleria Rusticana, Madama Butterfly, Faust, Der Rosenkavalier, Love of Three Kings, Aida, Boris Godunov, Samson and Delilah, La Traviata, Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde, Parsifal, Lohengrin, Siegfried, Götterdämmerung, Tannhäuser and Die Meistersinger. The report is preserved in the Scrapbooks of the American Opera Society of Chicago, Vol 5, at the Newberry Library of Chicago. At that time, Carmen and Pagliacci were published in libretto form; the complete translations, known collectively as the Edith Rockefeller McCormick Edition, were the property of the Meltzer family.

Americans are snobs and think it a mark of sophistication to listen to opera in a foreign language. Foreign artists who refuse to sing in English are totally out of sympathy with American aspirations. . . . I will fight till I drop for American art in America and for the use of our own tongue in opera.⁸

Meltzer shared the McCormicks' hope that eventually the opera company could wean audiences away from expecting only the traditional works they already knew. Beginning with old favorites and gradually presenting new operas in English was a plan that Freer and her Arts Club colleagues approved. Nothing could be accomplished quickly; in time audiences would see that American composers could create opera as well as their European forebears.

The McCormicks and other wealthy socialites who made up the Chicago opera "forces" dreamed of discovering and producing the first great American opera. They believed they had found it in Herbert's Natomah, a work based on an American Indian theme. A performance of Natomah was scheduled for 13 December 1911, with Mary Garden singing the leading role. Garden expressed her views about singing in English for the Music News:

Till I [learned the role of] Natomah I confess I was opposed to singing opera in English. I disliked the idea of translated opera texts, because those I read were always bad. Since the production of Natomah I have changed my mind, and after reading Mr. Meltzer's translation of Die Walküre I have

⁸Quoted in Davis, Opera in Chicago, p. 156.

altered my opinion of translations. . . .
Something--a little--may be lost
. . . much more is gained. And now I know
that English can be sung. Yes, I will fight
for opera in English.⁹

Freer and the McCormicks were overjoyed to have such a prominent supporter as Garden in their ranks. Unfortunately, Natomah was not a great success; it did little to further the cause of American opera, but it was at least a beginning.

In 1913 Campanini attempted to fulfill the desires of his financial supporters and the suppliants whose letters flooded his desk by promising to schedule at least two new American operas. These performances never came about because of insurmountable debts occurred earlier in the season. Two operas had been presented in English, Wolf-Ferrari's Secret of Suzanne and Jewels of the Madonna, but the McCormicks' real object was the production of American operas. They came to the rescue of the floundering company, and in 1915 the organization resumed as the Chicago Opera Association.

The company seemed to have difficulty finding new works by American composers. Freer, eager to have the new Opera Association become a true American company, began contacting publishers and music schools throughout the country, but the response was slow. A definite commitment

⁹ Music News 4 (2 Sept. 1911): editorial page.

for performance was needed but impossible to give; box office considerations were of utmost importance. American opera premières in 1917 were Azora by Henry Hadley (1871-1937) and Arthur Nevin's (1871-1943) A Daughter of the Forest; neither one was successful. Much money was spent on hiring foreign singers and conductors. Reginald DeKoven's (1859-1920) Rip van Winkle was mounted in 1919, again without much success. The European singers in the company disliked singing in English, and the director Gino Marinuzzi (1882-1945) resigned because of having to deal with "temperamental singers." The situation looked very bad for American opera. In the meantime the debate over opera in English had become more heated. Americans generally, disillusioned with European ideals because of the war, seemed to view every issue with exaggerated patriotism. The question of opera in English revealed the spirit of the times more closely than any other issue.¹⁰

Mary Garden, professed supporter of opera in English, took over as director of the Chicago Opera in the 1920-21 season. The McCormicks again supported the venture, but Garden's new Chicago Grand Opera continued producing European operas with European singers, while she and her colleagues travelled to Europe at great expense to hire well-known European performers. In her first season as

¹⁰Davis, op. cit., p. 155.

director of the Chicago Grand Opera, Garden scheduled only one American work.

Freer, whose many letters on opera in English had been pouring into Music News, Musical Courier, and Musical Leader offices, wrote an angry editorial for Music News of 6 May 1921, recalling to readers' minds Mary Garden's earlier supportive declarations:

. . . Why this change? . . . she [now] declares: "All operas shall be given in the original text; I hate translation. Only French and Italian voices are the most beautiful." (She even forgets her own). "I shall only engage artists who have had a Continental training." She then asks, faintly, for one American opera! Has she forgotten that our language is vital to the progress of our National Musical Art? Another five years of established opera in foreign languages may mean a death-blow to our Musical Art. It will mean that there continues to be no stage for English-speaking peoples for opera in their vernacular.

Freer's other comments were related to the subsidy of the Grand Opera. The Association of Commerce had asked 500 citizens of Chicago to pledge \$1,000 a year each for five years in support of opera productions. The final sentence in the editorial was blunt and to the point: "We resent half a million dollars being spent yearly for an organization that continues to stifle the progress of our National Music."

In May of 1921, Freer, with her colleagues Bertha Ochsner and Mrs. Louis Yeager, founded the Opera in Our

Language Foundation (OOLF). Edith McCormick became a charter member. The Foundation was dedicated "to further in every possible way opera in our language in the U.S.A.; to organize, reorganize to assist companies, and, if foreign works are given, to acquire adequate translations. Foreign works and artists [are to be heard] only in English."¹¹ Freer published a list of other goals for the Foundation besides that of attempting to nationalize music by having all foreign opera performed in English. Most of her principles involved the elimination of superfluous expense, first, by using the Civic Music Association Orchestra composed of local musicians, and second, by engaging international stars for a short season only and allowing the rest of the performances to be given by a stock company of fine American singers. Obviously, this plan would be difficult to put into operation, since it was completely opposite to the general public's idea of opera. The project as stated by the OOLF charter grew into a time-consuming task, and, as Freer later described in a letter to Carl Engel of the Library of Congress, "my work has been mostly against the stream."¹²

¹¹Peters, comp., Scrapbooks of the American Opera Society of Chicago, original typewritten charter reprinted in numerous programs of operas presented by the Society.

¹²Freer to Engel, 1 March 1924, Old Correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress.

The first objective of the OOLF was to discover who among the opera-loving public were willing to support the movement. Accordingly, Freer placed an announcement in the Music News of 12 June 1921:

We believe the time has come for the formation of a Stock Company for opera in our own language--(English or American, as one wishes to call it!)--for the Americanization of our national musical art. We believe opera in English can be established . . . if one thousand subscribers will pledge one hundred dollars, each, for this worthy purpose.

At the bottom of the column was a small, discreet form for potential subscribers to pledge and sign. Music News added its own little statement below, eschewing responsibility for the Opera in Our Language Foundation, but "heartily" endorsing it.

A flood of journal and newspaper articles followed this announcement. The Chicago Evening American of 28 July 1921 carried an article by music critic Hermann DeVries:

Every once in a while, with misguided regularity, with pathetic insistence, somebody wastes a lot of good paper and excellent ink writing for the "cause" of opera in English . . . I have said many a good word for the furtherance of opera in the vernacular. And yet, as far as Chicago is concerned, Opera in English does not exist. To this there is but one deduction to be made: The public does not want it.

This discouraging article was followed soon after by a report in the Musical Leader of 15 September 1921. A headline reading "Los Angeles Fails to Support English

Opera" topped a brief report saying efforts in that city to organize a permanent English opera company had failed for lack of public support.

The Musical Leader, a publication edited by Charles French, supposedly in favor of opera in English, published numerous columns by staff writers presenting arguments both for and against this movement, although not against any particular group which espoused it. Music News, on the other hand, while repeatedly disclaiming any connection with Freer's organization, came to her aid consistently with editorials and reports that were favorable to her cause, and carried Freer's own letters and essays on the subject of opera in English.

A humorous editorial by Music News editor Charles E. Watt included strong opposition to the Leader's claim that tenor Lucien Muratore could "never master English sufficiently to sing an operatic role in that language."¹³ Watt answered this contention by saying, "We cannot see that this follows at all. Isn't Muratore just as brainy a person as is Mary Garden?" Opera-lovers all were aware that Garden had learned the French language in order to be able to appear at the Paris Opéra. The clever editor then concluded his response with praise for Eleanor Everest Freer:

¹³Charles E. Watt, "Opera in English . . . Eleanor Everest Freer . . . Music News and the Musical Leader," Music News 13 (22 July 1921): 3.

She has talent, routine, skill, great training and the finest sort of artistic feeling, and in dedicating all these to the achievement of [her] purpose . . . she is serving not alone the present generation but also the coming one.

Critic and musician Karleton Hackett of the Chicago Evening Post was more conservative in his comments. Immediately after the public announcement of the fund drive, he simply quoted Freer's own words in his column, which he opened by saying, "Energetic as it has been since the start of its campaign, the Opera in Our Language Foundation . . . enters into its final attack on foreign domination of our Lyric Theater".¹⁴ This clipping from Hackett's scrapbook is undated, but the statement of Freer's which follows the topic sentence mentions the David Bispham Memorial Fund, indicating that the article may have been written in mid-to-late October, 1921. Bispham's death occurred 2 October. Since he had been a lifelong friend of Freer's, she and her group agreed immediately to honor his memory by awarding a medal inscribed with his likeness to composers of American operas. Bispham had always spoken in favor of opera in English, and his concert programs show his willingness to perform songs by American composers. He had also often sung European art songs in English translations, convinced that audiences could more readily

¹⁴Karleton Hackett, comp., Music in Chicago, Scrapbooks of Opera and Concert Programs, Vol. 7, 1921-23.

accept this repertoire if they knew the meaning of the poetry. The honorary medal was a perfect remembrance of Bispham and at the same time an excellent vehicle for OOLF's goal of motivating American composers to write new operas (see Fig. 17).



Fig. 17: The David Bispham Medal, as shown in Foster,
Eleanor Everest Freer

Freer continued in earnest the project of locating operas already written by American composers. She planned to provide conductors and opera-supporting groups throughout the United States with a list of operas available for performance. The incentive of the Bispham medal, she hoped, would then inspire the creation of new

works. OOLF's role was to gather a select group of knowledgeable and experienced performers and conductors to endorse the works they deemed best. The total plan would gradually elevate the standard of American operatic composition and performance.

The next step was to solicit help from nationally-known musicians for reviewing new operas and judging their merits for future performance. An endorsement form with spaces for the signatures of three prominent judges was designed by the group (see Fig. 18). A letterhead was printed, an artist engaged for the execution in bronze of the David Bispham Medal, and publicity for the venture was begun.

Edith McCormick was already providing moral and financial support for a then-unknown American composer, Otto Luening. While a poor student at the Zurich Conservatory in 1917, Luening had been introduced to the wealthy lady by means of a letter from the Conservatory director, Volkmar Andreae (1879-1962). Andreae had been impressed with Luening's musical ability, he was acquainted with Mrs. McCormick, and he realized that his student was desperately in need of financial help. McCormick was in Zurich at the time to be psychoanalyzed by Carl Jung. She became interested in the young student (Luening was nearly 17), and provided him with an ongoing stipend that allowed him to complete his studies at the Conservatory. Luening's

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*En - des - y
 Miss Virgile Hughes
 The Grade Chicago*

It is the hope of the Committee to make this a permanent institution which can only be national and civic if based upon our language. This Foundation will offer a stage for the American Composer, Poet and Artist, whose united efforts make our musical art.

STATE CHAIRMEN
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WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, DO HEREBY CERTIFY
 THAT THE OPERA SCORE *Egypt*
 BY *Mr. J. M. Boy* IS, TECHNICALLY,
 UP TO THE STANDARD REPERTORY.

Giorgio Tolano
Rudolph Ganz
6.5.1914

To be signed by three musicians of unquestioned ability and mailed to:

Mrs. Archibald Freer,
 1420 Lake Shore Drive,
 Chicago, Ill.

Arch
Amelia Stone
Sample of...

Fig. 18: Example of the opera endorsement form used by OOLF. (American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks, Newberry Library).

autobiography describes his relationship with his unusual patroness:

. . . in her relations with us [she also sponsored the poet James Joyce and the musician Philip Jarnach], she functioned partly as a therapist. She let us talk without trying to direct us, but she gave us some guidance, assurance, and reassurance in our work . . . One felt from her a strong understanding and an empathy that were often unspoken.¹⁵

One of McCormick's conditions for her continued patronage of Luening was that he should at some time come to Chicago. America needed composers very badly, she said, and she suggested that Luening devote most of his energies to composing.

When McCormick returned to Chicago in October of 1921, Luening had been there for a year, earning a living by playing with a theater orchestra. He was invited to the McCormick home to present some of his works in a private performance. McCormick was pleased that he had been producing compositions, and offered another stipend that enabled him to quit his theater job and devote all his time to composing. A performance of Luening's Sonata for Violin was arranged with violinist-conductor Rudolph Mangold, who led the theater orchestra where Luening had played. The two played the work for a musicale at the Melodist Club, and it was here that Luening met Freer, who was then

¹⁵Otto Luening, The Odyssey of an American Composer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980, p. 142.

President of the organization. The wealthy ladies of the Melodists, having already heard about Luening from McCormick, were enthusiastic about the Sonata, and awarded the composer a \$1000 fellowship for a working period at the MacDowell Colony. Luening preferred to use the money to open a teaching studio, and the women agreed. Thus, some of the same patronesses who assisted Freer in her crusade for opera in English brought another dimension to their original idea: the support of an American teaching studio established by an American composer, with American teachers to train American musicians. Here was the prospect of a fine nucleus for the performance of the new operas that the Foundation might sponsor. Luening and Mangold then presented Luening's Violin Sonata at the McCormick mansion on 9 December 1921. Luening's Sextet was also performed by members of the Chicago Symphony. The rest of the program consisted of groups of songs by Freer and John Alden Carpenter.¹⁶

The Chicago Musical Arts Studio became a fact in May of 1922, with a faculty of five. Marguerite Lamar, a well-known Chicago singer, was in charge of voice and diction. Her husband Theodore Stearns (1880-1935), a composer and pianist, was interested in American opera and had already

¹⁶The Carpenter and Freer works performed at this program are not noted in Luening's Odyssey nor in journal articles. According to Luening, his own works were not well received; Carpenter was the only person present who spoke to him after the performance.

written both music and libretto for The Snowbird. Stearns was assigned the difficult task of teaching both opera and drama. Since he also had some experience in writing articles and reviews for various publications, he was asked to offer a course of study in musical criticism. Luening's friend Mangold taught violin and chamber music, and the piano teacher was Mme. Bernhard Stavenhagen, who had been a pupil of Ferruccio Busoni (1886-1924).¹⁷ Luening himself taught theory, composition, and music appreciation. Members of the Chicago Symphony would be used as needed to teach other orchestral instruments. A printed circular announcing the new studio also listed the names of nine patronesses, including Freer and McCormick. The project was underway (see Fig. 19).

¹⁷Mme. Stavenhagen's husband had been one of Liszt's favorite students, according to Luening (Odyssey of an American Composer, p. 246).

Those whose ambition in life is to be telling and practical, as well as absolutely artistic, will find, in The Chicago Musical Arts Studio and its internationally-known faculty of teachers, an undivided aim, and contentment for the pupil—not disappointment later on in life—the goal.

Mme. Bernhard Stavenhagen		Piano
Rudolph Mangold		Violin
Marguerite Lamar		Voice and Diction
Otto C. Luening		Musical Theory (Ziehn) Composition and Musical Appreciation
Orchestral Instruments by Members Chicago Symphony Orchestra		



ENSEMBLE

Rudolph Mangold		Chamber Music
Marguerite Lamar		Stage Presence
Mme. Stavenhagen		Concert Accompanying
Theodore Stearns		Opera, Operetta, Drama and Musical Criticism

Under the patronage of:

MRS. ROCKEFELLER McCORMICK
MRS. J. MITCHELL HOYT
MRS. FLETCHER DURBIN
MRS. ARTHUR B. WELLS
MRS. WRIGHT A. PATTERSON
MRS. A. P. CALLAHAN
MRS. THEODORE MILLER
MRS. ARCHIBALD FREER
MRS. LOUIS E. YAGER

Fig. 19: Sections of an announcement for the Musical Arts Studio, listing faculty and patronesses
(Given to the writer by Otto Luening)

Patroness and Opera Composer

During the time given over to the organization of OOLF and the Musical Arts Studio, Freer continued with her own creative work. An important series of benefit concerts presented toward the end of 1920 featured the entire cycle Sonnets from the Portuguese. The Sonnets were performed in four programs, in separate groups of three or four interspersed with violin and piano solos played by prominent Chicago musicians. The concerts, costing patrons \$10.00 for the entire series, were to benefit ten different local and foreign philanthropies including the MacDowell Society of Chicago, a shelter for tubercular children, the Permanent Blind War Relief Fund, and a scholarship fund for the School of Domestic Arts and Sciences.

Freer apparently sent a score of the Sonnets to Hermann DeVries of the Chicago Evening American much earlier, perhaps as part of the publicity for the benefit, and possibly in hope of his being present at the series. DeVries submitted to his paper on 10 June 1920 a comment about the music which obviously came from a study of the score, not from a hearing of the work. First explaining that the Sonnets had "just come to my notice," the critic stated that he had known of Freer's talent through the medium of her songs, but he had "no idea of the breadth and variety of her vision." DeVries continued:

Judging them without the dissecting analysis of the master of harmony and counter-point [sic], yet with the appreciation of the art lover, I dare to say that Mrs. Freer's "Sonnets," for the most part, are . . . fine music, finely uttered by an idealist, whose sympathy with the delicacy and exquisite spirit of Mrs. Browning's poems is breathed into each line with the sensitiveness of the true music-poet.

. . . Take them at random, you will find beauty in each and every page. All are of unusual musical refinement and delicacy, such as only a woman can create.

The Evening American published no review of the four concerts. Music News, however, reported on the final program of the series:

Ethel Jones [the singer] not only is the possessor of a beautiful voice and superb musicianship, but of a sincerity . . .

It was a thoroughly rehearsed performance, one of authority. The Freer Sonnets are now part of the known American composer repertoire. They are difficult for both singer and pianist, but sensitive and beautiful when performed as they were . . . ¹⁸

The four concerts netted large returns for the charities listed on the program: \$758.57 (see Fig. 20). Although selected groups of the Sonnets were sung by many different singers in succeeding programs throughout Freer's life, no other presentation of the entire cycle was ever given.

A tragic event in Freer's personal life occurred in July of 1921, soon after the official organization of OOLF.

¹⁸Charles E. Watt, reviewer, Music News 12 (17 December 1920): 11.

Four Afternoons of Music

Orchestra Hall Foyer

MONDAYS AT 4 O'CLOCK

November 15th, 22nd, 29th, and Dec. 6th, 1920

PROCEEDS FOR LOCAL AND FOREIGN PHILANTHROPY

The Programs of Vocal and Instrumental Music
will contain a first rendition in song of

"The most beautiful sonnets since Shakespeare's time"

Forty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

BENEFICIARIES

Infant Welfare Society
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Chicago Nursery and Half-Orphan Asylum
Permanent Blind War Relief Fund
Chicago Committee for French Relief
Serbian and Armenian Children
Marie-Elizabeth Shelter for Tubercular Children (Ostende)
Paris "Chicago Hospital" Foundation

SERIES, - - \$10.00

Tickets may be obtained from MRS. JOHN D. KALES, Treasurer,
1356 North State Street

Single admission tickets for professionals at reduced rate, may be had from
MR. HERBERT E. HYDE, 637 Fine Arts Bldg.

Fig. 20: Cover of program for performances of complete
Sonnets from the Portuguese
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

Her five-year-old granddaughter Eleanor Jane Willson (born 1916) was drowned at a lake resort where the family and some friends were enjoying a summer outing. David Bispham was sharing the day, according to a letter from Freer to George Upton.¹⁹ The child would soon be given a unique memorial by her grandmother.

Near the end of 1921, Freer joined the composers of American operas with an operatic creation of her own, perhaps initially inspired by the "opera in English" and "opera by American composers" propaganda for OOLF. The new work, Legend of the Piper, Op. 28, was a one-act chamber opera based on the first act of a four-act children's play by the American writer Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-1922).²⁰ The playwright's imaginative text with its many added characters presented a perfect vehicle for the arioso style. Dedicated to "Eleanor Jane Willson, my beloved little grandchild," the little opera was published by C. C.

¹⁹Freer to Upton, 22 January 1923, Upton Correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress.

²⁰Josephine Preston Peabody, Diary and Letters, ed. Christina Hopkinson Baker (Boston and N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925). Peabody's play is an imaginative enlargement of the ancient tale of the piper who freed the village of Hamelin from its plague of rats. Legend of the Piper had won the Stratford prize in 1909 and was premiered in England; the first American production was given at the New Theatre in New York 30 January 1911. The New York Times in its review the following day reported that America had "no other poet whose Muse was capable of such a sustained and inspired flight in the atmosphere of poetic drama."

Birchard in a private edition, and received its première performance in South Bend, Indiana, three years later.

Freer's work for the Foundation continued with more announcements and articles detailing plans and procedures for realizing OOLF's goals. Each week Music News and Musical Leader carried another letter or an extensive report on the organization's activities. At a public meeting held by the group in early November 1921, Freer happily announced that the Chicago Opera had promised to change its policy:

I have been authorized by Mrs. McCormick to state that the Chicago Opera will change its policy to the extent that next season [1921-22] not less than two American operas will be presented, and every effort will be made to bring such works into the standard repertory as soon as possible.²¹

In December, Music News reported that a circular had been sent out by OOLF, endorsing three American operas: Shanewis by Charles Wakefield Cadman, Daughter of the Forest by Arthur Nevin, and The Echo by Frank Patterson (1871-1947). Completing the information on the circular was a list of three libretto translators whose work the foundation approved: Charles Henry Meltzer, W. J. Henderson (1855-1937), and Henry Krehbiel (1854-1923). The new year brought forth a report from the Musical Leader written in its customary satirical fashion:

Undaunted by the experiences of
professional managements who [have attempted

²¹Music News 13 (11 Nov. 1921): 10.

opera in English] a coterie of Chicago society women will try it again. The new society is called the "Opera in Our Language Foundation," and this week is giving a concert to gather funds for the purpose. With delicious irony the artists donating their services for the cause are offering a program of arias in foreign languages. This incident is related only because it is amusing, and as showing what artists think of opera in English.²²

This program, which was given at the Drake Hotel Ballroom on 17 January, included arias and duets by Puccini (1858-1924), Wagner (1813-1883), Massenet, and the American composer Harriet Ware (1877-1944). The same journal, in its issue of 9 March 1922, announced the establishment of the David Bispham Memorial Medal and its purpose. Little space was given to the report: OOLF was mentioned only as a "foundation for opera in our language," and the remainder of the article discussed the formation of the Caruso Memorial Foundation being debated at that time.

Music News, continuing to support the "opera in English" movement, reviewed a book by James Francis Cooke (1874-1949) in which a number of famous singers had been asked their opinion on American music and singing in English. Marcella Sembrich's (1858-1935) statement summed up the belief of most:

. . . French, German, and Italian are the most necessary languages. I include English, as I am convinced that it is only a matter of a short time when

²²Musical Leader (19 Jan. 1922): 60.

a school of opera written by English-speaking composers will arise.²³

Meltzer's article "The Future of Opera in Chicago" appeared in the Independent and Weekly Review, 11 March 1922. It included the announcement that Mary Garden had resigned from the directorship of the Chicago Opera, to be replaced by Giorgio Polacco (1878-1959). Meltzer recounted the history of Garden's variable opinions on opera in English. "There are three reasons," said Meltzer, "for excluding English from the languages employed in opera. One is fashionable snobbery, an inheritance [the custom of performing traditional opera in the original language], and a bad, foolish habit. One is the badness of most so-called English versions of the standard foreign librettos. The last is the unwillingness, and present inability, of most singers to enunciate and pronounce our language plainly." The last paragraph of Meltzer's article lauded the work of "the Opera in Our Language Foundation of Eleanor Everest Freer, herself a writer of rare songs, [who] is now encouraging American composers to submit operas to a jury with a view to production, . . . and some day the American composer may not have to go a-begging at the Metropolitan."

The Chicago Musical Arts Studio presented Theodore Stearns and his wife Marguerite Lamar in a program of songs at the McCormick mansion in April. Lamar sang Freer's

²³Music News 14 (27 Jan. 1922): 2.

"Sweet and Twenty," Op. 25, no. 1, "The Shepherdess," Op. 5, no. 1, and "You," Op. 23, no. 3. Stearns played sections of his opera The Snowbird, and Lamar sang an aria from the work.²⁴ Freer, meanwhile, continued her campaign for use of the English language in vocal programs. She wrote asking permission of the Music News editor to submit translations of German lieder for publication in the journal. Music and Letters had been devoting space to this, and Freer gave her strongest approbation to the practice, endorsing the translations as well. Watt printed all translations sent by Freer, Music and Letters having given its sanction.

W. J. Henderson, whose opera translations had been endorsed by OOLF, wrote for the New York Herald of 4 June 1922:

The Opera in our Language Foundation and the David Bispham Memorial Fund have begun an active campaign to raise by popular subscription \$1,000,000 to build and endow an opera house in which native works will be produced and native singers be heard.

Henderson's lengthy article, quoted in Music News of 7 July 1922, was fervently supportive of OOLF's goals. He called the scheme "ambitious," praising the fact that the main aim of the Foundation's plan was to abolish existing conditions and provide better ones. He asked his readers for encouragement, knowing that there would be tremendous

²⁴Music News 14 (14 April 1922): 7.

opposition. Freer, undoubtedly spurred on by this and other published opinions which were in agreement with her purpose, wrote voluminous articles describing plans for the formation of a stock company which would present only American operas. She listed many works already in existence, either published or in manuscript, and enumerated in detail the part OOLF had played in paving the way for such performances. One article showed that some of the plans were actually coming to fruition:

Among other activities of the [OOLF] is the publication of one of the chosen operas at a cost of \$882, transferring to the composer all rights. We have given one composer, suddenly deprived of an income, a month in Chicago, during which time he has done valuable writing on an opera . . .²⁵

Freer also stated that the Foundation planned to give a two-month stipend to several other composers during the next summer, to provide time and freedom for the composition of new works. In another article, Freer listed the American operas that OOLF had endorsed for presentation in 1923. Besides the operas previously announced, Freer included Ralph Lyford's (1892-1927) Castle Agrazant, Carlo Minetti's Edane the Fair, Francesco De Leone's (1887-1948) Alglala, and The Spanish Student by J.D. Sapir.

The Evening Post reported that "Mrs. Freer emphasized the fact that the Foundation had no intention of seeking to oppose the present regime at the opera, but would work with

²⁵Freer, "Opera in Our Vernacular," Music News 14 (24 March 1922): 17.

all their strength for greater recognition of American artists and composers." The newspaper also stated that Edith Rockefeller McCormick, who had supported the same cause for many years, had enrolled herself as a permanent member of the Foundation. The additional financial support from McCormick enabled the group to plan the presentation of two American operas with the best casts obtainable in the following winter.²⁶

By this time Freer had collected a group of disciples, and letters of approbation for the work she and OOLF were doing began to flood the music journals. One such endorsement, chosen at random from many, proved that quite a number of the general public did indeed have a favorable opinion concerning opera in English: Music News reader Rosemond Chadwick felt that "everyone who has the interests of American music at heart should give moral support and financial help to the cause of Opera in Our Language." Chadwick expressed hope "that the cause of Opera in Our Language should soon become a grand chorus, and under the able direction of Mrs. Freer accomplish the highly worthy purpose for which it was founded."²⁷

²⁶Hackett, Music in Chicago Scrapbooks, 1921-23, undated newspaper clipping.

²⁷Peters, comp., American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks, clipping reprinted in Music News 14 (25 Aug. 1922): 20.

Other more famous names were also supportive of Freer's work: Giorgio Polacco of the Chicago opera, composer-pianist Amy Beach (1867-1944), and composer Geoffrey O'Hara (1882-1954), wrote laudatory letters. O'Hara's dramatic words not only praised Freer and OOLF, but also exalted the "language of Shakespeare, Milton, and the Declaration of Independence." Many such quotations from letters received throughout the year by the Foundation were finally published in Music News, 17 November 1922, giving subscribers information about the growing support Freer and her group were maintaining.

OOLF, meanwhile, continued to collect complete scores of new operas, planning to present the best of the works at the Studebaker Theater. Stearns was called upon to direct the performances. He and Luening together looked over more than fifty works. Orchestral scores for most of the operas were available only through rental, and there was no money for doing this prior to a scheduled production. The alternative left to the two colleagues was that of studying a piano-vocal score and imagining the orchestration. Polacco and the Chicago Opera sponsors chose two American operas to be performed during the season, as they had promised: Stearns' Snowbird and Hamilton Forrest's (1901-1979) Camille. Stearns resigned from the Foundation when his work was accepted, leaving the musical direction of future OOLF performances in Luening's hands. Now the nine

patronesses who had funded the Musical Arts Studio organized the Chicago Chamber Opera Company in August of 1922.²⁸ The plan was to perform five American operas in two series of six performances. Hackett reported the projected series in the Chicago Evening Post. He referred to the plan as "an interesting operatic experiment." Freer's name was given as chairman, Luening's as conductor, and Gilbert H. Wilson, a colleague of Luening's, was to be musical director. Hackett continued:

The operas to be given have not been definitely chosen save Cadman's "Shanewis," with which the show will be inaugurated. Others under consideration are "The Temple Dancer," Hugo; "The Legend," Breil; "Traitor Mandolin," [Clarence] Loomis, "The Snowbird," Stearns; "Daughter of the Forest," Nevin; and "Fantasy in Delft," [Henry] Gilbert.

Music News listed the same operas with the inclusion of Freer's Legend of the Piper. All subsequently received the Bispham Memorial Medal with its accompanying certificate (see Fig. 21), except for the Loomis work. Loomis's Yolanda of Cyprus was endorsed by the Foundation two years later.

Money came in slowly from potential subscribers, and the future of the series looked bleak. The company had been founded upon the co-operative artists' plan: the net proceeds above all necessary expenses were to revert to

²⁸Luening's book cites October 1922 as the beginning of the Chicago Chamber Opera, but Hackett reported its organization in the Evening Post 31 August 1922.

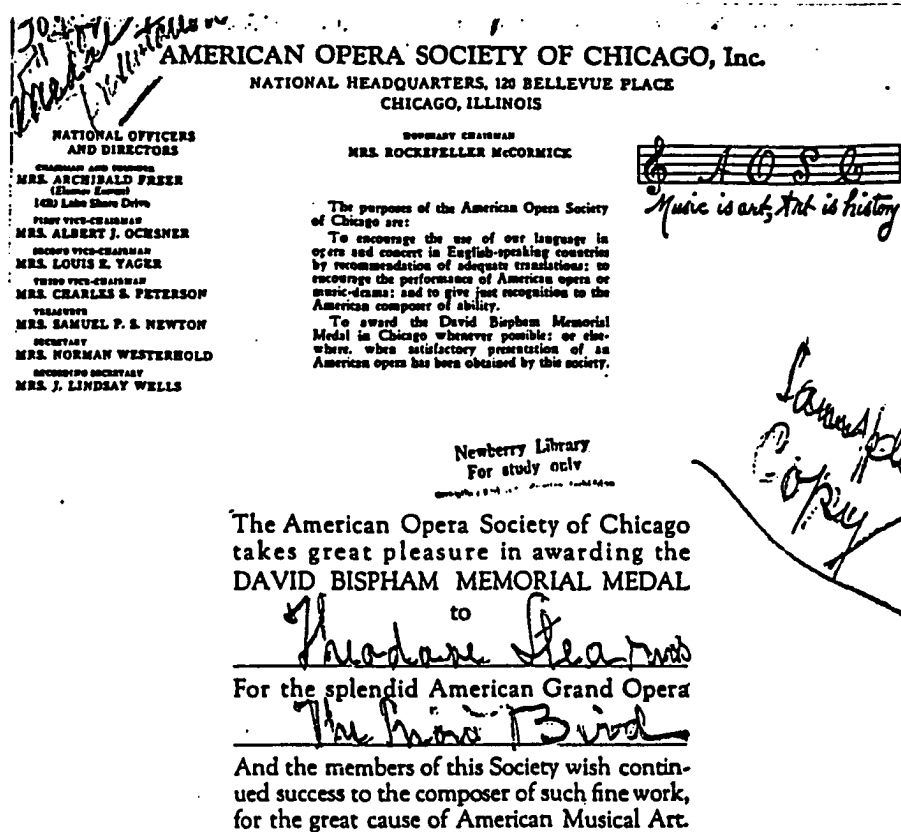


Fig. 21: Sample copy (in Freer's handwriting) of the David Bispham Memorial award certificate (American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks, Vol. 3)

members of the company, including the composers of the operas chosen. Of course the patronesses were underwriting the project, but additional money was a necessity if all concerned were to be adequately recompensed for their hard work. The initial gift would cover only the expenses of the orchestra.²⁹

Freer then suggested that the orchestra be reduced to a few instruments in order to salvage the performance. Luening and Wilson, who were arranging the details of the musical presentation, were decidedly against this, believing that such a performance would compromise the professionalism of the group and harm forever the prospect of American opera. Freer stood her ground, insisting that a reduced-forces performance was better than none at all, and the quarrel disbanded the Chicago Chamber Opera.³⁰

Luening and Wilson, with their colleague Hugh Stewart as head, then organized the Chicago Grand Opera Company, rented the Studebaker Theater, and produced Cadman's Shanewis. Music News, in the issue of 27 October 1922, announced the performance for the following week. The article quoted Stewart as emphasizing that his company "is not connected with that directed by Mrs. Archibald Freer." Stewart declared the break was caused by "dictatorial

²⁹Hackett, Scrapbooks, undated newspaper clipping.

³⁰Otto Luening recounted this event in a personal interview held 13 Dec. 1983. It is also given in his autobiography, pp. 247-49.

policy" adopted by Freer. The same issue contained a brief, unsigned article refuting a statement made in another unnamed paper (obviously the Musical Leader) that OOLF had collapsed. An explanation was given:

Some of the women who are directors of the Foundation happened also to be directors of the Chamber Opera Co, which had planned for performance of an American opera in November. For various reasons the plan as originally announced was given up, but it is said on the best of authority the idea will be taken up again shortly . . .

The Musical Leader of 5 October 1922 had a heyday with these events. A headline announced, "Chamber Opera Co. Torn By Quarrel," and a subsidiary headline told the entire story in one sentence: "Mrs. Freer, Chief Patroness, Says 7 Musicians Should Be Plenty, But Artists Disagree." Another article directly following the above story enlarged the tiff by relating other aspects of disagreement within the company ranks, and gave quotes by members of the troupe which were not at all complimentary to Freer. To save money, Freer had suggested that the artists make their own costumes at their own expense. The scenery was to be limited to nearly nothing, according to Wilson, and the final blow was that Freer insisted on holding the rehearsals in her home. "Imagine trying to rehearse with someone eternally fussing about," said one of the singers.

The review of Shanewis at the Studebaker was generally good. The Post reported that the opera was not "grand opera in the sense to which we are accustomed," but

conceded that Cadman's work was "tuneful with many pleasing tone colorings." Conductor Luening "showed that he is a man of force, and did all possible with the means at his command."³¹ Musical Leader's review in the issue following the opera's performance on 9 November stated, "We searched in vain for a delegation from the OOLF people. The performance was so good they could have been fairy godmothers without having been ashamed of the connection." Both reviews deplored the English enunciation of the singers. Hackett's final remark was "Kind words are desired, but money at the box office is essential."

The Field Secretary of OOLF wrote to the Leader a kind and tasteful letter dated 7 November 1922. The Foundation was counting, she said, on the journal's co-operation in giving wide publicity to the patriotic work being done in establishing a musical art in America. She then described the current plan devised by OOLF:

. . . we are presenting in chamber form five delightful operas in English by American composers. The performances will be given semi-monthly at the Playhouse in Chicago, beginning December 7th . . . All singers are gifted Americans with magnificent voices.

The first opera of the five was to be John Adam Hugo's (1873-1945) The Temple Dancer, which had been given at the

³¹Hackett, Scrapbooks, undated newspaper clipping.

Metropolitan in 1919.³² Following the letter, the entire charter of the Opera in Our Language Foundation and the David Bispham Memorial Fund was published, all names of national officers were given, and a new list of operas endorsed by the Foundation appeared. The letter and report, taking up an entire page of the Leader, reminded the public that OOLF was still alive.

The subsequent performance of Hugo's opera brought forth mixed reviews. The Leader of 10 December called it "a worthy amateur effort" and reported on the length of the afternoon's show, saying "there was one long speech and one short speech, and the opera itself consumed only 35 minutes. What did it all amount to after months and months of talk?" Music News of 15 December 1922 made no critical comment, but merely reported on Freer's enthusiasm for the whole venture and her promise of finer things to come. On 29 December the editor reviewed the performance favorably. He noted that at the first performance he had heard about fifteen per cent of the words, whereas at the later presentation twenty-five per cent were understood, showing a definite improvement. Much space was given over to describing the costumes for the Eastern-flavored story, and

³²Critic James Huneker (1860-1921) of the New York Times referred to this opera as "safe, sane, and soporific" in an undated clipping in the scrapbooks of the Metropolitan Opera.

to the wonderful acting and singing of Floyd Jones, a Chicago tenor, who played the leading role.

Freer, on behalf of The Opera in Our Language Foundation, announced that since many business men had requested evening performances of the American opera series, six additional presentations were to be given. She added that opera was an expensive enterprise, and therefore the Foundation had found it necessary to ask for the collaboration of the artists. The performances were being put on at a loss, but Freer assured her public that the deficit was being met.

The season (1922-23) continued with J. Lewis Browne's (1864-1933) Corsican Girl, a work which proved, Music News said, that Browne was a fine composer; Love's Sacrifice by George Chadwick, pronounced "slight but very dainty, and beautifully set musically, like a series of the rose and blue tinted groups on a Watteau fan"; a translation of Cavalleria Rusticana, and Cadman's Shanewis. OOLF was a fact, the public was accepting it as a burgeoning institution, and letters and reviews of all kinds filled the journals and newspapers.

Cavalleria, presented 2 March, was OOLF's first attempt at performing opera in translation. The work was paired with Egyptian Ballet of French composer Alexandre Luigini (1850-1906). The opera received great acclaim in all aspects. The translation by Willard G. Day was given high

praise, stage-director Charles T. Jones and conductors Leroy Wetzel and Karl Schulte were called "convincing" and "correct" by the Music News editor, and the principal singers were described individually and mostly favorably. The ballet, however, fared less well, and OOLF received a great deal of criticism for programming it. Some suburban club women wrote to Freer objecting to the costuming of the dancers. "Indecent," the letter said. Music News' comment was idealistic: "Dressing or undressing has but little to do with dancing except as it amplifies or hinders the intended picture and effect." The editor added, "nothing was in evidence except art in one of its purest and most radiant forms."³³

During the same season, the Chicago Opera presented Halévy's La Juive, translated from its original French into Italian. Letters of outrage from supporters of opera in English poured in to journal editors' desks; if translated opera was being performed in Chicago, couldn't it at least be an English translation? OOLF was being vindicated slowly but surely.

Freer's letters or editorials appeared in nearly every issue of the most prominent music journals; good translations of German art songs were still being published

³³Music News 15 (9 Mar. 1923): 24. A popular performance practice at this time was the pairing of a short opera with a ballet or suite of dances. Freer's own operas were later arranged as ballet or orchestral suites and were programmed with other ballets or chamber operas.

in Music News at her instigation, and articles for and against opera in English from other papers and periodicals were often quoted in their entirety as readers from over the country expressed their views. Early in January of 1923 Freer reported that the Juilliard Foundation would not support the American opera endeavor. A blow of this magnitude threatened the success of the organization's plans, and thereafter she began to dedicate her efforts to arranging opera performances in smaller cities. Her own Legend of the Piper would première in South Bend, Indiana, the following year (1924). A letter directed to Carl Engel at the Library of Congress showed her current thinking:

. . . I [have] a list of 9 American cities which are to give an American opera in 1924. I think our hope lies in the smaller towns; I believe the Metropolitan and Chicago Opera will only yield to outside pressure of this sort.³⁴

The Chicago Daily News radio invited Freer to give an address on 30 March 1923. Her speech, which promoted the Opera in Our Language Foundation, the McCormick-Meltzer translations, and past and future OOLF performances, began dramatically with the declaration, "There is patriotism in art, or there is no patriotism at all!"

The score of Legend of the Piper was reviewed by Music News of 6 April 1923. It was described as "a work of

³⁴Freer to Engel, 1 March 1924, Old Correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress.

notable intent and splendid result." According to the unidentified reviewer, Piper presented a new hope to the lovers of opera in English. As Chairman of the Illinois Chapter of the National Federation of Music Clubs and contributor to the organization's journal, Freer had a wonderful vehicle for her "opera in the small towns" idea. She now had a list of over 80 operas by American composers, and it had been published more than once in several journals. All state chairmen in the Federation received letters from Freer, asking that they investigate new operas within their respective borders, and search out any small opera companies as well. Wherever performing groups existed, they were to be asked to give a hearing to operas written by their own composers. She remained firm in her belief that if this system were followed, a national musical art would soon come into existence.

Freer's name was now known in musical circles throughout the country. Her picture appeared on the cover of Music News 23 August 1923. A week earlier Musical Courier had published an editorial on opera in English, praising Freer and her organization as being the only hope for the American composer, since nothing in his/her favor was being done elsewhere. The Opera in Our Language Foundation, said the (unidentified) writer, was the only place in the world where the American composer came first.

Through Freer's indefatigable letters to Music News, one of which bore praise and gratitude for that journal's support, it could be seen that it was not only music groups who were interested in her efforts. In one of her longer articles she reported on an address she had been invited to give 26 September 1923 at a meeting of "The Friends of American Indians." Here she presented the idea that in these "real Americans," interest in opera could be stimulated if each American opera company in existence would perform an opera based on Indian themes. She then proceeded to name ten such operas, including Natomah, Shanewis, The Sun God, and others less well known.³⁵ Briefly alluded to was the information that Freer had already received letters from small opera companies who had responded to her query published in the National Federation of Music Clubs Bulletin. She stated that there were ten such companies either already formed, or in the process of formation.³⁶

The years 1921-23 had been years of great activity and work that was surely "against the stream," producing tremendous controversy. The modest successes were a satisfactory beginning and a strong incentive to continue.

³⁵Music News 15 (19 October 1923): 4.

³⁶Peters, comp., American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks, Vol. 2, original typescript of entire address.

The American Opera Society of Chicago

An opera organization under the direction of William Wade Hinshaw (1867-1947), the English Opera Company, was beginning to attract attention. Organized in 1921, this group was divided into five companies which performed foreign operas using the Krehbiel translations OOLF had endorsed. By 1924, according to the Musical Leader, the English Opera Company had not presented any American operas, but had received favorable reviews for their English-language presentations. Interest in opera in English was not limited to OOLF and its Chicago supporters.

Another staunch defender of opera in the vernacular was George Eastman, founder of the Eastman School of Music. In 1923 he established an opera department at the school for the express purpose of presenting operas in translation. He chose as director-conductor Vladimir Rosing (1890-1963), an experienced singer who had been a student of Jean de Reszke (1850-1925). In a short time, Rosing built a strong opera department at the Eastman and developed a touring group called the American Opera Company. The troupe was first heard in Chicago in 1925 doing Cavalleria Rusticana and I Pagliacci in English translations. Enthusiastic OOLF representatives enlisted Rosing's support for the task of locating new operas and performing the best of them. Rosing was to be a loyal friend and valuable contributor to Freer's project.

At the beginning of 1924, in its issue of 4 January, Music News began publicizing the première performance of Freer's opera Legend of the Piper. Peabody's award-winning play was mentioned in glowing terms, and the salient sentences from the New York Times review of the 1910 production were reprinted. Musical details for the première were being ably handled by Freer's colleague Olive Maine, a professional singer who had established the Maine School of Music in South Bend, Indiana. Maine had assigned the lead roles to her best vocal students and other capable women who were available locally, and the rest of the cast would be made up of members of the Progress Club, a group specializing in the performance of music and drama.

Meanwhile, the Opera in Our Language Foundation presented an English version of Karl Goldmark's (1830-1915) Cricket on the Hearth, performing 30 December 1923 and 4 January 1924. The opera was given in Meltzer's translation, and there were favorable reviews for both the work and the singers. Critics were in general agreement that this presentation was the best OOLF had offered thus far. The great improvement in the singers' diction was said to be due to the excellent translation.

Elated with the success of the Goldmark piece, Freer pushed ahead by preparing plans for an American Music-Drama Week. Music News of 15 February 1924 displayed on its cover a new photograph of the composer and carried a

feature article entitled "A Recent Interview with Mrs. Freer." Freer offered suggestions for six programs of chamber operas to be held over the course of a week, each presenting two or three short works. This American opera extravaganza included her own Legend of the Piper on a triple bill with Hugo's Temple Dancer and Stearns's Snowbird. Other new operas endorsed by OOLF and made part of Freer's hypothetical opera week were Clarence Loomis's Yolanda of Cyprus, Ralph Lyford's Castle Agrazant, and Henry Hadley's Cleopatra's Night.

The world première of Ernest Carter's (1866-1953) The White Bird was given 8 February 1924 (see Fig. 22), directed by Charles Jones and conducted by Leroy Wetzel. In the printed program were three of Freer's previously published articles on the activities of OOLF, an article by Charles Henry Meltzer relating David Bispham's views on opera in English, and an announcement of the forthcoming première of Legend of the Piper. Carter, the program stated, was to be awarded the first David Bispham Memorial Medal on 6 March at the opera's third and final performance.

A South Bend paper featured photographs of costumed performers four days prior to the first performance of Freer's Piper (see Fig. 23). The Progress Club members



WORLD PREMIERE
"THE WHITE BIRD"

Opera in One Act (Two Scenes) by

Brian Hooker, Yale '02
Librettist

Ernest T. Carter, Princeton '88
Composer

Produced under the personal stage direction of Charles T. H. Jones

Reginald Warren, a great landlord of the period.....Ward Pound

Elinor, his wife Hazel Eden

Basil Bryce Talbot

Hugh Dwight Edrus Cook

Marian, wife to Hugh..... Laurina Olesen

John Wardwell Haydn Thomas

Nanny, nurse to Elinor Elaine De Sellem

Guest Huntress Lillian Arthur

Andrew Joseph Molengraft

Huntsmen Archie R. Rote, Watt Webber,

B. Fred Wise, Leo Landry, Clarence Ludwig, Joseph McMannus

Conductor—LEROY I. WETZEL

Complete second cast available for performance of

"THE WHITE BIRD"

Mmes. Clara Taylor, Laurina Olesen, Laura Butt; Messrs. Henry
Thompson, Marcus Nielson, B. Fred Wise and other artists

For further particulars address Mr. Ernest T. Carter, 115 East
69th Street, New York City, N. Y.

The first DAVID BISPHAM MEMORIAL MEDAL (for American
Opera) will be presented to Mr. Carter on March 6th, 1924.

The Medal was designed by Carl Hollem and executed by the
T. C. Shop, 414 Fine Arts Building.

Baldwin Piano Used

Fig. 22: Program for the première of The White Bird (Music
Division, Library of Congress)



Fig. 23: Publicity for the première of Freer's Legend of the Piper (Music Division, Library of Congress)

performed to excellent reviews on 18 February, director Maine receiving a great share of the praise.³⁷ As a "smaller city," South Bend provided the first experiment in Freer's plan of action for American opera performances. Through the NFMC, she was able to utilize her musical colleagues throughout the country who as teachers and/or performers provided what was needed on an amateur basis. Often, like Maine, these women had been professional performers before marriage, and kept up their skills by contributing their talents to performances presented by local groups.

The Opera in Our Language Foundation and the David Bispham Memorial Fund, on 7 April 1924, by unanimous vote of the board and members, were incorporated into the American Opera Society of Chicago, National (see Fig. 24). This was to become one chapter of a vast state-by-state membership, devoted to performances of opera in English, whether foreign operas in translation or new operas by Americans. The charter of the new organization was more precisely stated than that of the original group. The purposes were:

To encourage the use of our language in opera and concerts in English-speaking countries by recommendation of adequate translations; to encourage the performance of American opera or

³⁷As the news photos show, the leading male roles were sung by women. At this writing, nothing is known of either the Progress Club or the Maine School of Music.

Reincorporation May 1924

Opera in Our Language Foundation
David Bispham Memorial Fund
into American Opera Society of Chicago

DAVID BISPHAM MEMORIAL FUND, Inc. x
 MRS. ROCKEFELLER McCORMICK, Treasurer
 1800 LAKE SHORE DRIVE CHICAGO, ILL.

No. 299

CHICAGO, ILL.

TO THE ORDER OF

Income of the
Opera in Our Language Foundation
May 1924

TO LAKE SHORE TRUST AND SAVINGS BANK
 2-302 CHICAGO, ILL. 2-302

May 1924
Chicago, Ill.
1800 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Ill.
May 1924
Opera in Our Language Foundation

In May 1924, the
Opera in Our Language Foundation, Inc. (May 1921)
David Bispham Memorial Fund, Inc. (March 1922)
were incorporated into the
(retaining all purposes)
American Opera Society of Chicago
(National)

Fig. 24: The original draft, in Freer's hand, showing the incorporation of the Opera in Our Language Foundation and the David Bispham Memorial Award into the American Opera Society of Chicago, National (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2, Newberry Library).

music-drama; and to give just recognition to the American composers of ability.³⁸

An important corollary to the above goals stated that the Bispham Medal would be awarded in Chicago whenever possible, and elsewhere only when satisfactory information of an American opera had been obtained by the Society. These precepts appeared on every official document signed by the officers of AOSC. The new Society was officially announced first by the Musical Leader on 3 July 1924. The article, on the editorial page, admitted that this was a step in the right direction, for "the old name was much too cumbersome." With unforgivable inaccuracy, the article then quoted the poorly stated goals from the OOLF charter, and expressed an opinion of the Bispham Medal award in a satirical manner:

If a scheme could be devised whereby something of more material value than medals were bestowed, the society would then be of practical benefit to the native writer. Medals do not buy bread and butter, and in the case of need would be of scant assistance.

The editorial continued by saying that the Society must be run on a different basis from that of last season "when a COMPOSER was obliged to pay for the doubtful privilege of having his work presented by an inferior company, an inadequate orchestra, and makeshift staging and scenery."

Freer's letters to Music News, her favorite supporting agent, continued throughout the spring and summer. Editor

³⁸Peters, comp., American Opera Society of Chicago Scrapbooks.

Watt upheld his position by including as many articles as possible on opera in English. A note from Freer to the editor 11 April 1924, asked a rhetorical question obviously meant for the Chicago Civic Opera, Samuel Insull's new organization which had risen from the ashes of Mary Garden's extravagant disaster:

If a civic opera company through tax exemption of 10% on a million dollars takes from the government so large a sum, how can it continue to be based upon foreign languages and music . . . ?

In the middle of the controversy, a radio broadcast of 13 May (station WGN) presented a group of Freer's songs. Emil Eyer, tenor, with staff accompanist Dean Remick, performed "Sweet and Twenty," "I Fear Thy Kisses," and "The Old Boatman." Yet another performance occurred 20 June: Glenn Dillard Gunn conducted an orchestra concert which featured Freer's "The Wood Peewee," arranged for women's voices, "Stanzas on Freedom," for men's voices, and the two solo songs "The Boat is Chafing" and "Daughter of Egypt" from Op. 16. The vocal quartets had received favorable comments at the time of their publication in 1913: "all admirably adapted to the special times and places they are intended to adorn," wrote Watt of Music News.³⁹ In this program the songs of Op. 16 were heard for the first time sung with orchestra; neither the singer nor the songs were reviewed.

³⁹Charles Watt, ed., "Freer Songs," Music News 5 (10 October 1913): 79.

In August, prior to the opening of the new opera season, Music News published statements on the American music situation by American composers Charles Wakefield Cadman and Victor Herbert. Cadman wrote:

He [the American composer] must shake off the shackles of a too apparent continental influence and express himself sincerely and boldly, even though his expression may be found crude for a few decades.

Herbert expressed the opinion that there was no incentive for anyone to write an opera in English. Obviously recalling the ill-fated production of Natomah in 1911 at the Metropolitan, he continued:

The composer would be at the mercy of conditions unfavorable to an adequate presentation. The stage manager would be an Italian or some other foreigner unable to cope with the demands of an American libretto, and the composer would not be allowed to conduct his own work.⁴⁰

Another of Freer's articles in Music News described how Louis XIV, upon hearing of the works of William Shakespeare, immediately ordered them for the French libraries, sending out for the best translators who could bring this poet to the people. Here indeed was "action of the best kind, as opposed to that of Americans who sit passively by, listening to opera in a language they don't understand. Art is the expression of the life and thoughts of a people, hence, Art is history. Suppress one and you suppress the other." Using this dramatic example to close

⁴⁰Music News 16 (1 August 1924): 26.

her argument, Freer then suggested the establishment of a Fine Arts Chairman in the English-speaking Union.⁴¹

Music critic Olin Downes (1886-1955), who travelled to Salzburg for the Second Chamber Music Festival, wrote that no American compositions were heard there. Music News of 7 November duly printed an editorial with Downes's information, and added, "If American compositions are not heard in our own country, how can we expect other countries to perform them?" The same issue of Music News reported that Pagliacci had been performed in English in Rockford, Illinois. The local Mendelssohn Club had sponsored the successful production. No translator's name was given, nor were any performers listed. Other small but competent music groups in the nearby towns of the Midwest continued to add performances of opera in English to the AOSC's growing list.

At a bazaar held by the women of AOSC, bumper stickers were issued: "Ask for opera in English." The bazaar was criticized by the Musical Leader as being far too social and useless an event to bring in the vast amount of money needed to launch a successful opera season. Obviously every possible idea to bring in funds was being attempted; Freer seemed willing to accept any suggestions from her

⁴¹Music News, 16 (29 August 1924): 4, original typewritten copy in the AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2.

colleagues for activities that would reach the entire public, not only opera-lovers.

At the Fortnightly Club, 1 December 1924, a benefit performance was given in honor of Edith McCormick. The program included several operatic arias sung in Meltzer's English translations, and soprano Dorothy Talbot sang five of Freer's songs: "She is not Fair" and "I Have Done" from Op. 15, "Sweet and Twenty," Op. 25, "The Shepherdess," and "The Dancers" (see Fig. 25).

The following June (1925) Legend of the Piper was given at Central Theater in Chicago, with The Music Robber of Isaac van Grove. Glenn Dillard Gunn conducted, and the reviews of Freer's work were generally favorable. DeVries wrote in the Evening American:

Mrs. Freer wisely refrained from overloading her orchestral palette.--she preserved the childlike simplicity of conception, the fluid and transparent melodic line, the easy rhythm needed, adequately to reflect the spirit of the tale, and we congratulate her upon a very felicitous first attempt at this difficult art of writing for the theater.⁴²

The American Opera Society of Chicago, National, was officially incorporated by the state government 25 November 1925. No longer a fledgling organization operated by a small group of determined women, the AOSC was now an established chapter of a more authoritative agency. Re-

⁴²Hermann DeVries, Chicago Evening American, re-printed in Music News, 17(19 June 1925): 22.

In honor of Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick

PROGRAM

American Opera Society of Chicago, Inc.
120 Bellevue Place

December first, 1924, at three p. m.

Recitation: PROLOGUE FROM PAGLIACCI	<i>Leoncavallo</i>
JOHN McMAHILL, JR.	
ARIA "CANIO" (PAGLIACCI)	
EMIL EYER	
ARIA "MICAELA" (Carmen)	<i>Bizet</i>
DOROTHY TALBOT	
PRELUDE	<i>Chopin</i>
THE WHITE PEACOCK	<i>Chas. Griffes</i>
SERENADE	<i>Strauss-Beach</i>
WINIFRED LAMB	
BIRD BALLAD (Pagliacci)	
DOROTHY TALBOT	
ARIA "TOREADOR" (Carmen)	
HERBERT GOULD	
AMERICAN SONGS (by request)	<i>Freer</i>
She is not fair to outward view	
I have done, put by the Lute	
Sweet and Twenty	
The Shepherdess	
The Dancers	
DOROTHY TALBOT	
SEGUIDILLA	<i>Albeniz</i>
DANSE DE LA POUPÉE	<i>Debussy</i>
DANSE RITUELLE DU FEU	<i>de Falla</i>
WINIFRED LAMB	
At the Piano—ESTHER THOMAN	
The English translations used are from the <i>Edith Rockefeller McCormick Edition</i> by Charles Henry Meltzer	

Fig. 25: AOSC program 1 December 1924 (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, Newberry Library).

organization within the Chicago division created committees for every aspect of the operation, including a historical chairman in charge of a group to file letters, programs, and reviews.⁴³

In the midst of the relentless work for AOSC, Freer was composing once more. Her second chamber opera, Massimiliano, The Court Jester was performed 18 January 1926 at Lincoln, Nebraska, under the direction of Maude Gutzmer, head of the local NFMC chapter. The librettist for this dramatic story was Elia Peattie, the poet and Fortnightly Club member who had been a friend of Freer's since her early days in that organization.⁴⁴ Freer incorporated into the opera her unpublished song "To Love, the Soft and Blooming Child" from Op. 15, as a solo for Lucrezia, the leading female character. A month after the Lincoln performance, Massimiliano was produced by the Philadelphia Music Club. Fifteen hundred were in the audience for the performance at the Bellevue Stratford 18 February 1926.⁴⁵ The part of the score that attracted most

⁴³Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2.

⁴⁴Peattie had retired to Tryon, North Carolina, and wrote to Freer upon the publication of Massimiliano: "Dearest Eleanor, It was a fine, proud moment when our tragic jester arrived, his name linked to yours and mine. . . . I wish I were with you this morning in your beautiful music room listening to Massimiliano's song. . . . Who knows but some day we will sit together and hear a great voice in it?"

⁴⁵Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2, unidentified clipping.

attention was the Jester's "Serenade," published later in a separate solo edition.

Two Centuries of American Musical Composition, a souvenir booklet commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, was published by Theodore Presser Co. in 1926. Its sixty-four pages included 532 photographs of eminent composers, most born in America, others of European birth but living in America at the time and contributing to the American musical scene. Freer's photograph was among them (see Fig. 26).

March 1926 was an exciting month for Illinois opera composers. On the ninth, the AOSC presented Clarence Gustlin in a lecture-recital on Cadman's Witch of Salem. Gustlin was a pianist and singer who, according to the splendid review in Music News, was touring the country giving musical lectures on new operas by Americans. His performance was pronounced "expert and sensitive," and the opera "outstandingly beautiful."⁴⁶ The audience at the Fortnightly Club included Nelle Richmond Eberhart (1871-1944), who had been Cadman's librettist. She was "one of the eager ones who congratulated Mr. Gustlin on what he did." After the presentation, Freer awarded eight David Bispham Memorial Medals on behalf of the AOSC. The recipients were Henry Purmort Eames (1872-1950) for

⁴⁶Music News 18 (19 March 1926):36, the clipping preserved in ASOC Scrapbooks, Vol. 3.



Fig. 26: Page 26 of the Presser Sesquicentennial booklet (1926) with Freer's photograph among other composers.

Priscilla; Clarence Loomis (1889-1965) for Yolanda of Cyprus; William Lester (1889-1956) for Manabozo, which was one of a trilogy; Charles Carlson for Phelias; S.W. Harwell for Bella Donna; and Jane van Etten Andrews for Guido Ferranti. Freer made the awards herself, and after congratulating the composers, hesitated and said modestly, "The board insisted that Yours Truly be included, and so I give myself a medal." Freer's award, of course, was for Legend of the Piper, and her announcement was greeted with much applause from the audience who had gathered at the Society's headquarters for the presentation ceremonies (see Fig. 27).

At this time, notices for the Lucy Gates Opera Company, a troupe devoted to performing opera in English, appeared with continuing frequency in music journals and newspapers. The group used the Meltzer-McCormick translations on OOLF's recommendation, said Gates in a laudatory letter to Freer. She praised Freer for her perseverance in the long fight for opera in English, and assured her continued support and best efforts in performance.⁴⁷ Results of the AOSC's long and often thankless struggle were continuing to reveal themselves in the number of small "opera in English" companies springing up and in the increasing use of the Meltzer translations.

⁴⁷Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2, letter from Gates to Freer, 13 July 1926.



*(right)
 Clarence Loomis, Wm. Lester, Hamilton Forrest, Jane Van Etten Andrews, Henry Purmort Eames,
 Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick, Chas. Frederick Carlson, S. W. Harwill, H. W. Harwill*

Fig. 27: Photograph of Freer presenting the David Bispham Memorial Medal. Left to right: Clarence Loomis, William Lester, Hamilton Forrest, Jane Van Etten Andrews, Henry Purmort Eames, Edith McCormick, Charles Carlson, Freer, S. W. Harwill. 9 March 1926 (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 3, Newberry Library)

On 30 October 1926, the AOSC received a letter from Freer, directed to the board members and all active and sustaining members. The letter began with a quote she had used in several of her published articles:

When Marshal Foch was asked to what he attributed his success, he answered: "Action and Tenacity." Since the inception of this organization, May 1921, we have adhered to these precepts, and the result has been unequalled by any other Society.

Then followed a list of six contributions that the Society had made since its founding:

(1) The necessity of presenting opera in English has been brought to the attention of the public.

(2) The Edith Rockefeller McCormick Edition of foreign opera libretto translations by Charles Henry Meltzer has been achieved.

(3) A complete field of Native Opera has been found, which knowledge will be perpetuated . . .

(4) We have given twelve educational performances of Opera, employing entirely Americans, American operas, and foreign operas in our language . . .

(5) We have brought to the attention of the public the necessity of GIVING PRESTIGE TO OUR FINE ARTS AND OUR ARTISTS . . .

(6) . . . we have founded and have given to twenty-five American Composers of Opera the David Bispham Memorial Medal.

The closing paragraph said:

With such work already accomplished, I feel no compunctions of conscience--even as your Chairman and Founder--in now offering my resignation, after five years of such arduous labors.⁴⁸

Freer was sixty-two. She had accomplished much; she would create more.

⁴⁸Peters, comp,. AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, original typewritten letter of resignation from Freer to the AOSC.

CHAPTER V

COMPOSER AND NATIONALIST: 1927-42

The Chamber Operas

From 1926-29, in a period of remarkable productivity, Freer wrote seven more short operas: The Chilkoot Maiden, Op. 32; A Christmas Tale, Op. 33; A Legend of Spain, Op. 35; Masque of Pandora, Op. 36; Preciosa, or The Spanish Student, Op. 37; Joan of Arc, Op. 38; and Frithiof, Op. 40.¹ Each revealed another dimension of the composer's creative development. Although only one of them used an American subject, four were inspired by American authors.

The Chilkoot Maiden, a tale of Alaska inspired by J. J. Underwood's An Empire in the Making,² was Freer's initial attempt at writing her own libretto. For A Christmas Tale, she adapted Barrett Clark's translated version of Maurice Bouchor's play, the original of which had been produced at

¹Although Freer's manuscript and her own first privately published edition of Frithiof (1929) bear no opus number, the score published by Kaun is numbered Op. 40. A subsequent group of nine songs published in 1935 by National Music Co. are also numbered Op. 40.

²New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1913.

the Comédie Française in 1895.³ Washington Irving's Tales of the Alhambra provided her with material for the libretto of A Legend of Spain, while both Preciosa and Masque of Pandora were Freer's own adaptations of well-known works by Longfellow. These operas include a number of men's and women's trios and quartets, as well as mixed ensembles in crowd scenes. Preciosa seems not to have been performed in its entirety, even in concert version, though solo and ensemble sections of it were heard in special programs.⁴ Freer also wrote her own libretti for Joan of Arc and Frithiof, the two later operas.

Between A Christmas Tale and A Legend of Spain, Freer composed a dramatic vocal monologue, "Ishtar's Song," Op. 34. According to Musicians' Magazine of 15 April 1927, "Ishtar's Song" received a number of performances as part of the "entertainment for the annual Golf Show at the Hotel Sherman." The daily presentation included a dancer who further interpreted the sung text. The subject of this 84-measure composition is drawn from the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, relating the tale of Tammuz and Ishtar.⁵ Freer

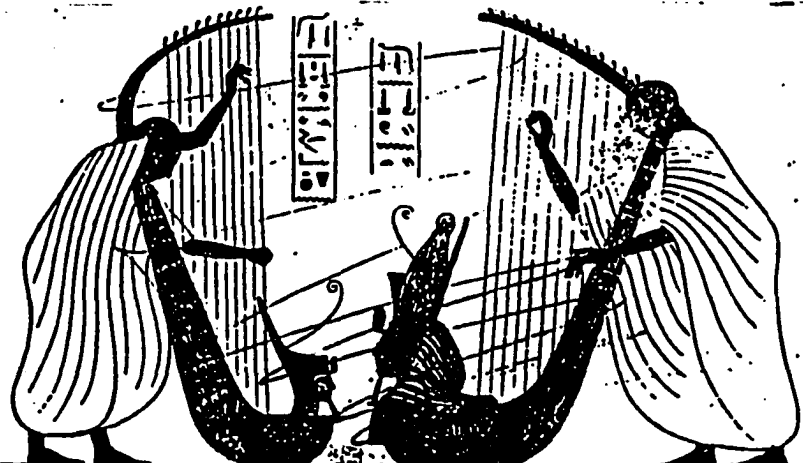
³Edward Ellsworth Hipsher, American Opera and Its Composers (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1934), p. 201.

⁴Hipsher, op. cit., p. 201.

⁵Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love and war, caused the death of her lover Tammuz and descended to the underworld to bring him back. At each of seven gates, she was required to remove one piece of clothing, until she stood naked before the Supreme Goddess.

devised her own text for the song, and may have created the work with the idea of using a dancer or a tableau of costumed characters as visual aids; an Egyptian drawing is attached to the original manuscript to show the type of costume required. The song is in the form of a dramatic speech that Ishtar might have made to her lover immediately after his return to life. The piano imitates the chordal strumming of a lyre or harp, creating the effect of an ancient bard reciting an epic poem to his own accompaniment (see Fig. 28).

A recital of Freer's music, including some excerpts from the chamber operas, was presented at Lyon and Healy Hall on 4 March 1927. The artists were Constance Eberhardt, soprano; Edwin Kemp, tenor; and Betty Baker, pianist. The program included the settings of two texts written by Edith Rockefeller McCormick, "How Can We Know?" and "I Write Not to Thee, Dearest," from Op. 29; "Cherry Ripe" from Op. 4, "Arachne," "Golden Eyes," "When is Life's Youth?," and "The Shepherdess." Kemp also sang the Jester's "Serenade" from Massimiliano, and joined Eberhardt for a duet from The Chilkoot Maiden. Pianist Baker played the four "Modern Dances" Op. 32, from the same opera's dance hall scene. In Musicians' Magazine the following week, reviewer H. P. E. praised the artists, and said of Freer's songs:



Ishtar's Song. *Elephant Everest Freer. op. 34.*

Andante *Ishtar*

Senipre à la Harpe *Oh, Tam-muz let us*

live and love, nor curb this life-pow-er cult: I'm

Fig. 28: "Ishtar's Song," m. 1-6, original manuscript
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

Songs of Mrs. Freer are always the product of a musicianly mind. For the most part they are hard to sing well, demanding much the same musicianship of the part of the interpreters as Mrs. Freer puts into them.

Musical Courier of 7 March 1927 reported that the recital was sung before a capacity audience, and said of the Freer works, "On paper her songs have problems which not every singer has the disposition to conquer."⁶

Several hundred members of AOSC enjoyed a spring luncheon meeting 26 April 1927, held for the benefit of the Society. Besides the charter members Freer, Ochsner, Yager, and McCormick, individuals of prominence in music were present at the speakers' table: critics Karleton Hackett and Glenn Dillard Gunn, composers John Alden Carpenter and Edgar Stillman Kelley (1857-1944), and the editor of Music News Charles Watt. The meeting opened with a performance of the "Prologue" from Pagliacci, sung in English by Frank Bennett, a Chicago baritone; appropriately, Bennett used a Meltzer translation. Speeches made by the guests included praise for the productions Witch of Salem by Cadman, and The King's Henchman by Deems Taylor, a recent Bispham Medal winner. Freer did not speak, but placed by each guest's plate a

⁶This recital is mentioned in Arlouine Wu, Constance Eberhardt: A Musical Career in the Time of Cadman (National Opera Association Monograph Series Vol. 4, 1983), p. 91. Eberhardt was the daughter of Cadman's librettist, Nelle Richmond Eberhardt. Wu does not name the works presented in the program.

copy of a cartoon by John McCutcheon of the Tribune, depicting irate Parisians and Viennese reacting intensely after being told that all operas given in those cities would be performed in English (see Fig. 29).

In the summer of 1927, a Freer Music Fund was established by the Music News "to give adequate production of the musical works of Eleanor Everest Freer."⁷ Freer accepted on the condition that no funds accrue to her, only to her younger composer colleagues. The directorate for the Fund, chosen by the composer herself, included Frederick Stock of the Chicago Orchestra, Edith Rockefeller McCormick, and thirty other prominent Chicago musicians.

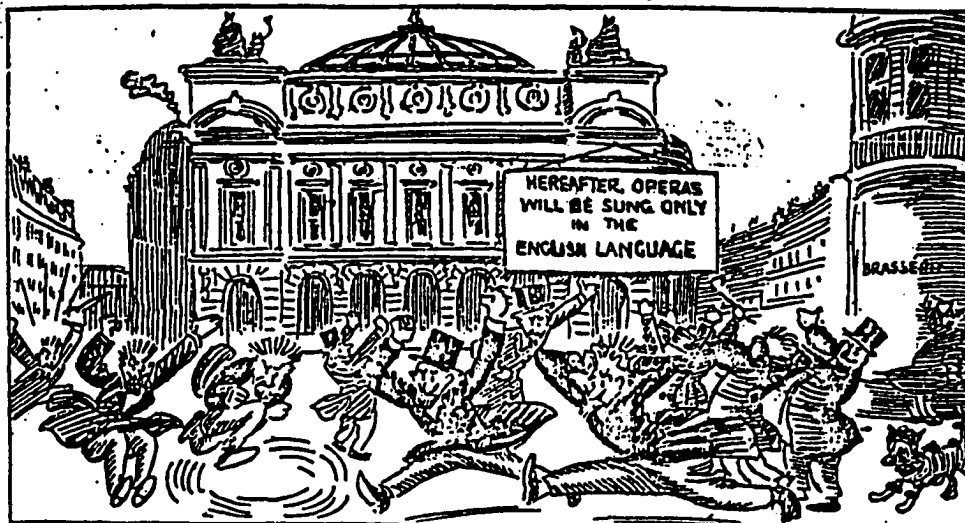
The new opera Legend of Spain was announced by the journals in late August. A Music News reviewer praised the score, saying the opera was "good theater from cover to cover." "The style," the critic said, "is direct, the drama intriguing, the melodies of the sort that will be remembered by the audience."⁸ There were modern effects, according to the article, that were "not achieved by a tramp of fifths and ninths, but by a sincere and musicianly treatment of themes in the current idiom." Performances were planned for Philadelphia, South Bend, Chicago, and Seattle. Meanwhile, the three Freer-McCormick songs were sung over radio station WGN without attracting attention.

⁷Music News 19 (29 July 1927): editorial page.

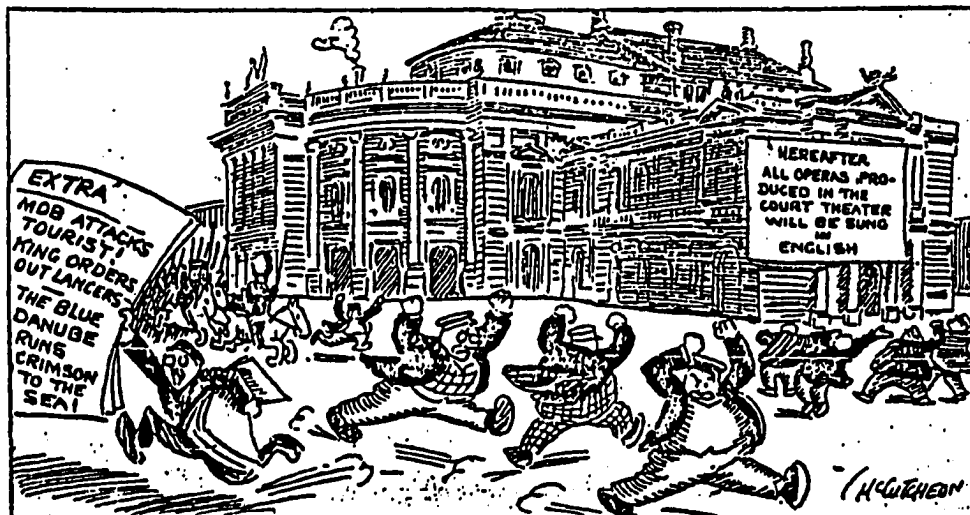
⁸D. C. W., Music News 19 (26 Aug. 1927): 4.

GRAND OPERA IN ENGLISH.

(Copyright 1912: By John T. McCutcheon.)



Wouldn't the Parisians be mad if they had to listen to operas in a foreign tongue? What a shrugging of shoulders there would be!



And wouldn't the good citizens of Vienna, and Berlin, and Rome rise in thunderous wrath if their operas were produced only in English?

Fig. 29: Cartoons by McCutcheon of the Chicago Tribune (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 3)

The report of that performance, without comment, concluded the review of Legend of Spain.

Another important event in 1927 was the publication by Freer's poet friend Agnes Greene Foster of her biography, Eleanor Everest Freer, Patriot, and Her Colleagues. The book was reviewed favorably in Music News of 25 November, and the reviewer took the opportunity to announce a coming performance of Massimiliano at the Olive Maine School of Opera in South Bend.⁹ The subsequent presentation elicited the following review:

The score flows smoothly, intensifying the dramatic effect of the libretto. The harmonization is modern in the best sense, varied, colorful, at times startling, but never far-fetched.¹⁰

The opera season of 1928-29 was an important one for the American Opera Society of Chicago. Vladimir Rosing, artistic director of the American Opera Company, was bringing his troupe to Chicago and the AOSC was sponsoring a long series of performances. The company moved into the Erlanger Theater, and prepared for eighteen presentations from 15-27 October 1928. The repertoire, performed in English according to the Eastman-Rosing plan of 1923, included Marriage of Figaro, Martha, Pagliacci and Legend

⁹Of interest in this article is the information that two pianos would be used for accompaniment. The original manuscript and the published version of Massimiliano are in standard vocal score format; no two-piano score is mentioned elsewhere.

¹⁰Music News 19 (2 December 1927): 20.

of the Piper, Faust, Madama Butterfly, and Carmen. Cartoonist McCutcheon again noted the event with a drawing showing Uncle Sam conducting a quartet of singers--Amity, Peace, Parity, and Security (see Fig. 30).

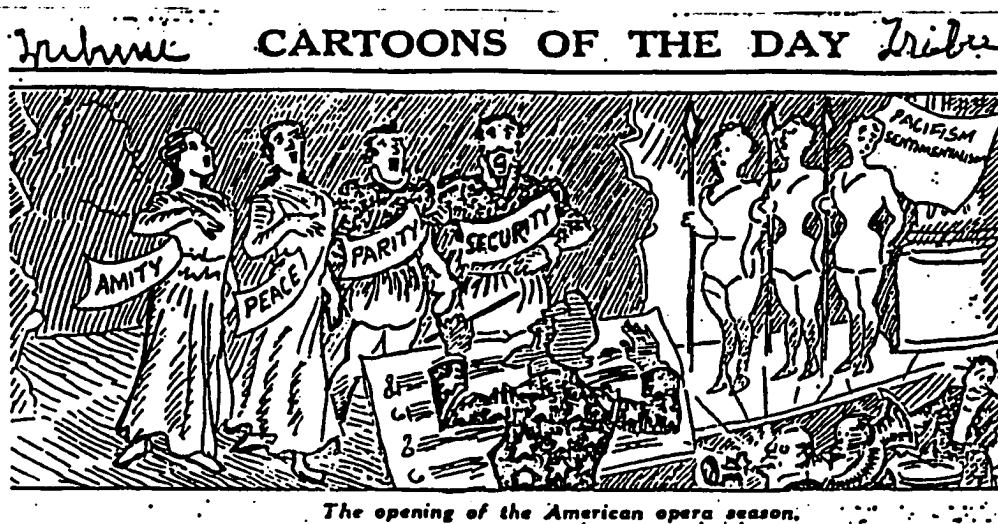


Fig. 30: McCutcheon cartoon satirizing the opening of the American Opera season (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

The Pagliacci-Piper pair was performed four times to reasonably good reviews. Director Rosing and conductor Frank St. Leger were lauded for their careful and tasteful work by critic Albert Goldberg in Musical Courier of 31 October. About Piper, Goldberg wrote:

The little opera provided a pleasant is [if] somewhat confusing forty-five minutes. The twenty-three characters . . . worked havoc to the continuity. At one point there was a brief love-scene, but the

relation it bore to the business in hand remained a mystery.¹¹

The critic used the phrases "kaleidoscopic scene," "fragmentary," "not unreminiscent of Puccini," and "economy and taste" to describe the music. In the Tribune, Glenn Dillard Gunn called the little opera "a charming fragment made up of charming fragments."¹² The American Opera Company performed Piper and the other operas in their repertoire in cities throughout the United States and Canada.¹³ Brooklyn, New York, saw Piper on 12 December 1928. The following day, a critic for The Trend wrote glowingly of the work, saying:

Legend of the Piper will stand very near the top when we take account of the list of operas by American writers. The music has exquisite charm . . . the point I wish to emphasize is the taking up of the listener as if he were an actor in the music drama.

This unidentified review was quoted in an eight-page brochure on Freer and her works, undated, published by the

¹¹The love affair between Barbara, Jacobus's daughter, and Michael the Sword-eater, which is not developed until Act 2 of Peabody's play, probably elicited this comment from the reviewer. Since Freer's setting is of the first act only, these two characters serve no real purpose in the opera's story line.

¹²AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, undated newspaper clipping.

¹³Vol. 4 of the AOSC scrapbooks lists the following performances: 20, 23, and 25 October in Chicago, 12 December in Brooklyn, N.Y., 15 December in Boston, 8 January 1929 in Buffalo, 22 January in Toronto, and 31 January in Montreal.

American Rental Library of Chicago.¹⁴ It was apparently the first in a projected series of brochures on American composers and their works. The firm was planning to publish six operas by Freer, and five of them were listed: Legend of the Piper, Massimiliano, and The Chilkoot Maiden had already appeared; Legend of Spain and A Christmas Tale were to appear 31 August and 31 September respectively. The sixth opera, announced for early autumn or winter, was A Masque of Pandora, Op. 36.¹⁵ The last page of the brochure, which listed earlier publications of Freer songs, informed the public that manuscript orchestrations for all works were available for rental. The brochure must have been circulated in the late spring or early summer of 1927, since the review for Legend of Spain, quoted above, appeared in late August.

Freer was continuing her research on American operas, as a letter to critic and writer Edward C. Moore illustrates:

In looking over my list of some hundred operas, I find but sixteen on subjects indigenous to our soil, and of this number but nine on American-Indian subjects. The rest are on native, but not Indian stories or books.

Of the remaining eighty-five, the operas are

¹⁴A copy of this brochure is among the Freer manuscripts at the Music Division of the Library of Congress.

¹⁵Hipsher (op. cit., p. 201) refers to this opera as being "lately completed." The work was published in 1934.

so international in subject that they cause astonishment.¹⁶

There followed a list of operas on American subjects, classified into Indian and non-Indian topics. The letter was written in answer to an article Moore had written for the Chicago Tribune on the subject of native American opera.

After the success of Rosing's second American Opera Company tour, the director declared that the group was no longer an experiment but an institution. The company's slogan was "music drama in the language of its audience." As of 1927 the performing unit had been permanently established, only American performers were being used, and the hope was that this group would develop into a National Grand Opera Company.

The 1929-30 season again promised some popular operas from the preceding year, such as Carmen, Faust, and Butterfly, and the première of Yolanda of Cyprus by Chicagoan Clarence Loomis, who had been a Bispham medal winner three years earlier. Loomis's work was given a pre-season promotion by its sponsors, the AOSC, at the Illinois Women's Athletic Club 3 October. After describing the opera, president Mrs. Waller Borden introduced soprano Corrine Thompson and pianist Harold Whittle, who presented

¹⁶Freer to Moore, 13 May 1928, typewritten copy, AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4.

a group of Freer's songs. Both performers were prominent in Chicago professional musical circles; Whittle worked frequently in London with touring singers and vocal teachers. As the program was to honor Chicago poets as well as composers, Freer had chosen some of her newer songs using texts by colleagues in the Society. The first of these, "Nights o' Spring," Op. 29, no. 1, was a setting of a poem by Bertha Ochsner, whose name would be remembered as one of the founders of the original OOLF. Ochsner's poem was filled with the imagery of elfin dances and shimmering glow-worms in "the laugh-away nights o' spring." Freer's setting provided a background of light and rapid arpeggios in the accompaniment, in uneven rhythmic groups of five or seven (see Fig. 31).

Two other songs performed from Op. 29 were the settings of McCormick's love poems sung by Constance Eberhardt two years before. For each of these introspective verses Freer used either repeated block chords or arpeggios in the piano accompaniment, forming a simple background to emphasize the poetic meaning in the melodic line. This technique dealt creatively with the sometimes uneven scan of the poetry and gave the music her own unique signature (see Fig. 32). The often-performed song from Op. 5, "The Shepherdess," completed the group. Thompson also added an aria from the opera A Christmas Tale, which had been published a year

The Nights o' Spring

Words by
BERTHA OCHSNER

Music by
ELEANOR EVEREST FREER
Op. 29. No. 1.

Lento ma non troppo
con molto sentimento

Voice

way with the light of gar - ish day, And the

gau - dy sun of la - bor's fray

None of you work, and

Fig. 31: Freer's setting of Bertha Ochsner's
"The Nights o' Spring," m. 1-10
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

I write not to Thee, Dearest,
(High voice)

Edith Rockefeller McCormick *Cleora Ernest Freer*
Opus 29, No. 5

Andante

I write not to Thee, dear-est, I

write to what thou art, for the brightness of thy face, dear-est,

Blinds thee from my heart. I write not of thee, dear-est, I

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Fig. 32: Freer's setting of McCormick's "I Write Not to Thee, Dearest," m. 1-6, original manuscript
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

earlier but not yet performed. The subsequent Bulletin of the Athletic Club praised Thompson's voice as "clear and beautiful, Whittle's playing as "splendid," and the music as "delicate" and "charming."¹⁷

The performance of Yolanda of Cyprus at the Majestic Theater was "spectacular," according to the American Music Journal of 19 October 1929. It had also been a spectacular social occasion, according to the Journal, as Governor and Mrs. Louis Emmerson were in attendance, with their guest the Maharajah of Kapurthala providing exotic color and special excitement for the boxholders. Additional Bispham medal winners were announced: Pietro Floridia (1860-1932) for Paoletta, Mary Carr Moore (1873-1957) for The Cost of Empire (Narcissa), Charles S. Skilton (1868-1941) for Kalopin, and Karl Schmidt (1864-1950) for Lady of the Lake. Earlier awards had been made to Walter Damrosch (1862-1950) for Cyrano de Bergerac, Wesley LaViolette (1894-1978) for Shylock, and Albert Bimboni (1882-1960) for Winona. Moore's award was given in California by Lulu Sanford Tefft, who had informed Freer of the opera while in Chicago promoting American music. Tefft was a friend of Moore and

¹⁷Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 2., undated clipping from the Illinois Women's Athletic Club Bulletin.

of Cadman, and was a champion of American opera.¹⁸

A gossip column called "Chicago Times" written by a reporter identified as "Lorgnette" presented the following surveys on the "opera in English" question:

Opera in English deceives neither the naked ear nor the naked eye. It begins to look as if George Eastman would put an opera box as well as a camera in every American home . . .

Lorgnette spared no one:

Chauncey McCormick, Chicago's best-dressed man, has seen and heard nearly 600 performances of Faust but never knew till last night that the child was killed by its mother.

And a final comment:

Col. George Taylor Langhorne, who has heard opera in all corners of the globe, [says] "Opera is always opera, whether it's sung in English or Sanskrit."¹⁹

Performances of Freer's works, including several of the operas in concert form, took place frequently between 1927 and 1940. Many of the original printed programs collected in the American Opera Society's Scrapbooks are identified by the day of the month only, without noting the year. One such program announced a "Gala Concert, all Chicago Artists" at the Blackstone Theater (Chicago) on 12 April.

¹⁸Lulu Sanford Tefft was Chairman of "Musical Americanization" in the Cadman Creative Club. She was the author of Little, Intimate Stories of Charles Wakefield Cadman (Hollywood, Calif.: David Graham Fischer Corp., 1926). Tefft's connection with Freer is mentioned in Catherine P. Smith, Mary Carr Moore (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1987).

¹⁹Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, unidentified newspaper clipping dated 15 October 1929.

The performance consisted of a concert version of Massimiliano, with the Women's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago under the direction of Leroy Wetzel. Through the use of a narrator, who at this performance was Willard Rhodes, the unstaged presentation could achieve continuity. Since the opera was scored to include a chorus of Venetian citizens, and no singing group was credited in the program, Rhodes and Freer may have arranged a narration to fill in the gaps created by this missing element.

Joan of Arc was modelled after a film starring the French actress Simone Genevois. In her manuscript, Freer placed cut-out photographs of Genevois in costume, along with pictures showing other film characters in the dress of the period. Joan's major aria, "Farewell, Ye Mountains," was the high point of the work, a dramatic cry of the young girl who had already determined to leave her family, defeat the English, and crown the French king at Rheims. The Kaun Publishing Company advanced the publication date of Joan of Arc so the score could be sent as a tribute to the city of Orleans. The French citizens there were planning a series of festivals May 5-20, to celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of their deliverance by Saint Joan.²⁰ According to Hipsher, Joan of Arc was heard over the radio 5 May 1929, and was subsequently presented in a concert version in Chicago 3 December 1929 by the Junior Friends of

²⁰Music News 21 (11 January 1929): 21.

Art.²¹ The young actors and singers who took part in the production were not reviewed.

Frithiof had been published by the Kaun Company late in 1928, and announced in an advertisement in Music News of 28 December (see Fig. 33). The year of publication given on the printed copy is 1929. The publishers' announcement hailed Freer as "the Mount Everest of American opera," and "the feminine Verdi." Music News of 1 February 1929 reported that parts of Frithiof had been sung the preceding Sunday at Trinity Church Parish House. The names of four female singers were given as participants in what was obviously a trial run, plus the name of another woman who acted as narrator. The original score of the opera calls for seven male singers and one soprano; for this "workshop" performance, women must have read the male roles. The journal did not review the program, possibly because of the experimental circumstances. A concert performance of the entire opera was given a year later, presented by the Civic Choral Club of Chicago. The director of the chorus was Ambrose Wyrick, a prominent Chicago tenor;²² May Valentine conducted the performance, which took place 15 July 1930. The subsequent mention of this program in Musical Leader of 25 July was not a review, but a human-interest story about

²¹Hipsher, American Opera . . ., p. 203.

²²Wyrick's professional advertisements in the Chicago Musicians' Directory for 1925-26 refer to him as "the silver-toned tenor."

JUST FROM THE PRESS!

The Ninth Opera from the Pen of

Eleanor Everest Freer

Pronounced "The Mount Everest Among American Composers" and
"A FEMININE VERDI"

All published works may be obtained from Wm. A. Kaun Music Co., 90 East Wisconsin Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wis.



Scene from the new opera

FRITHIOF

By MRS. FREER

Published By

THE WILLIAM A. KAUN MUSIC CO., MILWAUKEE

Fig. 33: Announcement of the publication of Frithiof
Music News 20 (28 December 1938)

Freer herself. In the interview, Freer related her family's friendship with the great Scandinavian singer Christine Nilsson. It was Nilsson, she said, who had first introduced her to the beautiful songs of Edvard Grieg and Ture Rangström (1884-1947). As a student singer, she had made a serious study of the song literature. When Mrs. Charles Peterson, a Chicago society woman who was a friend of Prince William of Sweden, had introduced her to the story of Frithiof with the request that she set it to music, her interest was immediately aroused. The saga had great appeal for her, she told the interviewer, because of the untiring efforts of the hero to find his heart's desire.²³ Freer likened Frithiof's quest for his happiness to her own relentless striving for recognition of the American composer.

The nine chamber operas Freer wrote between 1921 and 1930 cover a wide array of subject material. Only one of them, The Chilkoot Maiden, is American in both origin and plot. The American authors Peabody, Irving, and Longfellow provided the libretto sources for Piper, Legend of Spain, Preciosa and Masque of Pandora, but each of these tales has a European environment with characters drawn from legend,

²³The tale concerns a peasant's son and a king's daughter, the latter given in marriage to a distant aged monarch to prevent further war. The lovers are finally united after Frithiof's many years of hardship and suffering on land and sea in his attempts to find his childhood playmate and only true love.

historical events, or conflicting social strata. Humpbacked Massimiliano, Pierre and Jacqueline of A Christmas Tale, St. Joan and Frithiof are also European personages. In this Freer was not alone: other twentieth-century American composers also relied on non-American sources for their operas: Horatio Parker's Mona, Damrosch's Cyrano, and Loomis's Yolanda of Cyprus are among the works whose plots were based on foreign tales. Carter, Cadman and Herbert had attempted American Indian themes with The White Bird, Shanewis, and Natomah, respectively. The diverse heritage of the American people presented to the opera composer a wealth of folk sources, but even these were often based on European lore.

Freer seemed to be unaware of, or perhaps simply found unsuited to her work, the new technical and theoretical devices of such modernists as Henry Cowell (1897-1965). Cowell's shocking keyboard clusters for clenched fist and arm found no place in the Freer idiom. The jazz rhythms and "blue" notes in the compositions of Carpenter and Gershwin were also ignored; by 1930 much of the music in her own operas was based on songs she had written in her first years of study with Ziehn. In spite of her love for America and her desires for American music, Freer's works continued to reflect her own musical training and experience, which were essentially European.

The Final Years

By 1930, thirty native American composers had won the David Bispham Memorial Medal (see Appendix B).²⁴ The Meltzer translations now numbered twenty-three, and two were already published by Krehn and Dato of Chicago. Since the organization of OOLF in 1921, American composers whose works were formerly unknown had become more widely recognized through Freer's ceaseless efforts. The AOSC Award Committee members at that time included Freer, two other previous medal winners (Clarence Loomis and William Lester), and Alexander MacFadyen, a Chicago composer who supported American music and opera in English.²⁵

The Fortnightly Club was the scene of the AOSC spring luncheon 12 April 1930. Freer, conducting the meeting, suggested "as further encouragement to opera production" that a check for \$1000 should accompany the medal award.²⁶ Following the business meeting, a program of Freer songs was presented by Onalese White, soprano, and Lilian Jackson, accompanist. Freer had completed two more

²⁴The Christian Science Monitor, (10 June 1930).

²⁵Compositions by MacFadyen were performed by Lulu Sanford Tefft's Society for the Advancement of American Music, formed in 1930. This organization lists Freer as an honorary member in American Music Notes (November 1934), a fact also mentioned by Smith in Mary Carr Moore, p. 234.

²⁶As late as 1932, this suggestion had not been implemented, according to Otto Luening.

settings in the McCormick cycle of love poems, bringing the total to four; "Love" and "Between" were given their first hearing at this program. White also added a group of appropriate spring songs: "April, April," from Five Songs to Spring, Op. 6; and two songs from Op. 4: "Lady, Leave Thy Silken Thread" and "Cherry Ripe" (see Fig. 34). The next day marked another Freer performance: The Masque of Pandora was presented for the first time in a concert version at the Romany Club (13 April 1930), paired with a folk-opera of Colombia, "Andina," by Eustasio Rosales, sung in Spanish.²⁷ The program, "Operas of North and South America," was accompanied by Harold Whittle, the prominent accompanist and vocal coach whose name appeared frequently on both professional and amateur programs.

Freer continued to set Edith McCormick's poetry to music. By the following year's spring meeting 20 April 1931, a fifth song graced the McCormick cycle: the new piece, "Thou," was added to a performance of the earlier settings by Marie Morrissey and her accompanist Mrs. Carl Snyder.²⁸

MacFadyen's "Melodie" for violin and piano appeared in 1931, dedicated "to my friend and colleague Eleanor Everest

²⁷Rosales was a composer of the Spanish "zarzuela," and is mentioned briefly in Carleton Sprague Smith's report "Music in Latin America."

²⁸The newspaper clipping announcing the program is preserved in the AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4; on it is written in Freer's own hand, "beautifully sung."

**American Opera Society
of Chicago**

**THE FORTNIGHTLY
APRIL 12, 1930**

PROGRAM

Spring Songs Freer

April, April
Oh, Lady, leave thy silken thread
Cherry-ripe

Song Cycle . McCormick-Freer

How Can We Know?
I Write Not To Thee, Dearest,
Love
Between

ONALESE WHITE, Soprano

LILIAN JACKSON, at the Piano

In honor of Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick

**Fig. 34: Program of Freer songs at the Fortnightly
(AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)**

Freer." The piece uses as its accompaniment Freer's Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, Op. 1, transposed to D major and rhythmically slightly varied. The calm, simple melody for the violin hovers over the Freer harmonies, creating the mood of a reverie (see Fig. 35).

Many of Freer's writings, published in Music News, Musical Courier, and Musical America, now concerned the possible construction of a theater and/or auditorium exclusively for the performance of American works. She also promoted the idea that every concert program should have on it at least one work by an American composer. In an editorial titled "An Urgent Need," she stressed the importance of both plans, citing a current project that was not proceeding exactly as she had hoped:

Mrs. Frederick Coolidge [Elizabeth Sprague] has donated a chamber music hall in Washington D.C., Library of Congress, but it seems to remain international in character, which means it leans toward the other side.

It now remains for the public to further this cause by demanding an American work on all public programs.²⁹

A brief historical sketch, "A Century of Progress in American Opera," written by Freer and dated 20 June 1930, was published in several journals and sent to the committee in charge of planning for the Chicago Exposition of 1933. More important than the brief paragraph Freer devoted to

²⁹Freer, "An Urgent Need," Music News 21 (1 March 1929): 4.

Dedicated to my friend and colleague Eleanor Everest Freer

Melodie

Violin

Melody by Alexander MacFadyen

Harmony by Eleanor Everest Freer

Andante sostenuto

The image shows the violin part of the piece "Melodie" by Alexander MacFadyen, with harmony by Eleanor Everest Freer. The music is written for violin and is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked "Andante sostenuto". The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piece consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several slurs and phrasing marks throughout the piece. The second staff has a "Sul A." marking. The third staff has a "V" marking. The fourth staff has a "V" marking. The fifth staff has a "dim" marking. The sixth staff has a "pp" marking. The seventh staff has a "Sul E." marking and a "pp" marking. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Fig. 35: Violin part of MacFadyen's "Melodie," written over the harmony of Freer's Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, Op. 1
Chicago: Badger Music Co., 1931
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

earlier American opera composers Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791), William Henry Fry (1813-1864), and John Knowles Paine (1839-1906) was her suggestion concerning the proposed theater for the Exposition:

To make the best musical art in America is to make one of the best things in America. The theatre proposed should enclose not only the opera auditorium, but a concert hall, where other branches of American musical art may be heard, namely; [sic] orchestral or recital concerts, chamber music and all else that embodies our best works . . .

Freer insisted that although "other exhibiting nations may bring their operas with them, Chicago cannot fail to show the world what the century has given to this country in music drama." Her article concluded with a determined statement that "without waiting for 'the Great American Opera,' we should content ourselves with producing American operas from our list of over two hundred . . . and demand their production in the United States."³⁰

An answer from Dr. Alden D. Albert, Chairman of the Planning Committee for the Exposition, came in a letter dated 23 June 1930:

Thank you for the statement of the Century of Progress in American Opera. I am filing it with the material we are to consider when we make our plan for music more definitely.

Freer immediately sent Dr. Albert's letter to Mrs. John H. Coulter, then president of AOSC, with an accompanying note on a post card:

³⁰Freer, "A Century of Progress in American Opera," AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, typewritten copy.

My Dear Mrs. Coulter:

My letter in reference to music for the Century of Progress appeared in several journals, and as you see, Dr. Alden Albert has pigeonholed it, where it doubtless rests. With the Witherspoon letters [a reference to correspondence with a board member of the Opera], you will see my efforts at the Civic Opera. All evasive. We keep Europe going.³¹

(Dr. Albert must not have "pigeonholed" Freer's letter permanently: her Legend of the Piper was subsequently performed twice daily during the week of 16 July 1933 on the Enchanted Island at the "Century of Progress" Exposition).³²

A Freer article written during this period, "Musing on Opera," began with a small verse:

Our slogan of a passing day,
"If we want Art, import it,"
Has now been changed, that is to say,
"We make Art, and support it."

The editorial was concerned with the mostly negative attitude of Americans toward opera and with the best way to present new works. As a positive experience in this regard, Freer recounted a dramatic example of city support in Sacramento, California, where Legend of the Piper had been performed on 6 June 1931. Before an audience of 5500, with 350 children and adults taking part, two presentations

³¹Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4.

³²The Official World's Fair Weekly, "A Century of Progress," Vol. 1 No. 12, (week ending 22 July 1933) lists the opera as taking place at 4:15 and 5:15. Though the pages of this bulletin are filled with interviews and articles about various events occurring at the exposition, Freer's name is never mentioned, and no information is given about the opera or its composer.

of the opera had each been a splendid success. The spectacular event was arranged by the Board of Education and carried out under the auspices of the Civic Recreation Department. Freer described how "the doors of their Memorial Auditorium were thrown open to the public, free, and this 'bugbear' opera became music 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.'" Freer never mentioned her own name in this written description, but continually referred to "an American work by an American composer."³³

In this article, for the first and only time, Freer expressed in writing her feelings about jazz:

We will not have to write Jazz operas in order to become popular . . . it is a question whether or not Jazz can ever be made elegant. I doubt it, and feel that it is but a passing musical idiom.

Irving Schwerké, the American music critic for the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune, was one of Freer's numerous correspondents. From Paris where he was studying music privately and writing for his paper, Schwerké had written to Freer inquiring about her work in AOSC and performances of her own music. A letter from Freer to Schwerké, dated 9 February 1930, informed the critic that "a letter sent to you yesterday will give you--in part--the information you desire, and I shall send you some of my music shortly." Freer closed her missive with the address

³³Freer, "Musing on Opera," typewritten article dated 8 June 1931, AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4.

of the violinist Madeleine Godard, the sister of her former teacher, indicating that Schwerké might wish to contact her if he needed additional information about Freer.³⁴

Schwerké subsequently became the director of the Bad Homburg Festival of American Music in 1931 and wrote to Freer of his experiences, describing the coolness of the German audiences toward the American works performed. Freer's answer of 14 September 1931 expressed her enthusiasm for the project and her delight in its success under his direction. In response to the comment about the German audiences, Freer wrote, "Am sorry the Homburg audiences were so 'cool'--but, the Festival was given, and the idea will sink in." By way of comparison, Freer then described the reception of her own works in the U.S.:

Here, they do not criticize my music as "lacking in originality and profundity"--au contraire, the Suite from Legend of Spain on Sept. 4 was the most applauded on the program.³⁵

Writing to Freer again on 10 October 1931, Schwerké informed her that Emma Nevada-Palmer's daughter Mignon was one of the singers in the Festival. Freer's next letter to the musician asked him to remember her affectionately to the Palmer family, again congratulated him on the Festival's success and promised to show his letter "when

³⁴Freer to Schwerké, 9 February 1930, Irving Schwerké Correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress.

³⁵Freer to Schwerké, 14 September 1931, Schwerké correspondence, Music Division, Library of Congress.

occasion affords, to spread the good news."³⁶

Performances of Freer's operas, some in full productions and some in concert version, were fairly frequent. A Christmas Tale had premiered in Houston 27 December 1929, and the work was finally heard in Chicago on 27 December 1931. The staged production, given in Curtiss Hall at the Fine Arts Building in Chicago, received a glowing review from Freer's supporter of long standing, Charles Watt. Using phrases like "one of the most interesting and popular events of the season," and "alight with artistry and glowing with charm," Watt lauded the scenery and lighting, the chorus of excellent voices from the Chicago Philharmonic Singers, and the Little Symphony Ensemble under the direction of Willard Rhodes. About the music itself, Watt wrote:

. . . inspired by its subject, fitting the story to a great nicety, [the music] is full of originality and charm and runs a long gamut of expressiveness and adaptability to the forces employed.³⁷

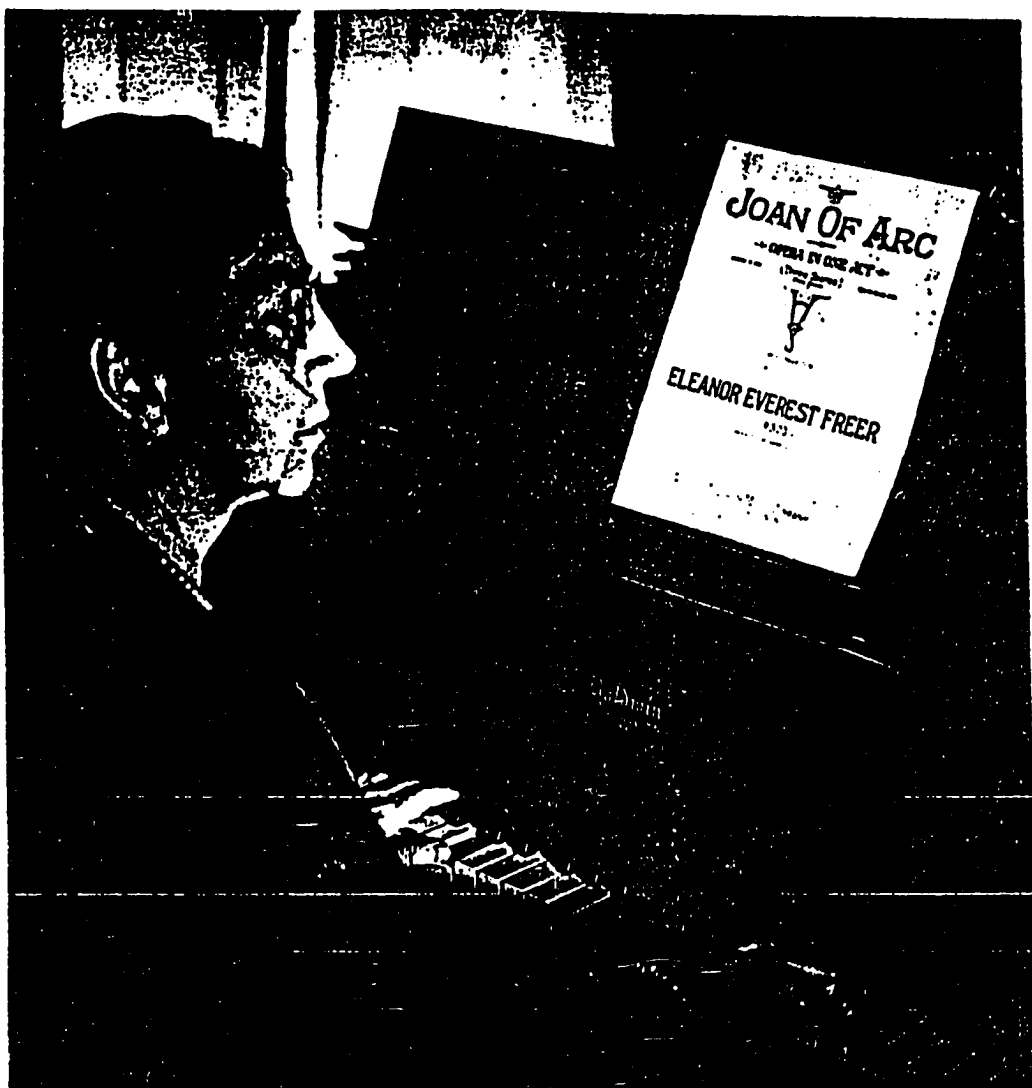
A Legend of Spain was presented in September 1931 at the Maywood School of Music in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, according to Hipsher's History, and Cavallo's symphonic

³⁶ Emma Nevada's daughter had become a celebrated singer whose reviewers included Ezra Pound: "Mignon Nevada . . . starts plump on the note (the right note), and proceeds with perfect clarity, delicacy and precision, with articulation and a comforting surety." R. Murray Schafer, ed., Ezra Pound and Music, the Complete Criticism (London: Faber and Faber), p. 112.

³⁷Music News 24 (1 January 1932): 10.

band played a suite from the opera in Grant Park, Chicago, 29 July 1932. A number of performances of Freer's works were often given in special arrangements, such as highlights from an opera presented as a ballet suite or instrumental piece. At age 67, Freer was still a most active composer and writer, continuing to publish articles and editorials on her favorite subject: American opera (see Fig. 36).

Letters arrived at the AOSC headquarters daily from composers suggesting or endorsing new operas, or inquiring about possible performances of their own new works. One such letter, dated 27 July 1931, came from composer Howard Hanson, endorsing Bernard Rogers's The Marriage of Aude. Hanson also wished to arrange a performance of his own opera Merrymount, for which he eventually received a Bispham Medal. A similar letter was received from Otto Luening, who was interested in mounting excerpts from his new opera Evangeline. He and Freer had apparently allowed time and distance to resolve their differences, and on 29 December 1932, the AOSC presented a musical program at the Arts Club featuring portions of Evangeline. Luening's wife Ethel sang the role of Evangeline, and Luening accompanied her. On the same concert, Elaine DeSelle of the Chicago Opera performed three of the McCormick-Freer songs. A



*Eleanor Everest Freer, in her home studio -
July, 1931*

Fig. 36: Eleanor Freer in 1931 at age 67
(Original photograph, AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

sixth and final song in the "Love" cycle had been completed the preceding July, only a month before Edith McCormick died. Now DeSellem performed the first, second, and sixth songs, presenting the new "It Was Spoken" to the colleagues of the woman who had been so generous in her patronage of Luening and others. The Bispham Medal was awarded to Luening for Evangeline, and at the same time Marx E. Oberndorfer became a recipient of the Medal for his opera Roseanne.³⁸

Following the daily stagings of Piper at the Chicago Exposition in the summer of 1933, another performance of the opera Masque of Pandora was presented at the Goodman Theater on 10 October by a group called the Operatic Art Theater. Freer was by this time completing another opera, Scenes from "Little Women," Op. 42, adapted from Louisa May Alcott's popular book. The work was published in 1934, and was first staged 4 April 1935 at Chicago's Kimball Hall by the DePaul Little Theater Association. It attracted more attention when it was given an unusual performance in concert form at a special performance for the AOSC by a talented singer, Frances Coates Grace. Grace sang all four of the characters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, and connected the musical numbers with narration. The Musical Leader's comment, written as a result of an interview with the

³⁸Peters, comp., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, printed program.

composer, was " . . . the [music] brings out [Freer's] subtle gift for musical delineation as she has given some lyrically lovely phrases to each of the four characters."³⁹ The accompanist Harold Whittle, who played in the studio of Charles Victor, a leading voice coach in London, may have been responsible for arranging Grace's tour-de-force presentation of the work in that city. Whittle had written Freer earlier that her songs were being sung in Victor's studio. The flyer advertising the singer's London performance gave no year, but was dated 9 July. Grace's performance was given for the American Women's Club; her accompanist was the acclaimed Gerald Moore (see Fig. 37).

Freer's last opera, The Brownings Go to Italy, Op. 43, appeared in 1936. Called by one reviewer "a sequel to the Barretts of Wimpole Street," the work dealt with the poets' marriage and subsequent flight to Venice. The librettist was George Hawkins-Ambler, seven of whose poems were set by the composer near the end of her life. Freer inserted into the opera her earlier songs on texts of Browning and six of the Sonnets from the Portuguese. She then wrote a setting of "The Year's at the Spring" especially for the new work. The older songs were connected by short, humorous ariettas and duets sung by the maid and valet, who

³⁹Florence French, "The Brownings Go to Italy," Musical Leader 68(19 Dec. 1936): editorial page. This interview was conducted after Freer completed her final opera The Brownings. In the article, the reviewer unfortunately confused Little Women with the newer work.

American Women's Club
 46, Grosvenor Street, W.1
 MONDAY EVENING, JULY 9th at 8.30



(From the Portrait by Robert Kneller)

FRANCES COATES GRACE
 "RUTH DRAPER OF SONG"

IN
 "Scenes from 'Little Women'"

MINIATURE OPERA BY

ELEANOR EVEREST FREER

Mr. GERALD MOORE Pianoforte Steinway

TICKETS 5/6 (including Tax) may be obtained from American Women's Club, 46, Grosvenor St., W.1.

Fig. 37: Flyer for London performance of Little Women.
 (AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

made another happy pair of lovers. The Brownings Go to Italy was performed at least six times between its publication in 1936 and the composer's death in 1942. First given by the AOSC in concert form soon after its completion, a performance in full costume was presented at the Italy-America Society 11 May 1936. Two years later, on 9 September 1938, the National Federation of Music Clubs saw it staged in the Grand Ballroom of the Medinah Club in Chicago. Singers from the Chicago Opera, Freda Draper and Richard Gordon, sang the leading roles of Elizabeth and Robert Browning in that performance as well as in a subsequent concert version presented 11 December 1939. The following spring, 3 May 1940, it was given with full staging for the Illinois Federation of Music Clubs at the Arts Club Auditorium, and another concert performance took place 18 November 1942 at the Louise Trenton Studios in Chicago.⁴⁰

Between Frithiof and Scenes from "Little Women," Freer composed the ten songs of Op. 40 (two of these are listed as no. 3), the ten of Op. 41 and two others given the same opus number (42) as Scenes from "Little Women." Two additional songs in Op. 50 followed The Brownings Go to Italy, and the composer's final work was "Dream Caress,"

⁴⁰Turkington and Coulter, comps., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5. Announcements of all performances of the opera were included, clipped from unidentified newspapers and journals.

Op. 51. The last songs were mainly settings of the poetry of family and friends: "The Wild Sea" was a poem by Freer's daughter; "Children's Spring," "Drifting Down the River," and "Love Call" were by her granddaughter Barbara Helen Willson, the oldest of the three remaining Willson children. "A Promise" was written by Esther Turkington, a president of AOSC and one of the compilers of the Scrapbooks. "Music of Wings," written and published in 1940 at the outbreak of World War II, used a text of Francesca Falk Miller exalting the era of the American aviator. This popular song was published with both English and Spanish texts. A review written by William Dodd Chenery was quoted in the song's publication by the National Music Company of Chicago:

YOU [sic] have caught the spirit of the poem supplementing it with your rare gift of melody. The rhythmic beat of the accompaniment, in its triplet form, might well suggest the swiftly moving bird-like movement of a gliding air-ship; the lilting upward swing of the melody tells the exhilaration in the heart of the driver.

Many of the songs from Op. 40 and Op. 41 were arranged for vocal ensembles, and were performed frequently. The AOSC Scrapbooks include a printed program for the Welsh Male Chorus performance at the Chicago Arts Club 13 February 1937. The group sang Freer's "Drifting Down the River," Op. 40, no. 8. A male trio known as the "American Airmasters" sang an entire program of Freer music on 2 March 1937 at the Arts Club. The occasion was a "World

Travel Talk" presented by Emily Larned, a member of the AOSC, and the musical program included "Galloping Song," "Drifting Down the River," "Love Call" and "The Wild Sea." The bass in the trio was Kai De Vermond, who later conducted a performance of Freer's operas.⁴¹

An "All-American Night of Opera and Ballet" paired The Chilkoot Maiden and Legend of the Piper 30 April 1937 (see Figs. 38 and 39). Chilkoot was performed as a ballet suite, with two dancers representing the Indian maiden and her American lover. Piper was performed with its original

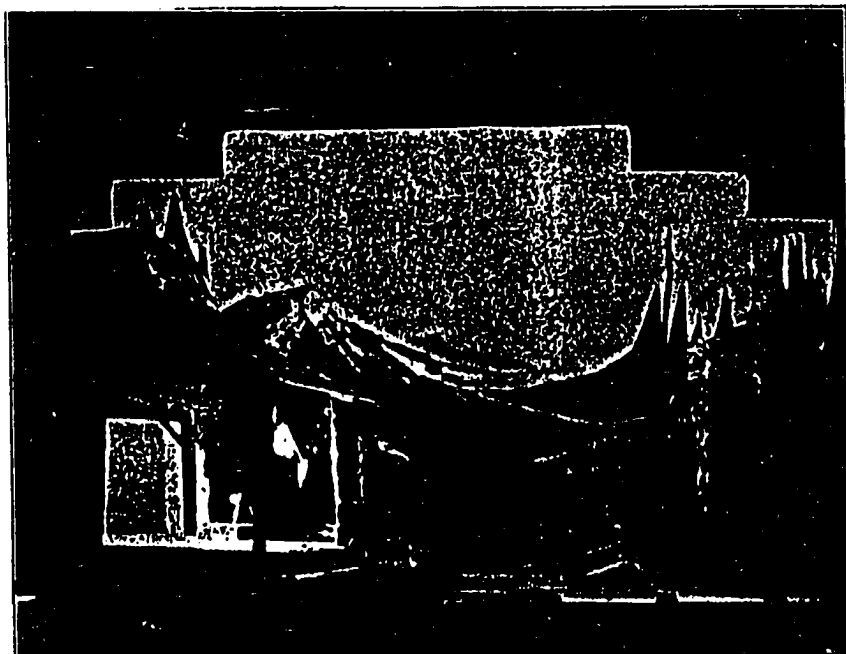


Fig. 38: Stage set for Chilkoot Maiden
Musical Leader (5 May 1937)

⁴¹Turkington and Coulter, comps., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5, printed program.



Fig. 39: Stage Set for Legend of the Piper
Vocal score, Chicago: C. C. Birchard, 1921
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

stage-set, Freda Draper of the Chicago Opera sang the leading female role of Veronika, and the entire presentation was conducted by Leroy Wetzel, who had directed the Freer works many times. The review in Musical Leader the week following said that "all the talented singers were especially notable for the clarity of their English." The music of both Chilkoot Maiden and Piper, said the reviewer, was "full of charming melodies and very singable."⁴²

"About a Noted Woman Composer" appeared in the Musical Leader of 13 February 1937. It combined notices of past and coming performances of Freer's works with complimentary statements about her music:

. . . her songs are "different" and unusual in every respect. . . . There is something very honest and sincere about Mrs. Freer's works. . . . She has mastered the art of suiting the mood and atmosphere and style of the text. . . . Her music is virile and impressive, and reflects the amazing versatility of this remarkable woman.⁴³

Referring to a recent interview with the composer, the writer stated that Freer was a remarkable linguist, a convincing conversationalist, and "a real wit." This human-interest side of the article spoke of Freer's pleasure in setting to music the poems of her three grandchildren and their friends. One of these verses, "My

⁴²Musical Leader 69 (8 May 1937): 11.

⁴³E. F. S., "About a Noted Woman Composer," Musical Leader 69 (13 Feb. 1937): 13.

Annabelle," by Polly Hartquist, describes a worn-out doll in graphic and humorous terms, and the music reflects the child's honest and straightforward expression (see Fig. 40).

Also noted in the interview was a performance of Freer songs, "sung splendidly" by Kai De Vermond at the Melodist Club 27 January: "Galloping Song," Op. 12, no. 3, "Whispering Winds," Op. 41, no. 5, "Rondel," Op. 41, no. 10⁴⁴ and "The Year's at the Spring," from the opera The Brownings Go to Italy. The singer's encores were "Kuni San," Op. 41, no. 4, and "When is Life's Youth?," Op. 4, no. 3.

Like many composers before and since, Freer seemed to be experiencing her best successes during the last ten to twelve years of her life. Her final letter to Schwerké in 1935 revealed her personal feelings about the passage of time:

I am so delighted that my friends Mme. Emma Nevada and Mlle. Madeleine Godard are still well and active-- Time flies and I now feel "each year is one of grace."⁴⁵

In the same letter Freer commented with pleasure on Schwerké's visit to Vichy with "Dr. [Richard] Strauss," and recalled being taken to dinner by Strauss in 1906, "the

⁴⁴The text for "Rondel," Op. 41, no. 10 is by poet Max Vivier. Op. 21, no. 6 (1912) is a setting of Charles Swinburne's "Rondel."

⁴⁵Freer to Schwerké, 9 October 1935, Schwerké Correspondence, Library of Congress.

My Annabelle

3

POLLY HARTQUIST

ELEANOR EVEREST FREER

Moderato

Op. 89. No. 2.

"My doll, My doll, My doll, nose was stol - en.

An - na - belle; She's real - ly feel - ing far from well; Her by the pup, The hens ate all - her saw - dust up, So

eyes are gone, her teeth are out, Her wig was left some - all that's real - ly left of her Are just her clothes and

where a - bout: Her char - ac - ter

poco rall *rall*

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Fig. 40: "My Annabelle"
(Music Division, Library of Congress)

reason being that I spoke fluent German." Rambling on, Freer asked to be remembered to Mme. Blanche Marchesi. "Her mother was my vocal teacher in France (tempi passati)." And finally, "Pardon this lengthy missive, but we are thinking of France these days, and the European situation."

Bispham Medal recipients between 1932 and 1940 included Clarence Cameron White (1880-1960) for Quanga, George Gershwin (1898-1937) for Porgy and Bess, Virgil Thomson (1896-1989) for Four Saints in Three Acts, George Antheil (1900-1957) and John Erskine (1879-1951) for Helen Retires, among others. Gershwin's letter of thanks to Freer was written from California, where he was "working on the music for several films," but he promised to let her know when he could come to Chicago.⁴⁶

Kai De Vermond, who had so successfully performed many of Freer's songs, organized the "Patrons of American Opera" in 1938. In early December of that year he conducted staged performances of A Christmas Tale and The Court Jester, using his group of singers and the Little Symphony Orchestra. Edwin Kemp, who had sung the role of Massimiliano before, was guest artist in the production. The newspapers reported the Freer double bill as a social event, along with a number of others occurring simultaneously:

⁴⁶Gershwin to Freer, 7 May 1937, AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5.

Anyone who goes to all the attractive parties of this afternoon will be kept hopping! . . . Some of the audience at the American Opera Society's presentation of Mrs. Archibald Freer's two short operas in the Goodman will stop in at the Antiquarians' Victorian exhibition and tea in the adjoining Art Institute.⁴⁷

Among the singers in the cast of The Court Jester was Evelyn Ewert, a mezzo-soprano who consistently performed the Freer songs in recital. Ewert had sung three concerts during the preceding year which included Freer's "A Valentine," "The Wild Sea," "Bird Song" (from the opera Masque of Pandora), "Rondel," (presumably from Op. 41) "The Shepherdess," "Nights o' Spring," and "When is Life's Youth?" When interviewed, the singer praised Freer's music as being full of variety, and stated that audiences were very appreciative of the songs.⁴⁸

On 11 May 1939 Freer resigned as Chairman of the Awards Committee for the David Bispham Memorial Fund. She suggested that William Lester replace her as chairman, stating that no one was more fit for the position than he. She lamented the passing of MacFadyen, and of Campanini, who had done so much to further the cause of American opera. Once more she related her disappointment that the heavily endowed music schools seemed to have funds only for their own students and had not responded to her request for support. At the end of her statement she expressed her

⁴⁷Turkington and Coulter, comps., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5, unidentified newspaper clipping.

⁴⁸Musical Leader 69 (23 October 1937): 11.

hope for the future of the Society:

In the Medal Awards Committee, and being unable to continue my activities for this Foundation-child of mine, I am now forced to offer my definite resignation, this, now, being my only activity in the Society. The past 18 years have been full of varied and interesting events; a few storms, but more sunshine. May the cause continue to flourish.⁴⁹

Freer's resignation was tendered during the spring meeting of the AOSC. The musical program consisted of Freer works. Mae Dolling Schmidt, whose name figured prominently in the music journals and piano instruction advertisements, played "Lyric Intermezzo," [Op. 2], "Modern Dance," Op. 32, no. 4 and "Lyric Etude," Op. 3., no. 8. A male quartet, the Stetson Singers, performed "Drifting Down the River," "A Promise," "Jenny Kiss'd Me," and "A Love Call." Also included in the group's presentations were an ensemble from Frithiof and "Solo and Serenade" from the opera Preciosa.

Freer and the AOSC hosted a benefit musicale and tea at the Congress Hotel 20 February 1940. The proceeds were to go to the David Bispham Memorial Medal Fund. Schmidt again performed several of Freer's solo piano works and also appeared in company with pianist Lucille Manker, presenting arrangements of the pieces of Op. 2 and the "Lyric Etudes" of Op. 3 for two pianos. Three of the Sonnets were sung by the well-known Freda Draper, whose performances for the AOSC and the Chicago Opera were continually lauded. The

⁴⁹Eleanor Everest Freer, letter of resignation, AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5.

program was to be repeated the following month as a benefit for Finnish relief.⁵⁰

The Committee on Advancement of American Music presented a morning musicale at the Arts Club 31 October 1940. The entire program was devoted to a recital of Freer's music, sung by Draper (see Fig. 41). Four songs from the cycle Six Songs to Nature began the program, followed by three of McCormick's "Love" cycle. "A Shepherd and a Shepherdess," Op. 40, no. 5, with a text by Gita Orlova, followed. In the final group Draper programmed no. 21 of the Sonnets, and then sang the remaining two songs from the "Nature" Cycle. "Music of Wings" was the last song on the program.⁵¹ This song, patriotic and stirring, seemed to be exceptionally popular at this time, as the war occupied the minds of all.

Another musicale preceded a luncheon meeting of the AOSC 24 February 1941. The two performers were pianist-composer Ruth Gourlay and baritone Robert Kessler. Gourlay presented seven of her own compositions, then accompanied Kessler in a group of Freer songs (see Fig. 42). Included were "The Wild Sea," "Summer Night," Op. 12, no. 6, and two songs with texts by Hawkins-Ambler, who had been the

⁵⁰Turkington and Coulter, comps., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5, program and clippings.

⁵¹Turkington and Coulter, comps., AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5, announcement and program.

Eleanor Everest Freer Program

Freda Draper — — Contralto
Leo Heim — — at the Piano

I

The World Beautiful — — John Milton
Before the Rain } — — Thomas Aldrich
After the Rain }
The Harvest Moon — Henry W. Longfellow

II

How can we know? } Edith
I write not to thee, Dearest } Rockefeller
Love } McCormick
A Shepherd and a Shepherdess — Gita Orlova

III

Portuguese Sonnet XXI — Elizabeth B. Browning
A Garden — — — Thomas Brown
To the Western Wind — Robert Herrick
Music of Wings — Francesca Falk Miller

* * *

Dept. Advancement of American Music D. A. R.

The Arts Club

October 31, 1940 at Eleven A. M.

Fig. 41: Program of Freer songs
(AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

PROGRAM

The American Opera Society of Chicago
(National)

The Arts Club, February 24, 1941, at 11 o'clock

★	★	★	
To a Wild Rose			} GOURLAY
Pursuit and Escape			
Two Moods: Serenity - - Ardour			
The Lotus Dreams			
Wayward Spring			
White Rose			
Riot of Red Roses			

Ruth Gourlay — Pianist-Composer

The Wild Sea (E. Freer Willson)	} FREER
Dear, Wert Thou Less (Geo. A. Hawkins-Ambler)	
Night of a Thousand Stars (Geo. A. Hawkins-Ambler)	
Summer Night (Alfred Tennyson)	
Music of Wings (Francesca Falk Miller)	

Robert Kessler

Ruth Gourlay, at the Piano

★	★	★	
Etudes	— — — —		Chopin

Ruth Gourlay

Fig. 42: Gourlay-Freer program
(AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

librettist for The Brownings Go to Italy. The Hawkins-Ambler poems, "Dear, Wert Thou Less," and "Night of a Thousand Stars" were from Op. 41, among the latest settings Freer had completed.⁵² Once more "Music of Wings" closed the program.

Eleanor Everest Freer died 13 December 1942 at the age of 78. The AOSC cancelled its January open meeting and announced a memorial concert for 18 February. Numerous journals carried announcements and eulogies, particularly those in which her many letters had been published. The New York Times reported her death on 15 December. Most articles approximated the number of songs and operas she had written, but all reported accurately the founding of the American Opera Society of Chicago and the David Bispham Memorial Award, those unprecedented successes for which she was known throughout America.

The memorial concert program (see Fig. 43) included three arias from the operas: "The Piper's Soliloquy," the "Serenade" of the Court Jester, and Joan of Arc's stirring cry, "Farewell, Ye Mountains." Both early and late works were performed, including "A Valentine," "Gallop Song," "Whispering Winds" and "Music of Wings." The pianist Schmidt repeated her performance of several of the "Lyric Etudes," representing the best of the piano works. Esther Turkington, Freer's old friend in the work of the AOSC,

⁵²AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 5, announcement and program.

AMERICAN OPERA SOCIETY
(NATIONAL)

MEMORIAL CONCERT

ELEANOR EVEREST FREER
(1864 - 1942)

THE ARTS CLUB

Thursday, February 18, 1943 at Eleven O'clock

★ ★ ★

PROGRAM

1. Resolutions, Adopted January 26, 1943
Elaine De Sellem, Chairman of Resolutions Committee
2. Galloping Song 1905
Raymond Koch, Baritone
3. The Shepherdess 1905
Marian Schroeder, Lyric Soprano
4. The Piper's Soliloquy - THE LEGEND OF THE PIPER - 1922
David Johnson, Tenor
5. Nights of Spring 1929
Naomi Cullen Cook, Dramatic Soprano
6. Lyric Etudes Nos. 8 & 9 Opus 3 1905
Mae Doelling - Schmidt, Pianist
7. Words of Appreciation of a Colleague
Dr. William Lester, Chairman Medal Award Committee
8. A Love Call 1935
"Be True" 1929
A Valentine 1929
Drifting Down the River 1935
Leonard Huber, Baritone
9. "The Year's at the Spring" - THE BROWNING'S GO TO ITALY - 1937
Sonnet "Say Once Again" 1909
"Farewell Ye Mountains" - JOAN OF ARC - 1929
Freda Draper, Mezzo-Soprano
10. Serenade - THE COURT JESTER - 1925
Whispering Winds 1936
Music of Wings 1941
Maxwell Wilson, Tenor
11. Sonnet Esther Turkington
Mrs. Ralph Talbot Winston, Past President
Joseph Anderson, Accompanist

All Musical Compositions on this Program are by ELEANOR EVEREST FREER

Fig. 43: Program for Freer memorial concert
(AOSC Scrapbooks, Vol. 4)

wrote a sonnet for the occasion, and William Lester, current Chairman of the Medal Award Committee, read a moving tribute. Freer's work had touched the hands of many famous Americans; American compositions, American composers, and American performers and teachers had gained an unshakable foothold. The firm resolutions of the young Eleanor Everest had been realized.

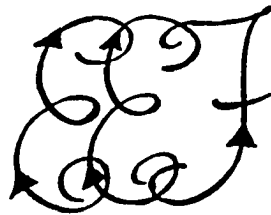


Fig. 44: Eleanor Everest Freer's monogram, from a printed invitation in David Bispham's Scrapbooks (reproduced by the American composer Richard Hoyt (1928-)).

PART II

CHAPTER I

FREER'S WORKS: AN OVERVIEW

Prelude

Freer's return to musical composition in 1902 began with a letter to Bernhard Ziehn, asking that he accept her as a student only if her works showed professional promise. In her autobiography she explains her re-awakened desire to create:

" . . . that smoldering fire [burning within] broke loose and the impatience to write again possessed me. I wrote [to Ziehn] and asked for the honor of becoming a pupil, sending in advance manuscripts with the request that I be accepted upon condition my sent material warranted the taking up professionally the career of a composer."¹

The manuscripts Freer sent to Ziehn for consideration are unknown; they may have been scores completed while under Godard's tutelage during the Paris days. By her own admission, however, Freer's study of theory with the French

¹Freer, Recollections, p. 68.

composer had not been extensive.² The paragraph quoted above suggests that she had not written music for quite some time. According to her Recollections, she was primarily a wife and mother while living in Leipzig:

" . . . I experienced . . . years of domesticity, meeting interesting people in science and business."³

Whatever compositions Ziehn received and examined, his affirmative answer indicated that he found enough promise in her music to accept Freer on the terms she desired.

The outcome of this new relationship with an admired mentor was a body of works that included piano solos, art songs and song cycles, choral compositions, and chamber operas. The songs and operas constitute the major part of Freer's work and are deserving of the greatest attention; these genres will be discussed in detail in separate chapters. The piano and choral compositions are fewer in number, but several of their important aspects must be mentioned in an overview of the complete works.

For the Piano

Only nineteen of Freer's compositions are for piano solo; a few brief examples will suffice to show how her

²"My work in theory had been of short duration in Paris, as it was more for the study in diction and a thorough knowledge of his beautiful songs that I was introduced to and accepted as a pupil of Benjamin Godard." Recollections . . . , p. 67.

³Ibid., p. 79.

early background as a piano prodigy influenced her writing. Her first efforts as a student of Ziehn were three sets of piano solos published in 1903 and 1904, of moderate to difficult technical demands. Of these (Op. 1, 2 and 3), only Op. 1 (three pieces) and Op. 3 (nine pieces) have been thus far located. These short works, often resembling concert etudes of 19th-century composers and piano pedagogues, began a remarkable outpouring of creative effort which continued almost without interruption until the composer's death in 1942. The nine Lyric Studies, Op. 3 (1904), are the best of the extant piano works. Technically difficult, they are also of considerable musical interest, displaying fascinating contrasts and interesting chromaticism. The influence of Chopin is evident in the first of the Lyric Studies (see Examples 1a and 1b).

Example 1a, Freer, Lyric Study Op 3, no. 1, m. 20-26:

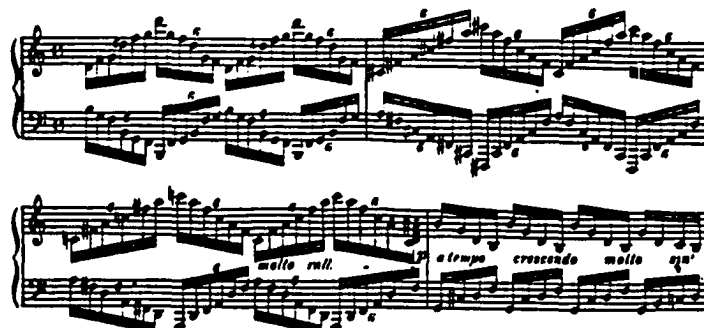


Example 1b, Chopin, Impromptu, Op. 29, m. 113-19:

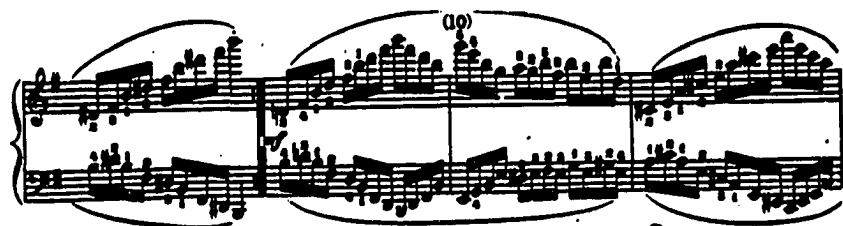


Lyric Study No. 2 is reminiscent of an etude by J. B. Cramer (1771-1858). Examples 2a and 2b compare the technical similarities in the two studies.

Example 2a, Freer, Lyric Study Op. 3, no. 2, m. 18-21:



Example 2b, Cramer, Etude 27, m. 9-12:

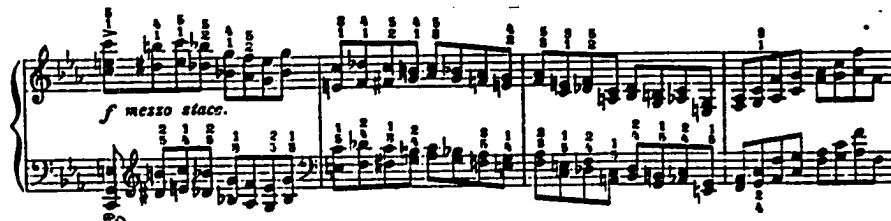


Examples 3a and 3b show the style of Freer's Op. 3, no. 9, and its similarity to a double-note etude by Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925), which is also a concert piece.

Example 3a, Freer, Lyric Study Op. 3, no. 9, m. 87-93:



Example 3b, Moszkowski, Study in Double Notes No. 4, m. 43-46:



All nine of the Lyric Studies, and the pieces of Op. 1 as well, reflect Freer's experience with piano technique and its practice, and her exposure to the standard nineteenth-century piano literature.

Two-piano versions of Op. 1 (Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, Andante, and Souvenir!) were published by the National Music Company of Chicago in 1936. Lyric Intermezzo and Rondo, perhaps the missing pieces of Op. 2, were also listed by National as available in a two-piano arrangement.

The same publisher announced a two-piano version of the Lyric Studies "available in manuscript." The only two-piano score found, however, is A Greek Dance, Op. 29, no. 3 (1939), a tasteful arrangement of the song "To A Painter," Op. 15, no. 6 (1907). The duo happily retains the light and graceful character of the original (see Examples 4a and 4b for a comparison of the two versions).

Example 4a, "To A Painter," Op. 29, no. 3, m. 1-5:

Allegro scherzando.

Allegro scherzando. While you my lyre's soft num-bers

hear, In-ge-nious paint-er, lend an

ear; And, while it charms your

accel. *a tempo.*

Example 4b, A Greek Dance, Op. 29, no. 3, m. 1-5:

Allegro scherzando

First Piano

Second Piano

accel. a tempo

accel. a tempo

Words and Music

In 1904, Freer deserted the piano solo genre for twenty-two years, in favor of the art song. Now she began to realize her long-held dream of providing American singers with a repertoire of songs in the English language. By 1926, when she returned to keyboard works with Four Modern Dances for Piano, she had already written over 100 songs and was at work on her third chamber opera. The 163 songs and eleven chamber operas are the most important

segment of Freer's works; selected songs are discussed in the following chapter, and three operas are described in detail in Chapter III.

At this point, another interesting dimension of Freer's work must be mentioned: the substantial number of vocal ensembles she composed requires at least a brief general survey. In Op. 7 (ca. 1905), following the eleven songs of Opp. 4 and 5 and the five-song cycle of Op. 6, there are three secular ensembles for women's voices. Op. 8 (1905) contains three secular pieces and one church anthem for mixed voices. Freer's remaining choral pieces are found in Op. 13 (ca. 1906) and in Op. 40, nos. 1 and 2 (1932); these include two Christmas anthems and four secular pieces. A collection of sixteen works for mixed voices was published by Kaun of Milwaukee in 1932. This volume included the two pieces from Op. 40 and fourteen four-part arrangements of songs previously written for solo voice. Notices of special programs presented in the music clubs during the later years of Freer's life mention male quartet arrangements of three solo songs in Op. 40, apparently not published. A number of Freer's choral works, either newly composed, or pre-existent pieces with new text, were incorporated into several chamber operas in appropriate and interesting ways. The homophonic style typical of Freer's ensemble writing is shown in Example 5, part of a male-quartet setting of Longfellow's "Moon of the Summer Night"

from the opera Preciosa (1928).

Example 5, Preciosa, m. 156-80:

Moon of the sum-mer night! Far down yon western steep, Sink,
Dreams of the sum-mer night! Tell her, her lov-er keeps Watch,

Moon of the sum-mer night! Far down yon western steep, Sink,
Dreams of the sum-mer night! Tell her, her lov-er keeps Watch,

sink in sil-ver light, she sleeps, My la-dy sleeps, sleeps, now!
while in slum-ber light, she sleeps, My la-dy sleeps, sleeps, now!

sink in sil-ver light, she sleeps, My la-dy sleeps, sleeps, now!
while in slum-ber light, she sleeps, My la-dy sleeps, sleeps, now!

poco rall.

An interesting use of the same musical material in two different vocal arrangements, each with different text, is found in the opera Massimiliano (1925). A duet for two women (the heroine and her lady-in-waiting) reappears as a four-part chorus of courtiers. The meter has been changed from triple to duple, but the melody, harmony, and style of accompaniment remain the same (see Examples 6a and 6b).

Example 6a, Massimiliano, Scene I, m. 123-136:

(MARGHERITA and LUCREZIA sing together)

Andantino (125)

M. So goes the dit - ty of by - gone days,

L. So goes the dit - ty of by - gone days,

M. Which will re - mind us of an - cient lays, He

L. Which will re - mind us of an - cient lays, He

(136)

Example 6a, cont.:

M. gave her a purse and a no - ble
 L. gave her a purse and a no - ble
 name, Why does the la - dy weep so? He gave her land, and he gave her
 name, Why does the la - dy weep so? He gave her land, and he gave her

Example 6b, Massimiliano, Scene II, m. 13-18:

CHORUS
 Lento
 S. En-chant-ed are the fields a mai-den walks, There Cu-pid's pop-pies grow, and
 A. En-chant-ed are the fields a mai-den walks, There Cu-pid's pop-pies grow, and
 T. En-chant-ed are the fields a mai-den walks, There Cu-pid's pop-pies grow, and
 B. En-chant-ed are the fields a mai-den walks, There Cu-pid's pop-pies grow, and

Example 6b, cont.:

Examples of Freer's choral writing are scattered throughout her chamber operas, discussed in Chapter III.

Background and Development

Freer's early experiences as a singer and accompanist may have limited her creative thinking to the small musical structures that comprise her works. Her immediate social circle, during her adolescent years in Philadelphia as well as in her later life, continued to provide frequent exposure to "drawing room" performances, mostly for voice and/or piano. Listening to her father's choral groups performing his own arrangements of art songs (which she had heard and played in his studio) may have given her

confidence to try her own hand at choral writing; perhaps she was Everest's copyist as a teenager, thus absorbing ideas for her own pieces. She wrote no symphonic or other instrumental works, in spite of the early promise of "Aurelian March" and her experience with her brother's string band. Her later training as a concert singer and her emphasis on accompanying and voice teaching probably left little time for attending orchestra or chamber music concerts.

Orchestral accompaniments and instrumental arrangements of some piano pieces, songs and certain numbers from the operas are mentioned frequently in the music journals and in Freer's own writings. Since no classes in orchestration were given at the École Marchesi, and the limited theory studies with Godard could hardly have included this technique, there is a strong possibility that the instrumentations for the song cycle Sonnets from the Portuguese and for the chamber operas were the work of a publishing-house arranger/editor, following the composer's suggestions. The opera manuscripts are piano-vocal scores only, with certain instruments indicated at obvious points (harp and organ in Christmas Tale, flute solo in The Piper, etc.). Advertisements for the operas in Music News note the availability of orchestral parts for rental. In 1936 (Freer was then 72), Music Library of Chicago offered among the Freer works an orchestral arrangement or "Ballet Suite"

of the Modern Dances, Op. 32. The Modern Dances were originally published as Op. 31 (1925) for solo piano, but later they were used to provide the greater part of the music for the opera The Chilkoot Maiden, Op. 32 (1926). Also available from this publisher were orchestral parts for Spanish Ballet Fantasy and Russian Ballet Fantasy. These programmatic titles suggest that music was extracted from the operas Legend of Spain and Preciosa for the former, and perhaps from Frithiof or Chilkoot Maiden for the latter. The mysterious "Quintets" for piano and four strings in the same list of available works (see Fig. 45) might have been arranged from a group of suitable songs or from any one of the cycles. The Sonnets especially would have made an interesting and varied instrumental chamber work. These scores have not been found, but their mention with the works published during the composer's last decade indicates that the "smoldering fire burning within" continued until the end of her life.

Transposition, which Freer certainly understood and may have done at sight at the piano while accompanying, is another time-consuming writing task for a composer; this arduous copying work was probably also done at the publishing house. Most of her songs were published in two keys: in the song manuscripts Freer has written specific instructions for the transpositions she desired. She almost always wrote the first copy in keys suitable for

(Incomplete list)

Inquire concerning compositions by Eleanor Everest Freer. Earlier Songs, and Operas: Legend of Spain; Frithiof, Chikoot Maiden; The Court Jester; Masque of Pandora; Legend of the Piper, Joan of Arc; A Christmas Tale, Precious, and

	Price
OPERA: "LITTLE WOMEN"	\$1.00
OPERA: "THE BROWNINGS GO TO ITALY"	\$1.00
FORTY-FOUR SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE (English & French).	\$10.00

NEWER SONGS

THE GALLOPING SONG (Baritone)	.25
GRACE FOR A CHILD	.25
CHILDREN'S SPRING.	.25
MY ANNABELLE	.10
UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES (2 Keys).	.25
A PROMISE (2 Keys).	.25
WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST (English & German words) (2 Keys)	.50
A SHEPHERD AND A SHEPHERDESS	.25
A DANCING GIRL	.25
COBRA (English & French words).	.50
DRIFTING DOWN THE RIVER (2 Keys) Bar & Ten.	.25
THE CUP " " " "	.25
A VALENTINE (Medium Voice)	.10
THE DANCERS (Soprano).	.25

PART-SONGS

MY ANNABELLE (Trio for Women's Voices)	.10
A PROMISE	.10
SONG, THE SHEPHERDESS (Baritone)	.25
THE FLOWERS OF FRANCE (Duet for high and low voices)	.25
A GREEK DANCE (Waltz for Two Pianos)	.50

QUINTETS (Piano and Four Strings) per rental.
SPANISH BALLET FANTASY (for Full Orchestra) per rental.
FAVORITE SONGS (3 Keys)

PART-SONGS

DRIFTING DOWN THE RIVER (Quartets for Men's Voices)	.10
A CAROL	.10
A PROMISE	.10
JENNY KISS'D ME	.10
(Orchestral Ballade, per rental) FOUR MODERN DANCES, ...	
RUSSIAN BALLET FANTASY (for Full Orchestra) per rental.	.25
SCHERZETTO (For Piano)	.25
NINE LYRICS (For two pianos, etc.)	.25

LATER SONGS

A LOVE-CALL (2 Keys).	.25
TO A DREAMER. (2 Keys).	.25
RONDEL. (Medium Key)	.25
WHEN IS LIFE'S YOUTH (Medium Key)	.25

8 OTHER SONGS

GUNDS (For Baritone) (Words by G.A. Robinson-Aubler)	.50
KUNI-SAN (For Baritone)	.50
WHISPERING WINDS (In two Keys - Baritone and Tenor)	.40
QUESTIONS (For Baritone)	.25
DEAR WENT THOU LESS (Tenor)	.25
NIGHT OF A THOUSAND STARS (Baritone)	.50
PARTED (2 Keys).	.50
LOVE AND NATURE (2 Keys)	.50
TWO PIANO NUMBERS - Lyric Intermezzo, Souvenir, Andante, Rhythmic Har- monies, Rondo, Scherzetto, A Greek Dance.	.50

Published by National Music Company, 1830 Kimball Hall, Wabash Avenue & Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Fig. 45: Back Cover of "Upon Julia's Clothes" (Chicago: National Music Co., 1936), listing Freer song arrangements for instrumental and vocal ensembles (Music Division, Library of Congress)

mezzo-soprano, her own vocal tessitura; only five songs were written originally for high voice, among them "The Dancers," Op. 12, no.2, "Song of the Rose," Op. 12, no. 4 and "Nights O' Spring," Op. 39, no. 1.

In her earlier songs, Freer chose mostly texts by recognized English or American poets, but settings composed in the 1930s feature many verses by friends and colleagues in the cultural clubs or by prominent poets in the Chicago area. Several songs in Op. 40, for example, were published as "popular" songs; they included settings of verses by Barbara Helen Willson, Freer's third eldest grandchild. Greater ease of preparation for performers as well as audience appeal may have influenced the composer's shift in her later years to less esoteric poetry and simpler harmonies more readily assimilated by the average listener. The many club luncheons and cultural programs Freer attended and often organized were perfect occasions for singers to present such short, lighthearted songs.

Freer's entire list of compositions includes 103 independent songs, with an additional sixty in the cycles (forty-four in Sonnets from the Portuguese, five in Five Songs to Spring, five in Five Triolets in Song, six in Six Songs to Nature. Her piano solo pieces number nineteen, and there are fourteen original choral pieces among her manuscripts. Additional choral arrangements of twelve songs originally published for solo voice are mentioned in

notices of performances scattered throughout the music journals during the 1930s; no scores are extant for these. The eleven short chamber operas cover a vast array of subject material including early legends from Germany, France, and Scandinavia as well as Moorish, Spanish, Greek, and American Indian myths. The Chilkoot Maiden, an Eskimo tale, and Scenes from "Little Women" use both American materials and American authors (J. J. Underwood and Louisa May Alcott, respectively), while A Legend of Spain, Preciosa and Masque of Pandora, though European in story origin, are drawn from literary works by Washington Irving and Longfellow.

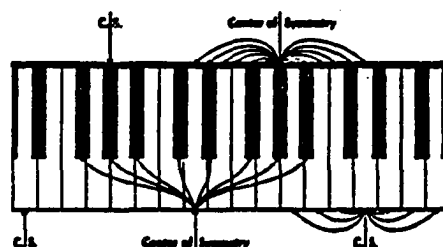
Freer, Ziehn, and Nineteenth-century Tonal Practices

Freer seemed to be curiously shielded from the new developments in musical composition that marked the early Twentieth Century. The total disruption of tonality found in Schoenberg, the experiments with pentatonic, whole-tone, or octatonic scales exploited by Rimsky-Korsakoff, Debussy and Stravinsky are not part of Freer's harmonic/melodic scheme. From her earliest works to the final song (Op. 51), the colorful and interesting chromatic expansion of tonality used by composers of the late nineteenth century is the predominant feature of her general style. Other nineteenth-century tendencies, including the weakening of a

central tonality, the use of shifting tonal regions for expressive purposes, and unusual cadences suffuse her works. Her methods of using these procedures will be shown in subsequent examples. Although Freer had experienced these particular sounds many times as a performer in her previous training at the keyboard and in the vocal studio, her work with Bernhard Ziehn was conceivably an important organizational factor in stimulating her particular musical style.

It is impossible to determine specifically the extent of Ziehn's influence on Freer's compositions. Her works exhibit no canonic writing or other counterpoint, the favorite techniques of Ziehn which so fascinated his students Wilhelm Middelschulte and Thorvald Otterström. The famous theory of symmetrical inversion⁴ also seems to

⁴In the theory of symmetrical inversion, the pitches D and A-flat are symmetrically arranged around the tri-tone B-F:



As parts of chord structures, these symmetrically-arranged pitches can "mirror" themselves as different voices in chord progressions or in canonic writing:

Original: Inversion:

have escaped Freer or was not suited to her musical expression: both her song and opera accompaniments, and indeed her piano and choral pieces as well, are typical of the homophonic style found in the nineteenth-century art-song and piano literature with which she had long been familiar.

Ziehn's exhaustive examination of music literature which occupied him throughout his life uncovered harmonic details that gave his students a kind of creative freedom perhaps previously unknown to Freer. His attempts to classify chromatic harmonies used in the nineteenth century and his methods of working with melodic and intervallic permutation were also elements in a new area of discovery. The chromatic voice-leading and several devices for melody-building outlined in Ziehn's Manual of Harmony can be seen throughout Freer's works. The following brief explanation of Ziehn's ideas and his chromatic seventh-chord and cadence classifications will show how Freer used these principles. In the accompanying examples, Ziehn's Roman

numerals for chromatic seventh-chords are placed in parentheses, while traditional Roman numerals are used to identify tonal sonorities.

Ziehn taught (in accordance with Rameau's theory) that harmonic structures were created from thirds placed above each other and sounding simultaneously. Each third, and subsequently each chord, could thus function "plurisignificantly" in several diatonic scales. A simple chord progression of two chords, e.g., G major to A minor, could be interpreted not only in those scales, but also in C major and E minor. The connection of chords, then, was not limited to a specific tonality. Ziehn's instructions for good voice-leading follow the common-practice traditions: common tones are to be kept within the same voice while the other voices move stepwise. They may move, however, not only to invariant diatonic pitches, but also to chromatically altered pitches. The result of these operations, extending the diatonic scale to include chromatic tones, could produce tonal ambiguity or quickly shifting tonalities useful for expressive purposes; a clearly established tonic thus becomes less important than the voice-leading used within the work.

Of particular interest in Freer's compositions are myriad examples of augmented sixth-chords, which Ziehn classified into nine types. They are referred to in his Manual as chromatic seventh-chords, each identified by a

Roman numeral (see Example 7).

Example 7, Ziehn, Manual of Harmony, p. 22:



The first chord in Ziehn's classification (I), when used in the second inversion, is commonly known as the French sixth, or augmented six-four-three, while IV is the frequently-used German sixth or augmented six-five (when inverted). Ziehn's Manual expands the augmented-sixth chord collection by showing that the remaining seven, so often found in nineteenth-century music, are produced by permuting the intervals in I and IV. In each case the characteristic diminished third occupies a different (permuted) position in the structure.⁵ These sonorities can be "plurisignificant" or multi-functional if inverted or re-spelled enharmonically. For example, both IV (the German sixth) and V sound like dominant seventh-chords; VI and VII sound like diatonic diminished minor (half

⁵Ziehn observed that throughout music history certain degrees of major and minor scales were consistently altered to produce heightened tension in specific chord structures. Each of the nine chords in his classification has one major and one minor triad of resolution: the diminished third (or augmented sixth) resolves to a unison (or octave), while the other tones remain or move by half-step. Ziehn's presentation of the "altered scales" is given in his Manual of Harmony, along with more detailed information and examples (p. 22).

diminished) sevenths; VIII and IX sound like diatonic minor seventh-chords.⁶ Freer's songs, like those of Richard Strauss and Franz Liszt, are filled with examples of such sonorities. It is probably their prominence which caused Glenn Dillard Gunn to remark that "Freer's songs are worthy to rank with the best of Richard Strauss."⁷

In his "Allerseelen" (1882-83), Strauss uses chromatic seventh-chord V at the climactic point of the first section. The diminished third G-B^{bb} resolves inwardly to A^b as it should (see Example 8).

Example 8, Strauss, "Allerseelen," m. 11-16:

⁶Ziehn referred to the diminished minor seventh-chord as a small seventh-chord, and to the minor seventh-chord as a small minor seventh-chord.

⁷See Part I, p. 69 for this quote.

Reduction of Example 8:



Freer's beautiful song "Summer Night," Op. 12, no. 6, also emphasizes a climactic moment with a chromatic seventh-chord, in this case Ziehn's VII. When VII first appears on the first beat of measure 8, the augmented sixth E-C* in the accompaniment is resolved by the D# of the major sixth F#-D# on beat one of measure 9. When the same chord reappears in measure 10, there is no resolution of the dissonant interval: C* becomes the point of an enharmonic modulation to D major, a characteristic nineteenth-century operation that creates a sudden beautiful tonal shift (see Example 9).

Example 9, "Summer Night," m. 8-11:

Example 9, cont.:

Reduction of Example 9:

"Es muss ein wunderbares sein" of Liszt features Ziehn's chromatic seventh-chord IV (the German sixth in E^b) to emphasize the dominant pitch B^b . The A^b in the voice part sounds like a long appoggiatura rather than a chord tone, and the ambiguity creates delightful tension (see Example 10).

Example 10, Liszt, "Es muss ein wunderbares sein," m. 1-

7: *Con elevazione.*

Example 10, cont.:

⑤

sein ums Lie - ben zwei - er See - len, sich schlie - ssen
al, When two, with hearts con - fid - ing, Are each to

(IV) (Ger. 6)

Many of the Freer songs do not wait to introduce an altered chord in a song's midst after a key center is established, as in the preceding Strauss and Liszt examples, but often begin with one at the outset. Freer's first work for solo voice and piano, "Cradle Song," Op. 4, no. 1 (1904) and the later "Apparitions," Op. 9, no. 2 (1906) are examples of augmented sixth-chord openings, a deliberate method of "clouding" a specific tonality. The chord IV used in the Liszt piece above is the first sound of Freer's "Cradle Song" (see Example 11).

Example 11, Freer, "Cradle Song," m. 1-5:

Lento molto e mezza voce.

Lento molto. *pp*

Sleep, sleep, beam-ty bright,

(IV)

(3)

Dream ing in the joys of night; Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep

(5)

Lit-tle sor-rows sit and weep.

poco rall pp

Reduction of Example 11:

Here the tonal center E is not established until measure 5, although the chord's diminished third is correctly resolved to E, and the key signature suggests E major. The altered chord IV is a German sixth in A minor, of which E is the dominant. When the first cadence in E major is finally reached, the resultant tonal weakness is produced by the relationship of the initial chromatic seventh-chord to the A major chord in the plagal cadence. These first five measures of "Cradle Song" also provide an example of chromatic alterations which seem to destroy one tonality but do not really create another. "Apparitions," another illustration of an altered chord beginning, uses I as the complete introduction (see Example 12).

Example 12, Freer, "Apparitions," m. 1-7:

Recitativo

Such a starved bank of moss

Till, that May - morn.

(I)

Example 12, cont.:

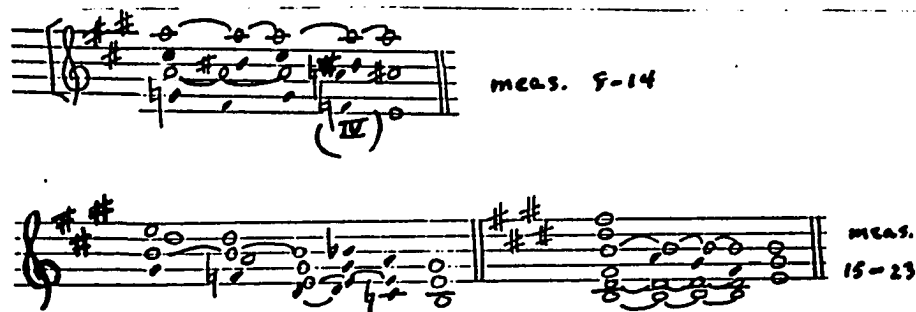
Reduction of Example 12:

The key signature suggests F major, but the introductory chord comes from the altered scale of the minor subdominant (B $\flat$ minor with raised fourth degree). The diminished third resolves to F, but the cadence chord following in measure 7 is A major. The purpose of this shift to the chromatic mediant is to prepare for the final key of E major, which appears first in measure 17 as a cadential six-four. The final six measures contain all the notes in the E major scale, but the pitch A has been emphasized for so long that E lacks tonal strength in the last measure (see Example 13).

Example 13, Freer, "Apparitions," measures 8-23:

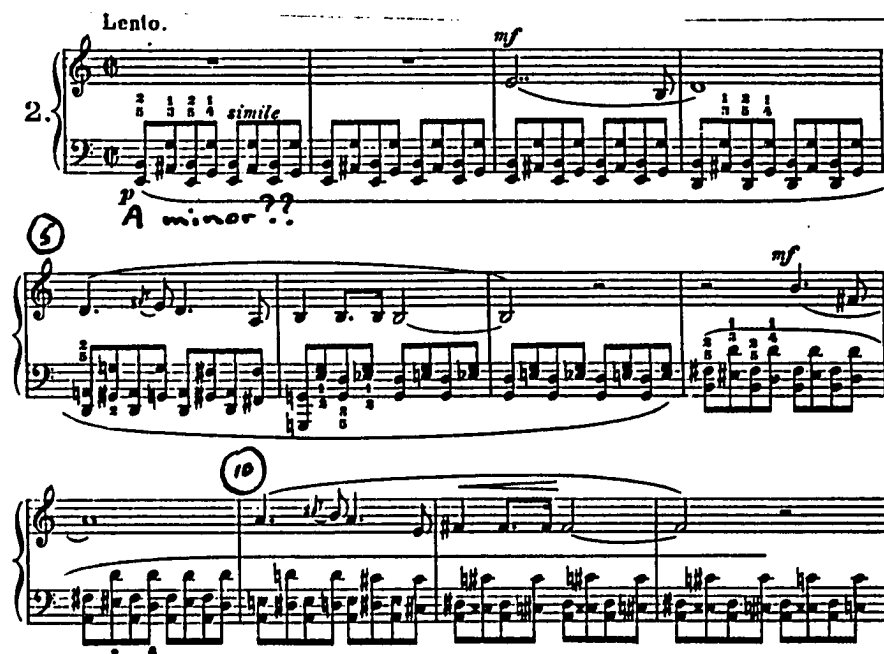
8 *andantino* *f*
 Sky what a scowl of cloud Till, near and
 far.
 Ray on ray split the shroud: Splen-did, a
 start World how it walled a - bout Life with dis-grace
 Till God's own smile came out: That was thy face!
 L.H. L.H.
 pp

Reduction of Example 13:



Nineteenth-century composers often intentionally created ambiguity of key in the introduction or in the final measures of a work. A famous example is Chopin's Prelude in A Minor, Op. 28, no. 2, where the central tonality is not established until measure 15 (see Example 14).

Example 14, Chopin, Prelude, Op. 28, no. 2:



Example 14, cont.:

Varying cadence patterns, found often in Freer's music, also belong to the nineteenth-century practice of avoiding or weakening a definite key center. The Ziehn Manual (page 28) gives numerous examples of "perfect" cadences (any cadence ending on the tonic, no matter what harmony precedes it), including those in which the final tonic is preceded by a chromatic seventh-chord (see Example 15).

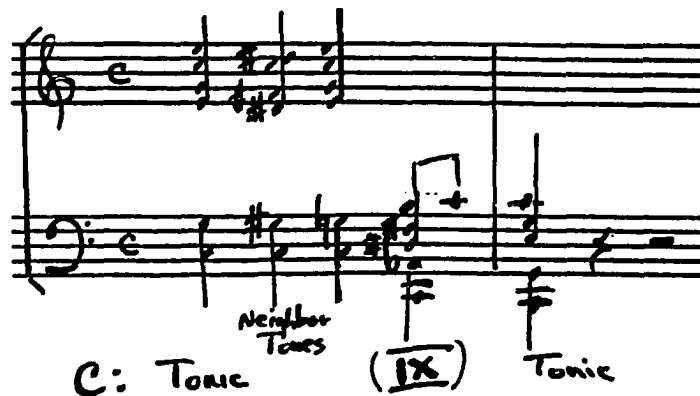
Example 15: Ziehn, Manual of Harmony, page 28:

C: V₇ ii_{6/4} (IV) I

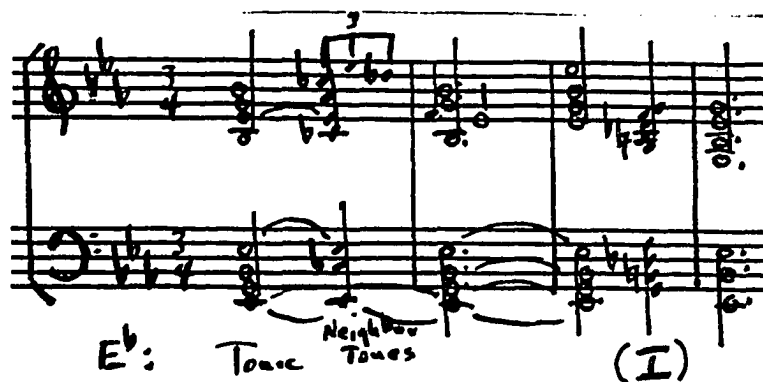
Freer's piano pieces, in particular, show her predilection

for this type of closing (see Examples 16 and 17).

Example 16, Harmonic-Rhythmic Study, final two measures (reduction):



Example 17, Lyric Study 7, final four measures (reduction):



In Liszt's "Es muss ein wunderbares sein" this type of cadence closes the song. The chord is the same sonority as before (Example 10, m.. 7), but now the chromatic tone A natural is in an inner voice (see Example 18).

Example 18, Liszt, "Es muss ein wunderbares sein," m.

31-32 (last two measures):

29 *langsam*
piu lento

sa - gen, shar - ing, sich nur von Lie - be in love a - lone still sa - gen. shar - ing.

pp

(IV) (Ger. 6)

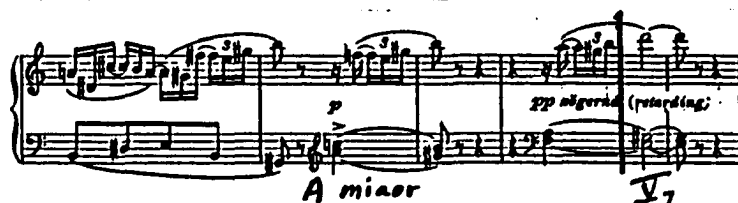
Ziehn also classifies in his own way cadences not ending on the tonic: "Every close on a dissonant chord, as well as every close with the dominant, not followed by the tonic, is an irregular cadence" (Manual, page 29). The following examples show the use of an unresolved dominant seventh-chord cadence in songs by Strauss and Hugo Wolf, in both cases, however, in the piano tag (see Examples 19 and 20). Example 19, Strauss, "Wozu noch, Mädchen," m. 35-38, final cadence:

Wozu noch?

35 *piu dim.*

F: V/IV V/IV

Example 20, Wolf, "Die Spinnerin," m. 85-89, final cadence:



Freer closes with the dominant in "Daybreak," Op. 4, no. 7 (see Example 21) and also in "After the Rain, Op. 6, no. 4. In the latter, the seventh in the dominant chord is unresolved (see Example 22). These are but two of many such cadences in the Freer songs.

Example 21, Freer, "Daybreak," Op. 4, no. 7, final cadence:

Handwritten annotations: *A minor: (I (F#C)) ii, (p.p.t.) V i_c V V*

Example 22, "After the Rain, Op. 6, no. 4, final cadence:

Lento

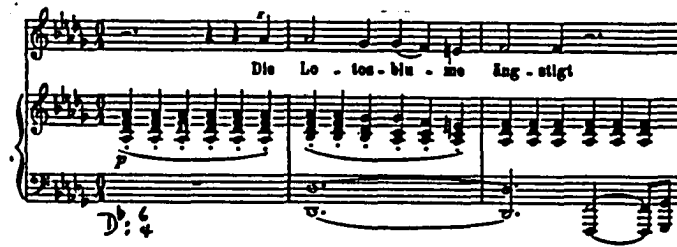
And in the bel-try sits a dove with pur ple rip - ples in her neck

D^b: V₇

In the preceding example, the key signature has little to do with the tonality actually heard in these final three measures. Implied are the supertonic and dominant seventh-chords in C[#] minor. In the last measure the root (soprano voice) and seventh (lower voice) have been re-spelled to imply the dominant seventh-chord in D^b major (or minor), the parallel (or enharmonic) key.

Signs of weakening tonality throughout the song and piano literature of the 19th Century include free use of the tonic six-four, often as a beginning and/or ending. Ziehn cites a number of familiar works which begin and/or close on a second-inversion tonic chord. Robert Schumann in "Die Lotosblume" creates an untroubled, open-space feeling with this sonority (see Example 23).

Example 23, Schumann, "Die Lotosblume," m. 1-3:



Strauss completes his beautiful "Morgen" with a second-inversion G-major chord (see Example 24).

Example 24, Strauss, "Morgen," m. 39-43, final cadence:



Freer's Lyric Study Op. 3, no. 1 features this beginning, in C major (see Example 25).

Example 25, Freer, Lyric Study 1, m. 1-5, reduction:



After undergoing countless tonal shifts, this Study ends on the same chord (see Example 26).

Example 26, Lyric Study 1, m. 80-85:



Freer uses the six-four chord as final cadence in a number of songs, among them "But only three in all God's universe," Op. 22, no. 2 (see Example 27). The tonality is in question throughout this strange piece, shifting from measure to measure, with C minor and E major seeming to be strongest in the last eight measures.

Example 27, Freer, "But only three," m. 32-39, (final cadence):

Example, 27, cont.:

35

rall.

We should but vow the last-er for the stars.
Nous sur-ions u-nis dant l'i-ter-ni-el.

C minor

E major

6/4

Conclusion

A detailed survey of Freer's compositions reveals that her conservative, sheltered background was an important factor in her creative work. Her natural gifts of absolute pitch, tonal memory, keyboard facility and vocal beauty, so carefully guarded by her parents, developed first within her home and later with Marchesi and her disciples. The majority of musical events she absorbed from the beginning of her life to the end were those in small, rather exclusive surroundings. As a performer, perhaps her most important experiences occurred under Marchesi's supervision. As a composer, she often listened to her own works performed in the social clubs or in the music rooms of wealthy music lovers and patrons of the arts. Audiences in these cases were usually gatherings of friends, social

colleagues, and musical acquaintances who supported her efforts. The small structures of her works, their limitation to music for voice and/or piano, and their conservatibve musical style show that her primary creative thinking was comfortably based on her own familiar experiences. based on her own familiar experiences.

Ten years of study with Ziehn added fuel to the flames "burning within," and expanded her harmonic knowledge so much that her music's outstanding characteristic is its Ziehn-inspired chromaticism. The release from tonality achieved by the harmonic manipulation of plurisignificant sonorities, an important factor in Ziehn's teaching, excited her musical imagination considerably, for her works exhibit tonal ambiguity to an astonishing degree; her most interesting pieces come from the years with her mentor.

There is no question that Freer was drawn to the song genre particularly; her love of poetry and literature is evident throughout her works. Her early life was permeated with her father's work in music and language; from these career-shaping experiences she also absorbed familiarity with accompaniment styles, reflecting words in music by word-painting and by rhythm and accent fitting the linguistic phrase. Poetry obviously motivated her musical thinking, since the greater part of her works are devoted to text-setting. Her choice of poetry is superior in the earlier period of her life; in her final decades she seemed

to favor the more popular style of poetry written by friends and relatives. Her music during this later period seemed to become a bit simpler harmonically, and thus easier for listeners to assimilate.

Freer's style best fits into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in that it features a kind of expanded tonality (with free use of chromatic tones), and cadence patterns in which the tonality is extremely weak or uncertain. Most of her music is somewhat unusual in its harmonic choices and melodic gestures. A superficial reading of her works is not enough to allow a complete understanding of her total purpose; her works must be carefully studied if a satisfying and intelligent performance is to be achieved. The following chapters will discuss selected works in detail.

CHAPTER II

THE SONGS AND SONG CYCLES

A Life of Song

At the start of World War I in 1914, Freer's completed works included, besides fourteen piano solos and eleven vocal ensembles, a prolific outpouring of text-settings: sixty-two individual songs, plus another sixty in the four cycles. The war might be designated as a dividing point in Freer's creative life: at its start, there was less time for composing because of her philanthropic work, and by its end in 1918, her consuming interest in promoting American opera had already begun. The creation of many new songs was superseded by these other activities.

In 1913 she had published "To A Dreamer," the first song in Op. 27. Until then, her works had come forth with great regularity, but at this point there began to be larger spaces of time between publications; limited personal time as well as publishers' wartime finances and

business schedules may have made arranging for publication more difficult. Whatever the reason, the second song in Op. 27, "A Child's Quest," did not appear until 1915.

While in the throes of organizing volunteer groups to care for the wounded here and abroad, Freer composed four war-related songs. Two of them, "The Flowers of France" (Miguel Zamacois) and "For the Freedom of All Nations" (her own verses), became nos. 3 and 4 in Op. 27. Both texts display her intense patriotic feelings for her adopted country as well as for her native America. With Op. 27, nos. 5 and 6, "Walls of Doubt" and "The Stealer" (poems of Lee Nichols), Freer concluded her wartime compositions.¹ These four songs were the only publications of 1916-17; no new works followed in 1918-19. Op. 27, no. 7, "Hymn," with a Christian Science text, and No. 8, "Etude Realiste" (Charles Swinburne), were not published until 1920-21. The latter is dedicated to the memory of her first grandchild, whose death occurred during this period. "To His Lyre," Op. 27, no. 9, its text by the Latin poet Horace, remains only in manuscript.

With the opera Legend of the Piper, Op. 28 (1921), Freer's second surge of musical creativity seemed directed primarily toward chamber operas rather than songs. At this

¹The poet Nichols was an American soldier who lost his right arm at the battle of Ypres in 1915. This information is written on the song manuscripts in Freer's hand (Music Division, Library of Congress).

point, she was consumed more with the effort of promoting American opera and American composers than with composing. Already immersed in the organization of the Opera in Our Language Foundation, she was spending considerable time writing letters and articles and collecting data about new operas.

Among the songs written during this second period, or what might be labelled the "opera period" of Freer's life, there are several examples of incorrect numbering, and some pieces seem to be missing. These later songs have a character somewhat different from those of the first period: the harmonies are less chromatic and the melodies contain fewer non-chordal tones, though quick tonal changes and unusual cadences are still in evidence. The poetry Freer chose was more often by friends or family members rather than recognized poets. Op. 29, for example, contains the six songs (nos. 4-9) in the "Love Cycle" of poems written by Edith Rockefeller McCormick. These six pieces, taken as a separate set of textually related songs by the same poet might be considered a fifth song cycle among the Freer works; indeed, the composer herself gave the title "Love Cycle" to the first three (Op. 29, nos. 4, 5 and 6). The last three (nos. 7, 8 and 9), however, were never published. No. 1 in Op. 29 is the setting of Bertha Ochsner's "Nights O' Spring," and strangely placed here as no. 3, among the songs, is the single two-piano work "A

Greek Dance;" no. 2 is missing, or perhaps the rest were incorrectly numbered. "A Greek Dance" did not appear in print until 1939 and there is no manuscript extant, while "Nights O' Spring" was published in 1923 and the first three of the McCormick pieces were in print by 1927. It is impossible, therefore, to determine exactly the order in which these works were actually written.

A complicating factor is that with "A Greek Dance," Freer now began to delve into her earlier compositions to create new ones (see Part II, Chapter I, Examples 4a and 4b, pp. 208-9). Although this self-copying technique is found primarily in the operas (and is certainly not unique to Freer), a surprising use of it occurs in "Whispering Winds," Op. 41, no. 5, published in 1936. For a setting of G. Hawkins-Ambler's image-filled verses, Freer returned to a song she had written in 1910, "How Many Times Do I Love Thee, Dear?" Op. 19, no. 4 (Thomas Beddoes). The Ambler poem is given exactly the same melody and accompaniment as the work written twenty-six years before. In Example II-1 the original manuscript of "How Many Times Do I Love Thee, Dear? " is compared with the printed "Whispering Winds."

Example II-1, m. 1-4 of both songs:

"How Many Times..." Op. 19, no. 4

Allegro Moderato

① How many times do I love thee, dear? Tell me

②

① "Whispering Winds," Op. 4, no. 5

Allegro

While - per - ing winds and laugh - ing waves, why do you

②

③

④

How many thoughts there be in the atmosphere of a new fall?

③

④

Another example of Freer's re-working of previously written material is the arrangement for male quartet of several earlier songs. These are mentioned in Music News, Musical Leader and Musical America in reports of special programs given for the Arts Club and the AOSC. Manuscripts for these are not among the Freer autographs. Such arrangements include "Jenny Kiss'd Me", Op. 25, no. 2, originally published in 1912; "A Promise," Op. 40, no. 4, and "Drifting Down the River," Op. 40, no. 8, originally published in 1935; and "Music of Wings," Op. 50, no. 2, published in 1940. A quartet called the "American Airmasters" is credited with the performance of these and other TTBB re-workings. Probably the availability of four good male singers prompted the arrangements.

Eight other songs, arranged for mixed chorus, appeared in a sixteen-number collection published by Kaun in 1932;² prior compositions in new guises figure frequently and

²This published volume, now missing from the Music Division of the Library of Congress, contained the following eight mixed-voice arrangements of previously composed songs: "When Is Life's Youth?", Op. 4, no. 3; "Be True," Op. 4, no. 5; "An April Pastoral," Op. 6, no. 5; "My Garden," Op. 10, no. 6; "Faith," Op. 12, no. 1; "A Carol," Op. 21, no. 2; "Old Love Song," Op. 24, no. 1 and "Etude Realiste," Op. 27, no. 8. Older works originally written for mixed voices included in the collection were "For Music," Op. 8, no. 1; "Lord, When the Sense of Thy Sweet Grace," Op. 8, no. 3; "Shall I Be Loved?," Op. 8, no. 4; "Unto Us A Son Is Given," Op. 13, no. 3, and "A Christmas Carol," Op. 13, no. 4. "O World Be Nobler," originally for SSA, was revised and added, and two new works, "Children's Spring," Op. 40, no. 1 and "The Wild Sea," Op. 40, no. 2 completed the collection.

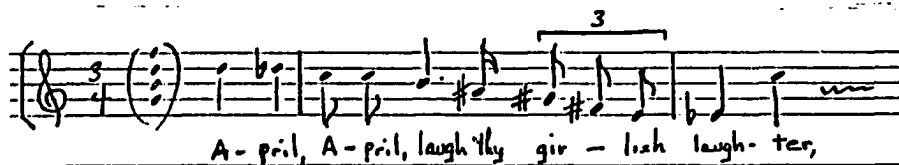
importantly in the chamber operas, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The songs, both early and late, evidence particular melodic, textural and structural traits used consistently throughout Freer's entire oeuvre. Chromaticism, non-chord tones of long duration, and quick tonal shifts creating unusual intervals are recurring characteristics. A number of the piano accompaniments feature double notes with multiple dissonances that disguise a simple chord progression; arpeggios with non-chord tones before or after accents are also frequent. Most of the songs are through-composed, with melodic sequences creating consequent phrases; the pieces in strophic form may define a particular tonality and then shift quickly to another, using the same melody in a new tonality or mode for successive verses. Short codas for piano alone appear occasionally, but the favored structural conclusion is one in which the final verse of a regularly rhymed text will contain motives from the song's opening, perhaps in a different tonal context. Some examples of these general characteristics are singled out for comment below.

Melody, Texture, and Structure in the Songs

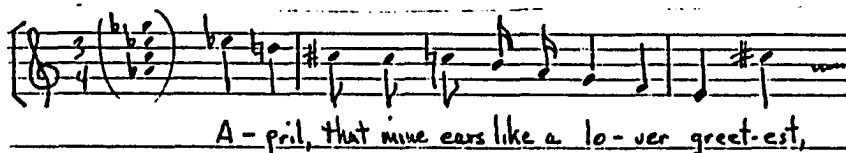
The Freer melodies are often extremely chromatic, a definite tonality absent until an intermediate or even final cadence. The abrupt appearance of a tonal conclusion with the third or fifth scale degree in the melodic line is characteristic, both in the independent songs and in those of the cycles. Sequential phrase treatment recurs throughout many of the songs. A representative example of these several techniques is "Song in April," Op. 6, no. 3,³ in which a chromatic melody is first introduced by a dominant chord in C major, only to arrive at A^b major for the first cadence (see Example II-2).

Example II-2, "Song in April," m. 1-3:



The second phrase repeats this line sequentially (see Example II-3).

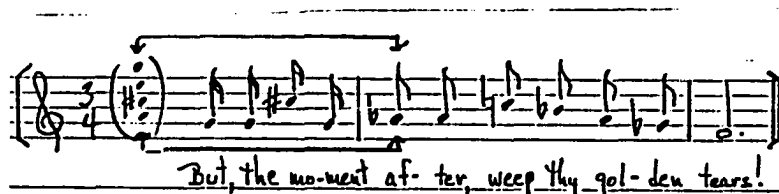
Example II-3, "Song in April," m. 6-8:



³This song, from the cycle Five Songs to Spring, is published separately as "An April Pastoral," Op. 6, no. 3. The actual title of this song as it appears in the cycle is "Song in April," while "An April Pastoral" is Op. 6, no. 5, the final song of the group.

Throughout the song's thirteen measures each phrase can be analyzed in a different tonality. The literary and musical climaxes of the final phrase are emphasized by introducing the key of $D\flat$ with the dominant chord of A major resolved as a German sixth. The melodic line leading to the cadence does not include the tonic pitch, but ends on the third scale degree in $D\flat$ (see Example II-4).

Example II-4, "Song in April," m. 11-13:



In Example II-5, these quick tonal shifts and melodic sequences can be seen within the context of the complete song.

Example II-5, "Song in April," Op. 6, no. 3:

Allegro

Example II-5, cont.:

A - pril, that mine ears like a lov - er

greet - est, If I tell thee, sweet - est, all my hopes and

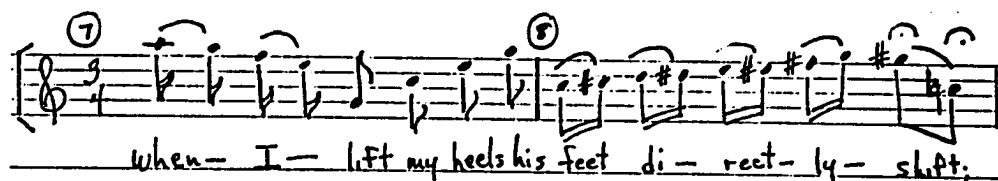
fears, A - pril, A - pril, laugh thy gold - en

laugh - ter, But, the mo - ment af - ter, weep thy gold - en tears!

poco rall *pp*

The chromatic scale appears often in the earlier songs, weakening the opening tonality and then arriving at a non-tonal cadence. This technique sometimes creates a difficult line for the singer. In "The Dancers, Op. 12, no. 2, a chromatic passage in the melodic line is inserted into a previously diatonic melody in C major; it destroys the tonality and ends the poetic phrase with a descending augmented fifth that defines no key (see Example II-6).

Example II-6, "The Dancers," m. 7-8:



The words "move" and "shift" in the poem are cleverly pictured in the music with the quick, non-tonal pitch changes of the melody line (m. 8), providing unexpected aural excitement following the C major broken chord (m. 7).

Sudden shifts of tonality and irregular cadence patterns remained an important part of Freer's style throughout her life; even so, she sometimes relied simply on pitches available to her in a given tonality, briefly modulating to foreign keys as she wished by introducing chromatic notes. In "Song of the Rose, Op. 12, no. 1, a simple opening in D major makes two quick tonal shifts to B $\flat$ and F $\sharp$ in the first five measures (see Example II-7).

Example II-7, "Song of the Rose," m. 1-5:

Handwritten musical score for Example II-7, measures 1-5 of "Song of the Rose". The score is written on three staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are: "If Zeus chose us a King of flowers in his wrath, he would call to the Rose and would roy-ally crown it; For the Rose, ho, the Rose! is the grace of the Earth,". The music features a melodic line with various ornaments and a bass line. There are circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 above the staves, likely indicating specific musical features or measures.

The melodic line beginning the second quatrain (upbeat to measure 8) begins with the same perfect fourth, this time in a contrasting gesture of ascent. The dominant chord of D $\flat$ announces the line which temptingly suggests first A $\flat$ minor and then G minor, the latter quickly destroyed at the cadence in measure 12 (see Example II-8).

Example II-8, "Song of the Rose," m. 7-10:

Handwritten musical score for Example II-8, measures 7-10 of "Song of the Rose". The score is written on two staves in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B $\flat$, E $\flat$). The time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are: "For the Rose, Ho! the Rose is the eye of the flowers, Is the blush of the meadow that feel themselves bare,". The music features a melodic line with various ornaments and a bass line. There are circled numbers 1, 2, and 3 above the staves, likely indicating specific musical features or measures.

For the third verse of Barrett-Browning's poem the music is a repetition of that used for the first stanza, now a half-

tone higher in E $\flat$, shifting to C $\flat$ (B) and A minor (see Example II-9, compare with Example II-7):

Example II-9, "Song of the Rose," m. 14-18:



Two melodic examples from "Golden Eyes," Op. 15, no. 2, and "A Devout Lover," Op. 25, no. 3, illustrate another of Freer's favorite melody-building devices. Created from simple triads, both these melodies are characterized by "suspensions," non-chord tones below or above the triad factors, occurring on the accented part of the beat, and "afterbeats," non-chord tones following the accent.⁴ In "Golden Eyes" this technique stretches out the dominant

⁴Ziehn's *Manual* describes this procedure as follows (p. 30): "Suspensions are upper or lower seconds before any chordic tone, delaying its appearance. They occur mostly on accented beats. Afterbeats are those tones which follow a chordic tone by degrees or leaps. They are mostly unaccented." On successive pages Ziehn shows hundreds of ways of using this technique with various broken chords, with seventh-chords, etc.

seventh-chord in F# minor for four measures (see Example II-10).

Example II-10, "Golden Eyes," m. 7-10:



Of the twenty-one textual phrases in "Golden Eyes," nine are musically constructed with the suspension-afterbeat style. The same technique is used twice more in the piano accompaniment during two brief interludes and in the coda. The four basic harmonies thus disguised in this entire piece of forty-four measures are the tonic, dominant, submediant and Neapolitan chords in F# minor, an unusual single-tonality example among the usually more chromatic Freer songs.

"A Devout Lover," on the other hand, is only twenty measures long; this same compositional technique is seen in every measure (see Example II-11).

Example II-11, "A Devout Lover," m. 1-3:

I have a mis-tress for per-fec-tious rare In ev'ry eye, but in my...

The continuous eighth-note rhythmic pattern which exactly follows the iambic pentameter of Thomas Randolph's poem is altered only once, when an eighth-note triplet followed by a quarter note removes the accent from "the" and also stresses the first syllable of "perfume" instead of the second. This brief respite from the constant sameness of the rhythm is a welcome and tasteful musical gesture (see Example II-12).

Example II-12, "A Devout Lover," m. 6-8:

Her breath is the per-fume of sa-cri-fice,

An overview of Freer's melodic construction must also include her practice of moving a particular harmony downward by half-tones and creating melody to conform to the new chord. "Cradle Song," Op. 4, no. 1, illustrates this in its opening measures. The melodic rhythm imitates a rocking cradle (see Example II-13).

Example II-13, "Cradle Song," m. 1-3:

① sleep - sleep - beau-ty bright,

② Dream-ing in the joys of night, sleep - sleep

③

Freer's setting of Tennyson's "Summer Night," Op. 12, no. 6, again illustrates this technique, using two seventh-chords a half-tone apart (see Example II-14).

Example II-14, "Summer Night," m. 1-3:

① Now sleeps the crim-son pet-al, now the white- Nor waves the;

②

③ cy-press in the pal-ace walk.

Abundant textural contrasts add interest to Freer's songs; a particular chordal or double-note passage containing a motive from the song often creates its introduction or ending in the piano accompaniment. That

Freer was an accomplished pianist herself is evident to anyone who studies her works. The song accompaniments present myriad examples of simple chord progressions decorated with unexpected dissonances (Ziehn's "figuration"), as well as rapid arpeggios, double-note passages, and other technical flourishes. The airy, broken-chord pattern which suffuses "How Many Times Do I Love Thee?" and its later counterpart "Whispering Winds" (Example II-1) is only one example of Freer's frequent use of repeated arpeggios (here imitating water or wind). In many songs the piano's quiet harmonies move with the same rhythm as the melody itself; other settings employ backgrounds of repeated chords at dramatic points in the text, and still others rely on motivic repetitions to present an appropriate mood for the chosen poem. Some of these characteristics are seen in the following examples.

"Like A Shooting Star, Love," Op. 4, no. 4, begins with an introduction sparked by closely-voiced, quick-moving chords whose non-harmonic tones prolong the dominant harmony in G major for seven measures (see Example II-15).⁵

⁵The technique of ornamenting a sustained triad with accidental dissonances is described in many short examples on pages 62-63 of Ziehn's Manual. Freer used this device consistently in both her song accompaniments and piano works.

Example II-15, "Like A Shooting Star, Love," m. 1-8:

The musical score is for the piece "Like A Shooting Star, Love" (Example II-15), measures 1-8. It is written in 3/4 time, key of D major, and marked "Andante." The score is presented in three systems, each containing a piano accompaniment and a vocal line.

System 1 (Measures 1-2): The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line. The vocal line begins with a single melodic line. The tempo is marked "Andante."

System 2 (Measures 3-5): The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line. The vocal line continues with a single melodic line. The tempo is marked "Andante."

System 3 (Measures 6-8): The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line. The vocal line continues with a single melodic line. The tempo is marked "Andante."

When the voice enters in measure 9, the triplet figure first heard in the eighth measure continues, highlighting the melody and text over a less busy accompaniment; the sixteenth notes disappear entirely. The dissonances remain, creating an unexpected effect when combined with the vocal line, as in measures 13-16 (see Example II-16).

Example II-16, "Like A Shooting Star, Love," m. 13-16:

The musical score for Example II-16, "Like A Shooting Star, Love," measures 13-16, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 13 and 14, and the second system covers measures 15 and 16. The music is in 3/4 time and the key of D major (indicated by two sharps). The vocal line is written in a soprano clef, and the piano accompaniment is in a bass clef. The lyrics are: "Pray do - not - flee, Love" for measures 13-14 and "Would you that I die?" for measures 15-16. The piano accompaniment features a triplet figure in the right hand and a descending line in the left hand. The measures are numbered 13, 14, 15, and 16 in circles.

"To a Dreamer," Op. 27, no. 1 (Agnes Lee), illustrates one of Freer's quiet, chordal accompaniments that moves exactly with the singer, while non-harmonic tones draw a descending line in the bass against the singer's upward gesture. A change of mode makes a simple but interesting consequent phrase (see Example II-17).

Example II-17, "To a Dreamer," m. 1-8:

Lento

Build air-cas-les, child. Build high and build he-gal. To
gem- pa- ven halls Bring bloom of the wild And

Lee's poem is composed of two six-line stanzas, each with a rhyme scheme of A-B-C-A-B-C. Each line contains two dactylic feet. For this rather unusual small structure, Freer has used a strophic form, varying the second verse very simply by enriching the voicing of the accompanying chords and also syncopating them. Change of register in the last phrase effectively emphasizes the poetic climax while providing a bit more variety (see Example II-18).

Example II-18, "To a Dreamer," m. 17-24:

has... tions up... sprung. And when you are gray, I dream
 yet, for the dreamer For... er... is young.

The final poetic phrase is followed by a quiet four-measure coda for piano alone. The manuscript for this particular Freer song shows several ink-blots which are "corrected" by written-in pitch names; apparently she trusted her editor to produce a fair copy.

In "Evening Song," Op. 21, no. 3 (copyrighted 1907, published 1913), repetition of a motive is Freer's compositional method of building an accompaniment. The first four measures of the piece show the motive used with two of her favorite choices--a descending chromatic bass line and Ziehn's chromatic seventh-chord I (see Example II-19).

Example II-19, "Evening Song," m. 1-4:

Andante

look off, dear love, across the shal-low sands, And

mark the meeting of the sun and sea, How

③

③ (I)

Here is another example of text-painting, as the words "look off" begin an ascending melodic figure to express distance, concluding one octave higher than the opening pitch. This beautiful song is used again in the opera *Frithiof*, Op. 40 (1929), where, with an entirely different text, it retains the sadly contemplative mood of the original. The introduction preceding the song-become-aria is a little fanfare in triple meter, announcing the entrance of Björn, a courtier in the palace of King Ring. The original quadruple meter of the song remains as it was (see Example II-20).⁶

⁶Frithiof, disguised as an old mariner, has traveled to Ring's domain to find Ingeborg, his childhood playmate and true love. From Björn he learns that King Ring will overcome his enemies in the coming battle and claim Ingeborg as his bride.

Example II-20, Frithiof, m. 331-38:

(Frithiof turns and looks at the Temple)
Andante

till me, In-ge-borg, where is she? The word bring

must be spok - en sad - ly; And I fear 'twill move not thy spir - it

glad - ly. When we have sail'd, will King Ring march down, Fire

A Freer song that combines several of the compositional techniques discussed here is "I Have Done, Put By the Lute," Op. 14, no. 2 (1907). The text of the poem (Duncan Campbell Scott) perhaps indicates Freer's feelings at the time of her illness in 1907. The first line, "Songs and singing soon are over," is a poignant and strong statement whose meaning obviously had personal significance. "I am like a weary linnet, for my throat has no song in it," rings like her own lament for her lost energy and well-being. The lament which governs the poem is treated as a recitative in an introduction of three measures; this becomes a refrain subsequently heard at the end of each quatrain. A tonic pedal supports the dominant seventh-

Example II-21, "I Have Done," m. 1-12:

Andante
 I have done, Pick by the date; Long and sing- ing

Andante
 Long as air- my shades that hor- er lip a- love the

Andante
 Jour- file closer — I have done, Pick by the date.

266

more important than the music, which is less complex tonally than most of the other songs written prior to her illness. That early body of work includes in its total three short cycles and probably some, if not all, of the forty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese.

The Song Cycles

Freer composed four song cycles before Ziehn's death in 1912. The first, Five Songs to Spring, Op. 6 (1905), brings together "The Eternal Spring" (John Milton), "Song in March" (William Gilmore Simms), "Song in April" (William Watson), "Incipit Vita Nova" (William Morton Payne), and "An April Pastoral" (Austin Dobson).

In Six Songs to Nature, Op. 10 (1905), Freer again uses subject-related texts, grouping "The World Beautiful" (Thomas Hood), "Before the Rain" and "After the Rain" (Thomas Bailey Aldrich), "The Harvest Moon" (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow), "My Garden" (Thomas Edward Brown), and "To the Western Wind" (Robert Herrick). Freer's German translation of the six songs, made with the help of her friend Gertrude Walter, was a project completed much later.

The brief Five Triolets in Song was inspired by Dobson's five short verses relating to a particular "Rose." The individual songs in this unpublished cycle total only seventy-one measures. The settings of Elizabeth Barrett-

Browning's forty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese, on the other hand, are a compositional tour de force that contains some of Freer's best and most unusual music. The French version, prepared by Freer and published in 1939, adds a remarkable dimension, lending a different and richer color to the music.

In Op. 29, a group of three songs set to the poetry of Edith Rockefeller McCormick and published in 1927, are referred to as "Love Cycle." Their titles are "How Can We Know?," "I Write Not to Thee, Dearest," and "Love." Three additional McCormick poems were eventually set to music but not published: "Between," "Thou" and "It Was Spoken" were perhaps intended to join the songs in "Love Cycle." Several of the individual McCormick songs were performed more than once on special programs at the Chicago Arts Club, but the complete group of six was never presented as a cycle. Freer herself apparently held Five Songs to Spring, Six Songs to Nature, and Sonnets from the Portuguese to be the most important of her song cycles: she delved into them later in her career, and used some of their best music in her chamber operas. Several of these interesting re-workings or unaltered insertions are shown and discussed in the following section.

Five Songs to Spring, Op. 6

"The Eternal Spring" by John Milton begins Freer's first song cycle. It is an esoteric little verse which Freer fashions into a prelude-like song of thirteen measures. This brief opening song features a rustling thirty-second-note ostinato representing the spring breeze, and a recitative-like melody which were adopted later for the opera Joan of Arc, Op. 38 (1929). The two musical presentations are compared in Example II-22a and II-22b.

Example II-22a, "The Eternal Spring," Op. 6, no. 1, m. 1-6:

Example II-22a, "The Eternal Spring," Op. 6, no. 1, m. 1-6:

The musical score is in F# major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a thirty-second-note ostinato in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Airs, ver-nal", "Breathing the scent of", and "field and grove,".

Example II-22a, cont.:

In Joan of Arc, a single measure of recitative allows the heroine to address Dunois, Earl of Orleans, before the original melody commences. Its beginning is now placed after the first beat of the measure instead of the second; the repeated notes in measure 3 of "The Eternal Spring" are elided, and the eighth notes of measures four and five have become sixteenth notes. Even with these changes, the proper stresses of the text are still observed (see Example II-22b).

Example II-22b, Joan of Arc, m. 484-88:

The musical score is for a scene from *Joan of Arc*, measures 484-88. It is written for a voice and piano. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, each with three staves (voice, piano right hand, piano left hand). The first system begins with a recitative for Joan (m. 484) and a piano accompaniment. The second system begins with a song for Joan (m. 485) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Du - nois, Why tempt your God in such a place? A - bandon it at once, for it be- comes thee not." The score is written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef for the voice and piano right hand, and a bass clef for the piano left hand. The piano part features a prominent arpeggiated figure in the right hand and a more static accompaniment in the left hand.

Joan: (recit.)
(484) Du - nois,
(song):
(485) Why tempt your God in
(486) such a place?
(487) A - bandon it at once, for it be-
(488) comes thee not.

The most unusual of the Five Songs to Spring is "An April Pastoral," which bears an indication on the manuscript that it is "to be sung by one or two persons." Austin Dobson's poem is in the form of a dialogue between a shepherd and a shepherdess, a subject which seems to have fascinated Freer, as several of her other songs employ verses of this type (Op. 5, no. 1, and Op. 40, no. 5). Here the motive of a shepherd's pipe accompanies the male questions, while the female responses are contrasted by the use of chordal structures moving rhythmically with the voice (see Example II-23).

Example II-23, "An April Pastoral," m. 1-5:

Capriccioso

(He:) Whi-ther a-

Wag- fair shap herd - ass?

(she:) Shap herd, I go to tend my kine.

Freer inserts "An April Pastoral" into the first scene of Joan of Arc: the two shepherds Claude and Etienne meet Joan's sisters Margot and Louison going to tend their sheep. The melody and accompaniment of "An April Pastoral" are perfectly suited to the action and dialogue. Both texts are similar; the duet parts of the latter are simply created by chord tones added beneath the original melodic line (see Example II-24).

Example II-24, Joan of Arc, m. 96-100:

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves (two vocal staves and one piano accompaniment staff). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking "Andante" is present in the first system.

System 1: Features Etienne and Claude. The lyrics are "Where go you". The piano accompaniment consists of a flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

System 2: Features Margot and Louison. The lyrics are "now, young sisters, dear? Shep-herds, we". The piano accompaniment continues with the same flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and supporting bass line in the left hand.

System 3: Features Etienne and Claude. The lyrics are "go to tend our sheep. Stay then, and watch our flocks, that sleep." The piano accompaniment continues with the same flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand and supporting bass line in the left hand.

The songs in this earliest cycle are not related musically in any way; they are bound together only by their spring-related texts. There are interesting and artistically placed motives, chromatic harmonies, and melodic gestures in each individual song, usually inspired by a word or idea in the text, such as the shepherd's pipe in the preceding example.

Six Songs to Nature

Freer followed her first song cycle with the choral works of Op. 7 and Op. 8, and the four single songs of Op. 9. In her second attempt at a cycle, Six Songs to Nature, Op. 10, the "nature theme" (see Part I, Fig. 7) unites the pieces musically by appearing in the first, third and final songs. In Op. 10, no. 1, "The World Beautiful," this theme serves as the accompaniment for the final vocal phrase before a three-measure piano solo ends the song. (see Example II-25).

Example II-25, "The World Beautiful," m. 15-16:

Example II-25, cont.:



In "After the Rain," the theme appears in the piano accompaniment to conclude the dramatic first quatrain (see Example II-26).

Example II-26, "After the Rain," m. 6 and 7:

The closing song, "To the Western Wind," completes the cycle with the nature theme stated in the piano.

The accompaniment styles of each song are clearly suggested by the poems. "Before the Rain," begins with an impression of clear, single drops of water and finishes with the rushing arpeggios of a tremendous deluge (see Examples II-27a and II-27b).

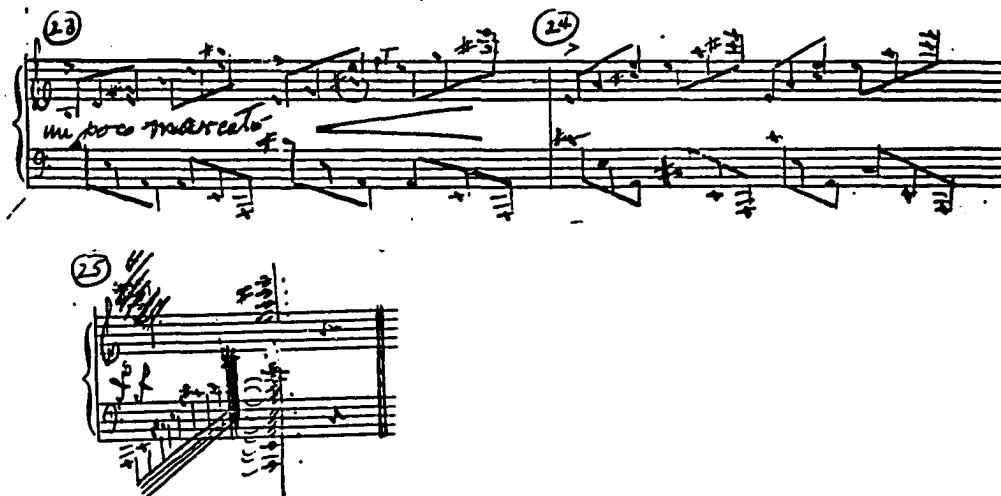
Example II-27a, "Before the Rain," m. 1-4:

Handwritten musical score for measures 1-4 of "Before the Rain". The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system contains measures 1 and 2, and the second system contains measures 3 and 4. The music is in 12/8 time and features a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are written below the staves: "The music will rain, for all the now, it spir-it on slow-ly, soft-ly of mist and rain." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *Andante* and *Allegro*.

Example II-27b, "Before the Rain," m. 21-25:

Handwritten musical score for measures 21-25 of "Before the Rain". The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system contains measures 21 and 22, and the second system contains measures 23 and 24. The music is in 12/8 time and features a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are written below the staves: "Lightning now is hang-ing in num-bered lines of rain!" The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *Andante* and *Allegro*.

Example II-27b, cont.:



In contrast, "The Harvest Moon" features an accompaniment of repeated chords to be played "lento e misterioso." The rising melody line in the voice at the opening suggests a quiet expectancy, completely different from the more dramatic songs which precede it (see Example II-28).

Example II-28, "The Harvest Moon," m. 1-3:

These three middle songs in the cycle, their texts by the American poets Aldrich and Longfellow, are the most

attractive and artfully conceived songs in Op. 10; they are among the works that show Freer at her best.

Roseleaves or Five Triolets in Song

The original manuscript of the unpublished cycle Five Triolets in Song bears the title Roseleaves on its cover page, and includes the five songs "A Kiss," "Circe," "A Tear," "A Greek Gift" and "Urceus Exit." Austin Dobson's group of whimsical little poems about Rose, a coquettish young lady of multiple charms and many interests, may have appealed to Freer because of its clever rhyming structure. Each poem has eight lines, of which the first two and the last two are exactly the same. The rhyme scheme in all five verses repeats the old rondeau form A-B (A-A-A-B) A-B, creating a little "triolet:"

Rose kiss'd me today,
Will she kiss me tomorrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kiss'd me today,
But the pleasure gives way
To the savour of sorrow;
Rose kiss'd me today,
Will she kiss me tomorrow?

Freer has not emphasized this structure by musical means; there is no recurring theme, nor any repetition, in this completely through-composed work. If the songs in the cycle were performed in Dobson's original order, without pause, the work could be heard as a single song of seventy-

one measures. In numbering, however, Freer made "A Tear" no. 2 and "Circe" no. 3. A close look at the songs shows clearly that she composed them in the correct order and subsequently numbered them incorrectly: a motive which appears at the close of "A Kiss," also begins "Circe, the poem that should follow (see Example II-29).

Example II-29: "A Kiss," Op. 11, no. 1, m. 18-21 (the close):



"Circe," Op. 11, no. 3 (Freer's number), m. 1-3 (the opening):

David Bispham's performance of this group of songs at a program in Boston is mentioned only in Foster's biography

of Freer (see Part I); no date, place, or name of accompanist is given. The cycle is referred to as "Roseleaves," Dobson's own title for his little "Rose" poems. According to Foster (p. 119-120), Bispham's printed programs always included the texts of his songs, and they are given in the correct order; presumably he sang them in that order.

Sonnets from the Portuguese

The cycle Forty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese, its poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, is Freer's most important creative work. A study of each song reveals no musical theme or motive used repeatedly as a method of unification. Like the Barrett-Browning verses, each song is an individual expression of love, passion, fear, death, or exaltation; the through-composed structure of the majority of the songs is likewise a singular, complete musical thought.

Nine of the forty-four songs (III, VIII, XI, XII, XVIII, XXI, XXVI, XXX and XXXIII) give an impression of three-part form: the last four or eight measures may repeat the melody and accompaniment or simply a melodic motive from the song's beginning. In these few cases the phrase in question is usually in a different tonality.

Since the cycle was originally published in four volumes with a group of eleven songs in each, the possibility of an overall musical structure conforming to this division would seem likely. Key relationships, tempi and cadence patterns, however, as well as accompaniment styles, seem to relate to each individual text. That Freer probably thought of the songs individually is corroborated by the fact that she extracted Sonnet IV for the music of a court dance in Massimiliano, and five other Sonnets for her later opera The Brownings Go to Italy. Although Sonnets from the Portuguese is a lengthy, esoteric cycle, some observations can be made which might be helpful in choosing a specific group of these songs for performance.

The harmonic relationships and tempo contrasts of the first seven songs form an interesting performance group which could be presented without pause. Unresolved sevenths and second-inversion chords at the final cadences lead smoothly into the music that follows. The eighth Sonnet seems separate, as if a new idea had been born in Freer's mind: its key and tonal changes seem quite remote from the preceding songs, and the style of accompaniment differs from any in the first seven. Sonnets XI, XVIII, XLI, XLII and XLIII, also seem to stand separately for similar reasons. The rest seem to fall into musical groups of three or four songs, as if their composition occurred in this way. The final song, Sonnet XLIV, repeats the music

of the opening, with some variation in the melodic line. This was surely a definite plan, probably inspired by Schumann's Frauenliebe und -Leben, Op. 40 (1862), in which the accompaniment of the first song is repeated at the close of the cycle.

It is interesting to compare the melodic lines of Sonnets I and XLIV; Freer has used this adjustment technique innumerable times from song to opera, and even from phrase to phrase in other individual songs (see Example II-30).

Example II-30, Sonnets I and XLIV, m. 1-8:

The image displays two musical staves, each for a different song. The top staff is for 'Sonnet I' and the bottom for 'Sonnet XLIV'. Both are marked 'Lento'. Each staff has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment for both songs features a similar melodic pattern in the right hand, with a circled '1' and a circled '2' indicating specific measures. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines.

Sonnet I
 I thought once how The-o-cri-lus had sung Of the sweet
 Cer-tain jour que je me re-mé-mo-rais Les très doux

Sonnet XLIV
 Be - lov - ed, thou hast brought me man-y flow-ers
 Mon â - me, vous me es - siez de cueil - lir des

Example II-30, cont.:

years, the dear and wish'd-for years, Who each one in a gra-cious hand ap-
 chants, où Thé-a-ctile en vers, Cé-le-bre, sans re-grats, les dou-ces

Pluck'd in the gar-den, all the sum-mer through And
 fleurs Dans le jar-din, pour m'ap-par-ter De beaux

pearls To bear a gift for mor-tals, old or young: And, as I
 heu- res, Les beaux jours a ja-mais dis-pa-rossent Les jours rem-

win-ter, and it seem'd as if they grew in this close room, nor miss'd the sun and
 bou-quets, qui fleu-ris-saient de-vant moi, Dans la mai-son, loin des bai-sers du

more rall.

Freer's French translations create several beautiful effects whose musical meaning somehow surpasses that of the English lines, as in Sonnet IV (see Part II, Example 27, p. 239, showing the second-inversion chord ending). Here the alternation of C minor and E major chords creates an augmented fifth at two places in the melody, both times as an upward gesture: the first outlines "nous prenaient dans leur plis," the second frames "l'éternité." The weak support of the unresolved second-inversion chord seems to add to the uncertainty of "nous serions unis . . ." (see Example II-31).

Example II-31, "But Only Three," m. 32-38:

The musical score for Example II-31, "But Only Three," measures 32-38, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 32-34) is marked "a piacere" and "a tempo". The second system (measures 35-38) is marked "rall.". The score is in C minor and E major, featuring an augmented fifth in the melody. The lyrics are in English and French. The score includes a piano (p) marking and a "rall." (rallentando) marking.

Measure 32: *a piacere*
 And, heav-en be-ing rolled be-tween us at the end,
 Et, si les ciux, en-tin, nous pre-naient dans leur plis,

Measure 35: *rall.*
 We should but vow the fast-er for the stars.
 Nous se-ri-ions u-nis dans l'é-ter-ni-té.

This particular phrase represents only one of many congruent musical and literary subtleties to be found in this masterful cycle.

One of the most unusual settings in Sonnets from the Portuguese is Sonnet XVIII. An ostinato pedal-point is introduced immediately in the accompaniment, the first of three such ostinati which are the framework for the entire thirty-four measures of the song. The melody itself centers around the perfect fifth C#-G#, with alternating use of an E# / E $\flat$ and A# / A $\flat$ to create a major-minor mode conflict. The effect is a static feeling which appropriately enhances the contemplative mood of the poem (see Example II-32).

Example II-32, Sonnet XVIII, m. 1-8:

Lento molto.

① I nev-er gave a lock of hair a-way To a man, Dear - est,
Nul au-tre n'eut ja-mais les bou-cles De mes che-veux, A - - mi,

p. ostinato

④ ex-cept this to thee, Which now up-on thy fin-gers thought-ful-ly I
vous se-vez le seul, Pre - nez, je vous vous don-ner cet-le tres-se,

Example II-32, cont.:

The second ostinato-pedal-point appears in measure ten; it continues for eight additional measures with the same two harmonies; the change in rhythm and register still create a gloomy, airless sense (see Example II-33).

Example II-33, m. 10-13:

In measure twenty-four a third repeated motive appears; the rhythm has again changed, but the two-chord harmonic scheme is used once more (see Example II-34).

Example II-34, meas. 24-25:

deciso

(24) I thought the su-per-ni-shen would take this first, but
La mort out em-per-ti La pa-rure un jour, l'a-

deciso

f

D: I

The final phrase returns to the first motive and a variation of the initial melody, incorporating the second ostinato pattern on the way to the unresolved cadence (see Example II-35).

Example II-35, m. 29-34:

poco a poco rall. e decresc.

(29) Take it thou, find-ing pure, from all these years, The
Trou-vez-y mal-gré les as-sa-ults du temps, L'a-

poco a poco rall. e decresc.

(31) Kiss my moth-er left here when she died.
dieu, qu'en mou-rant, ma mère y po-sa,

(33)

Barrett-Browning's poem is about several kinds of death; she laments the death of youth, she fears death taking away

her long hair before a lover appears, and she recalls her mother kissing her long hair before she died. Freer has captured the meaning of the text by utilizing a different ostinato for each representation of death, and uniting them at the end.⁷

Freer's songs and song cycles offer an enticing invitation to the performing artist. Challenging and subtle, the best songs demand a polished technique and a sympathetic ear of both singer and pianist. A great number of the songs present a similar mood, making it somewhat difficult to arrange a group of pieces that show enough contrast for effective performance. The poetry of the most musically interesting songs is often esoteric, with classical or archaic language, factors which today would limit the songs' performance to audiences with a high degree of musical sophistication.

⁷According to William Kimmel in "The Phrygian Inflection," College Music Symposium XX, No. 2, 1980, the image of death appears musically in the ostinato and also in the sixteenth-note triplet rhythm.

CHAPTER III

THE CHAMBER OPERAS: AN EXAMINATION OF THREE SELECTED WORKS

Introduction

Freer's eleven chamber operas, written between 1921 and 1936, constitute the major portion of her creative work during those years. In this chapter, the composer's ideas of character portrayal through various styles of music and accompaniment, her difficulties with dramatic development, and her methods of creating a unified musical structure will be documented by examining in detail three of the operas: Legend of the Piper (1921), A Legend of Spain (1927) and A Christmas Tale (1928). These--the first, fourth and fifth in compositional order--represent different architectural designs achieved by specific musical procedures which Freer used repeatedly throughout all her theater works. A general overview of the operas as a whole, given below, reveals their similarities and differences in formal plan.

Legend of the Piper, Preciosa (1928), Masque of Pandora (1930), and Scenes from "Little Women" (1934) are through-composed; each segment, whether arietta, sung

dialogue, ensemble, or instrumental interlude, proceeds directly to the succeeding event and is composed of new music fitting the character or situation. Massimiliano (1925), The Chilkoot Maiden (1926), A Christmas Tale, Joan of Arc (1929), Frithiof (1929) and The Brownings Go to Italy (1936) are all structured around songs written earlier in the composer's career, appropriately connected by instrumental introductions and short codas, or by short recitatives. A Legend of Spain is the only one of these dramatic works which might be classified as a number opera without connecting dialogue. It alone is a collection of separate arias and duets set off by instrumental interludes and brief choral sections; here there is no conversation among the characters, since all necessary information is presented in solo arias.

Freer's earlier successful experience with writing for mixed chorus and male or female vocal ensembles is apparent in five of the operas. Legend of Spain and Preciosa both require a male quartet; Masque of Pandora contains five separate groups of three women (the Graces, Fates, Mountain Nymphs, Wood Nymphs and Furies), all of which present commentative trios at appropriate moments in the action. In Massimiliano the courtiers form a mixed chorus, commenting on the beauty or horror of subsequent events. A full mixed choir sets a sacred mood in A Christmas Tale. The continuous sung dialogue in Frithiof and Legend of the

Piper is varied by short segments for three or four-part male chorus throughout the action.

Her use of dance is another interesting aspect of Freer's operatic conception in Massimiliano, The Chilkoot Maiden, and Legend of Spain. In the festal court scene of Massimiliano, the song "Thou has thy calling to some palace-floor," Op. 22, no. 4, (from Sonnets to the Portuguese), becomes the music for a ballet, the original melody to be played in octaves by divided violins. A similar device is found in The Chilkoot Maiden, where a saloon on the Alaskan frontier is enlivened by one of the Four Modern Dances, Op. 32, no. 3; this short popular-style piano solo is played by a bar-room pianist while the saloon girls dance a vigorous two-step. Finally, the elegance and exoticism of Spanish and Moorish cultures are displayed in two separate dance numbers in A Legend of Spain, each with appropriately characteristic melody and rhythm. In every case the dance scenes provide a structural element in the operas by occurring just before a climactic moment in the action, as if the composer conceived the dance as a delaying tactic or as a needed resting-place before continuing the story line.

Two compositional devices that Freer used frequently to provide a sense of unity and recognition in the operas are (1) a short, motto-like melodic/rhythmic figure (or leit-motif) to recall a character or event and (2)

repetition of the same music in a different meter or a different type of presentation. A leit-motif is used in Piper as a musical symbol for the troupe of strolling actors. In Massimiliano, a bell-like figure consistently announces the jester's entrances and also suggests his presence in the thoughts of the other main characters. Sonorous chord progressions played by the organ in both Piper and A Christmas Tale are reminders both of the church's influence on individual characters and of its singular importance in each drama. Choral music with the same melody and harmony but with changed meter is found in Massimiliano; in Legend of Spain and The Brownings Go to Italy, the melodies used for solo arias are used a second time for another character, or as duets, trios, or quartets.

Freer most often conceived her own libretti or freely adapted works of other poets or playwrights. Exceptions are Massimiliano (libretto by Elia Peattie) and The Brownings Go to Italy (libretto by G. Hawkins-Ambler). In Legend of the Piper and A Christmas Tale, two of the three operas to be discussed in the following section, Freer's literary sources were published plays. This perhaps led to the through-composed form of these works, as the composer followed the original dialogue almost exactly. The third opera, A Legend of Spain, is an amalgam of characters and plots described by Washington Irving in his Tales of the

Alhambra, the diverse situations giving rise to the work's separate numbers.

Legend of the Piper deserves a detailed examination as the first attempt of the composer at a longer form; A Legend of Spain is unique in being the only number opera of the eleven; A Christmas Tale shows clearly how Freer utilized earlier works as part of a larger structure. Each of these operas is approximately 35-45 minutes in length; all require mixed choruses and soloists of professional caliber. Additionally, two groups of ballet dancers are required for the celebratory Spanish and Moorish entertainment scene in A Legend of Spain.

Legend of the Piper

Freer's first opera is based on the initial act of Josephine Preston Peabody's four-act play of the same name. In this act, the playwright recounts the famous tale of the pipe-playing stranger who led the pestiferous rats from the town of Hamelin and drowned them in the river Weser, a legend which has often inspired both poets and composers (e.g., Robert Browning's poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," and Hugo Wolf's lied "Der Rattenfänger"). The original story ends with the heart-breaking disappearance of the children, who follow the Piper and his magic tune out of

the city, never to be seen again. (The thousand guilders, promised to the Piper for ridding the place of rats, were never paid by greedy Jacobus the Burgomeister (sic) and Kurt the Syndic (Councilman), so the children of the disbelieving townspeople were piped away in revenge).¹ Freer uses Peabody's first-act text almost exactly as written, though she makes several interpolations in the text for character-delineation or musical purposes.²

At the beginning of the action, the villagers are in a holiday mood, exulting over their freedom from the plague of rats. They are watching a morality play about Noah and the preservation of the Ark, being presented by a group of strolling players, one of whom is the mysterious Piper who had piped away the rats. At this point, he has not yet been paid, and the townspeople believe he has disappeared; they do not recognize him in his disguise of Reynard the Fox. When he makes himself known, angry at the suggestions he overhears from the Burgomeister and Kurt the Syndic

¹Peabody's play enlarges this story in three subsequent acts. The Piper's friend Michael the Sword-Eater and Jacobus's daughter Barbara are lovers brought together by the magical powers of music; the kidnapped children live in happiness in a beautiful forest cave; lame Jan is cured of his handicap, and his mother Veronika is miraculously saved from death when the music of the Piper intervenes. Since Freer ended her opera with the first act, these characters never reach their dramatic fulfillment in it.

²Peabody's original typescript may be seen in the Billy Rose Collection, New York Public Library of the Performing Arts.

vanished, the drama develops with angry discussion and argument about payment and its proper amount. The people and the officials cannot agree; the two politicians want the troupe to leave the village immediately without pay, while most of the people want the Piper to be paid at least a small amount for what they consider a deed well done. Barbara complicates matters by begging her father to let the actors stay and act out the play again; she particularly wants to watch Michael the Sword-eater swallow his flaming swords once more. Kurt's wife Veronika and their lame son Jan want the Piper to stay; Jan loves the Piper's music and his friendliness. The priest Anselm warns consistently of doom, but only old Ursula hears him; the rest of the villagers ignore his pessimism. After many efforts by Jacobus and Kurt the Syndic to denigrate the Piper's worth, the action is brought to a climax when the women question the Piper about his mother. In a dramatic aria he describes his early years as the son of strolling players, their poverty, his mother's sacrifices, and his determination to have justice for the wrongs done to her. He suggests that the children of the village would rather follow him than heed their parents. The people dismiss this idea, but when the Burgomeister offers fifteen guilders instead of the thousand requested, the Piper lifts lame Jan to his shoulders and begins piping, and the children follow him away in spite of their parents'

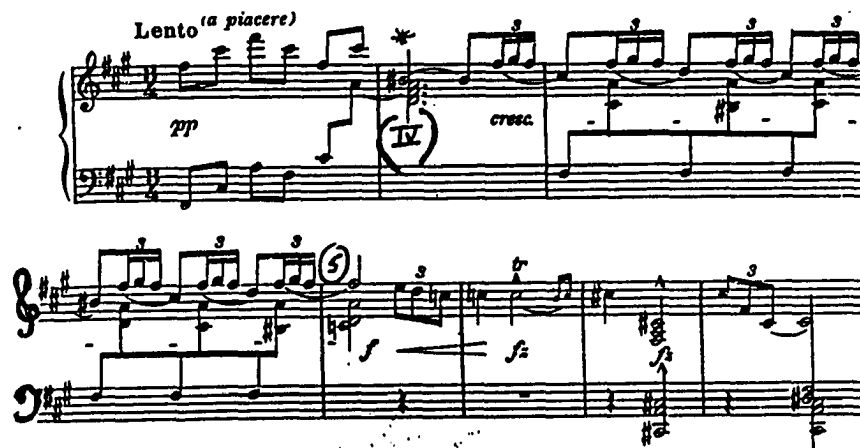
screams. . The church bells toll insistently, and old Ursula, who heeded the doleful warnings of the priest, shrieks "I told you so!" as a dreadful quiet descends over the villagers.

Legend of the Piper's single act is 894 measures long. Freer conceived it as a children's opera, the colorful characters and short moral tale giving her a perfect vehicle to carry out this first dramatic attempt. Many subtleties are merely suggested during this short work; much information and emotional sensitivity have been stored in the music and dialogue. Three distinct sections appear in the overall structure: the first 485 measures, approximately half of the opera, present the characters and explain the antecedent action. The remaining 409 measures first show the Piper subjected to a trial by the villagers (measures 486-577) and describe his heritage and moral precepts in a remarkable aria (measures 702-761). After the climactic revelation of the Piper as a real person, the denouement follows quickly. The Piper is refused his thousand-guilder fee (measures 768-813), he gets his revenge (measures 821-866), and the villagers lament as the children disappear (measures 867-894). Connecting links in the falling action are provided by a short, tantalizing love dialogue between Barbara and Michael; a touching display of affection between Jan, his mother, and the Piper; and Veronika's final plea to her husband to pay the

Piper what he asks. These brief musical conversations give some insight into the inner emotions of the most important characters. The final eighteen measures with their constantly tolling church bell and the horrified shrieks of Old Ursula make a fitting coda for the tragedy.

Freer begins the opera by introducing the music of the Piper. He is, of course, the most important figure in the drama; his melody is playful and rhythmic, but the F# minor tonality seems to foreshadow the tragic ending. The only interesting harmonic procedure, reminiscent of Freer's earlier songs, is the use of chromatic seventh-chord IV functioning as a German sixth (asterisked in Example III-1).

Example III-1, Piper's melody, m. 1-8:



A little motto-like tune heard subsequently in various guises throughout the opera is first used when the

listeners discover that the Piper has been acting in the play as Reynard the Fox (see Example III-2).

Example III-2, m. 81-82:

REYNARD (From the ark, golly) [Piper] JACOBUS

Eh? Oh in-dred, Me-now! 'Tis clear-est Prov-i-dence!

Motto

This motto is associated with the Piper and his travelling troupe, and is used as accompaniment each time the Piper is arguing with Jacobus the Burgomeister (see Example III-3).

Example III-3, m. 280-85:

JACOBUS

wo-men; Saving your health! No thought for pub-lic weal, In

PIPER KURT (Contemptuously)

this base grasping on- One thou-sand guilders- For pip-ing

PIPER

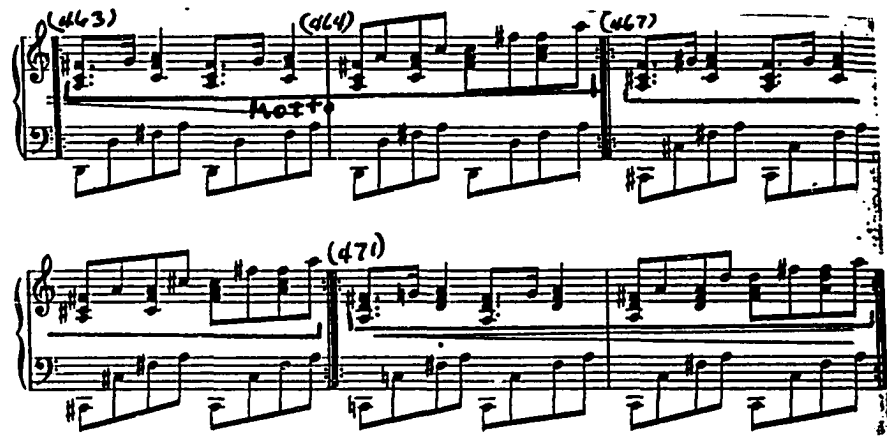
Shall I pipe them back a - gain?

Motto

poco rit.

When the money is not forthcoming and the players pack up their props in readiness to move on, the motto appears in an important sixteen-measure segment which completes the first section of the opera. The characters have now been introduced and the problem set forth (see Example III-4).

Example III-4, m. 463-74:



In this first half of her dramatic form, Freer has used arioso style almost exclusively, punctuating it with short exclamations from the village men and/or women in two, three or four parts. See Example III-5, in which the women exclaim aloud to the saints when the Piper suggests piping the rats back again if he is not paid.

Example III-5, m. 287-88:

Another such choral fragment which gives variety to the sung dialogue is heard when two men and the villagers beg the Burgomeister and the councilman to pay the Piper. The use of the same rhythm in all three voices intensifies their unanimous plea, and the emphatic rhythmic figures in the accompaniment add stress to the important words "ay!" and "pay!" (see Example III-6).

Example III-6, m. 344-47:

sum, friend. You will pay! **344** HANS & AXEL (With Crowd)
Come, there's an honest fellow.

Ay, now, pay! There's a good friend- And would I had the same.

These examples are two of many in which the townspeople act as commentators, a time-honored dramatic method used frequently by Freer in her theater works.

The longest individual expression in the first half of Piper is Barbara's two-strophe arietta of eighteen measures (see Example III-7).

Example III-7, m. 90-107:

2. Oh, 'tis my fan-cy yet to see them play, A while, and watch those
 1. No, no! Ah, Fa-ther, bid them stay a while And play it all a -
 same dear youths a - gain, For when they go a - way, my heart will break
 gain, Or, if not all, Do let us see that same good youth a - gain.
 Let my ap - peal be not in vain, Oh, fa - ther,
 ritar - dan
 Who swal - low'd swords be - tween the Ark Pre - ser - ved
 do For that Last Judg - ment!
 And the Last Judg - ment!
 do

In this arietta the orchestration would be extremely important: the higher pitches of the broken chord figure in the piano-vocal score often coincide with the vocal register, and the doubling in the bass creates a rather heavy accompaniment. Freer must have thought it important to emphasize Barbara's infatuation with Michael the Sword-eater; perhaps she intended to set the entire play to music at some later time, thus showing the development and happy conclusion of this love affair. There is, however, no evidence to support this conjecture. As it is, the character of Barbara never achieves the importance it ultimately has in the remaining three acts of Peabody's play. There is a brief conversation between the girl and Michael just before the Piper, his troupe, and the children disappear, but their later love relationship is only suggested when he calls her "my Lady of the Moon." The music here is not significant, nor is it related to the overall form in any way. Problems of this sort may be the reason Freer's opera was said by Glenn Dillard Gunn to be "made up of many charming fragments" (quoted in Part I, page 159) and pronounced by Albert Goldberg in Musical Courier to have "twenty-three characters [working] havoc to the continuity" (Part I, page 158).

The second half of the opera deals first with the attempts of the town leaders to outwit the Piper; the music of the Burgomeister and Syndic becomes pompous and

optimistic as they prove that the Piper cannot read. This is only one of their many crafty attempts to show that the stranger is of a low-level, undistinguished social class and is therefore not entitled to the money he requested (see Example III-8).

Example III-8, m. 490-95:

490 *Andante*
PIPER

Why not, then? 'Twas a bar - gain. If your word hold on - ly

493 KURT

when 'tis writ - We cannot open Clerk-ship on them that neither write nor read.

The lame boy Jan's music uses the Piper's opening arpeggio accompanied by the opera's motto in augmentation (bracketed in Example III-9).

Example III-9, m. 619-625:

Example III-9, m. 619-625. The score shows a vocal line for Veronika and a piano accompaniment. Measure 619 is marked with a circled '619' and the tempo 'Lento'. The lyrics for Veronika are 'Jan, stay here if you will, and hear the pipe At'. The piano part has a 'p' dynamic. Measure 624 is marked with a circled '624' and the tempo 'Tempo I PIPER'. The lyrics for the Piper are 'Church - time, Willt thou?'. The piano part has a 'pp' dynamic.

The motto is thus still associated with the Piper and his players, but now it seems to inform the listeners that the Piper becomes more closely associated with the children. At this point in the work, it serves as a subtle reminder of the music of the first section.

At the opera's climax the Piper sings a genuine aria, describing his painful childhood and memories of his mother, which is divided musically into three sections. In the first, the Piper answers the question "Who was your mother, then?" (see Example III-10).

Example III-10, m. 702-709:

Example III-10, m. 702-709. The score shows a vocal line for Martin's Wife and a piano accompaniment. Measure 702 is marked with a circled '702' and the tempo 'Adagio PIPER (Piercely)'. The lyrics for Martin's Wife are 'Who was your mother, then?'. The lyrics for the Piper are 'Mine! Nay, I do not know. For when I'. The piano part has a 'p' dynamic.

Example III-10, cont.

The anger of the Piper is reflected in the rhythm repeated consistently on the strong beats, both in the vocal line and the orchestra. A passionate accompaniment intensifies the Piper's description of his mother's suffering in the second section of the aria (see Example III-11).

Example III-11, m. 723-29:

Example III-11, cont.

wind, - she rovd and lurk'd and shudder'd out - side your win - dows, and fled

by, - Storm hunt-ed, try - ing to outstrip the snow, South, South and home-less

Non-harmonic tones on the strong beats project the pain felt by both mother and son in the reality of the past and in the memory awakened by the telling of the tale. A change of tonality (G minor to C minor) adds a deeper color and seems to express the Piper's reversal from bitter anger to passionate grief. The addition of a rich arpeggio on each chord change and expansive rhythmic movement complete the poignant contrast.

Anger re-appears in the third section of this lengthy outburst as the Piper shows his contempt for the "well-housed mothers" of the world. The rhythm here is the reverse of the first section, with the sixteenth-note figure on the third eighth-note of the measure instead of the first (see Example III-12).

Example III-12, m. 736-47:

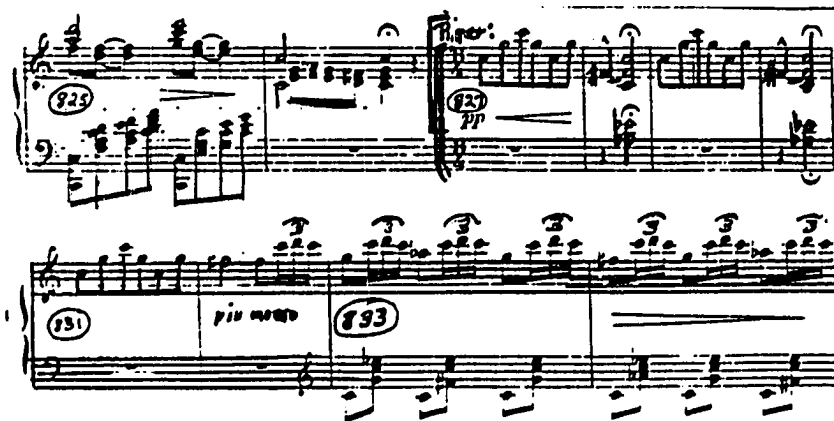
Nothing, for-ev-er, oh, you wellhouse mothers! As al-ways, al-ways
 for the lighted windows Of all the world, The dark out side is nothing;
 and all that limps and hides there in the dark; Famish-ing, - broken, -
 lost! And I have sworn for hersake and for all, that I will have justice,

A heavy accompaniment with close, thick voicing heightens the anger and pessimism the Piper feels; his anguish is the devastating climax of the preceding events. This lengthy

aria, in three distinctly different sections, is the longest continuous utterance in the opera. It emphasizes the importance of the Piper and gives his character a believable humanity. He is not a fey creature, as the villagers believe, but a real person with real emotion. The aria is placed approximately three-quarters of the way through the work, providing a perfect artistic balance. Following it are only refusal of the requested fee, the final tragedy of the vanished children, and the horrified outbursts of the parents.

When the Piper takes up his pipe for the last time, his original melody ends with a descending flourish, which acts as his call to the children. As they disappear after the Piper, the motto accompanies the Piper's melody (compare Example III-13, below, with Example III-1 and III-2). This continues until the children have disappeared.

Example III-13, m. 827-38:



Example III-13, cont.:



An interesting insertion of text made by Freer is a single line which reveals the misogyny inherent in the personality of Kurt the Syndic, who is the father of three normal children in addition to lame Jan. This subtle comment is another instance which seems to show that the composer may have originally intended to write music for the three additional acts, for it begins to make the character of Veronika into a tragic figure whose triumph at the end of the play presents the vindication of a long-suffering wife and mother. The use of the same pitch (f^2) for Veronika's cry of her son's name and for her husband's word "straight" emphasizes the miracle that will ultimately cure Jan, though at present his father is referring to the other children in his family (see Example III-14).

Example III-14, m. 870-72:

The church is both a visible and a covert presence in the stage set and in the thinking of the villagers, and also provides the place for important town gatherings. A hymn-like melodic-harmonic fragment represents the church organ at various times throughout the work, reminding of the religious influence guiding the people (see Example III-15). Example III-15, m. 535-36:



This tiny fragment thus becomes another means of providing musical unity appropriate to the dramatic events. As will be seen, Freer used this same unifying device of an organ motive in her later opera A Christmas Tale.

The bell in the church tower accompanies Ursula's shriek at the end. Its nineteen repetitions on f^1 are joined by the opera's motto, closing the action with a sense of the irretrievable (see Example III-16).

Example III-16, m. 888-94:

Lento
OLD URSULA

Ah, ring on, and crack the bell: Ye'll nev-er have them back - I told you so!

rall.

Lento ma a tempo
(The bell rings incessantly)

molto rall.

molto

2p

CURTAIN

Summary

Throughout the opera, Freer obviously attempted, as did the 19th-century lieder composers, to write different styles of accompaniment to reflect the different characters and dramatic circumstances. The formal dramatic divisions which can be noted are (1) the introduction of the characters and presentation of the problem, completed by the exit of the players (Example III-4); (2) the Piper's trial by the villagers, climaxed by his biographical aria (Examples III-10, 11, 12); and (3) the short denouement, like a coda, containing the final tragedy. The little motto (Example III-2) is the most important example of thematic unity, appearing like a leitmotif in various

tonalities either as an accompaniment or as a reminder of a previous story element. The organ-like phrase (Example III-15) provides another element of recognition, uniting the visual (the church in the stage setting) with the intangible (the importance of religion in the lives of the characters).

Legend of the Piper contains much charming music; the story itself will never grow old, but in the seventy years since this work was written, social changes have given audiences different expectations. The archaic language and continuous syllabic writing cause some difficulty in comprehension. On the other hand, many aspects of the opera are timeless. Lame Jan weaves a touching, identifiable thread throughout the action. His relationship to his mother, his love for the Piper's music, and the Piper's sensitivity to the lonely child are important communications in the play; Freer has faithfully embodied these subtleties in both Jan's and Veronika's music, but the work may be of too short a duration for these undercurrents to be grasped by the audience at a single presentation. The animal characters in the morality play and the officiousness of the Burgomeister and Syndic would still provide humor in a contemporary performance, while the Piper's kindness and his desire for justice are human feelings that will always be recognizable.

A Legend of Spain

Although A Legend of Spain bears a later opus number than A Christmas Tale, it was actually copyrighted one year earlier. As mentioned, the libretto is an amalgam of ideas, characters, and legends from Washington Irving's Tales of the Alhambra.

The Spanish monarch Isabella has just taken possession of the ancient village of Archidona which has been controlled by the Moors for some time. On the outskirts of the village stands a castle inhabited by the Moorish king and his daughter Anunit. The only way to reach the castle is by a secret path which the invaders cannot find. Responding to a prayer by Queen Isabella and her soldiers, the Virgin Mary appears and points out the way. The Moorish king, seeing the approach of his conquerors, jumps to his death from the castle parapet rather than submit to another's rule. The Spanish army overtakes the village and the castle, treating all inhabitants as friends, not captives. A local Curate, now free to speak without fear, tells the Queen that he has often dreamed of a buried treasure near the castle; the dream is so vivid that he has come to believe it is a sign. Another supplication to the Virgin brings the needed information, the spot is pointed out and a casket of jewels and gold is exhumed, to the rejoicing of all. The benevolent Queen brings the casket

to Princess Anunit in a gesture of love and friendship, and then orders a festal evening of music and dance. Count Benito, a captain in the Spanish army, falls in love with the Moorish Anunit, who willingly accompanies him as the conquering soldiers leave Archidona.

In this short opera (587 measures), Freer abandoned the arioso style entirely, using no sung dialogue but turning to a sequential structure with only full-length arias and ensembles. These separate musical divisions are not given numbers by the composer, but are successively rendered to conform to the different events in the story line. Short choral or instrumental interludes and colorful dances provide the necessary formal and musical variety. A seven- or eight-measure instrumental introduction to (or ending of) an aria occasionally serves as a unifying device as well as an opportunity for style change by using a melodic motive or entire theme from an earlier number. The same sacred choral fragment is used twice, at points approximately equidistant from beginning and ending, as the Virgin Mary conveniently solves the two problems in the drama.

Following is a table of hypothetical numbers for each dramatic event; subsequent musical examples will show the individual style of each character or event.

Table of Numbers for A Legend of Spain

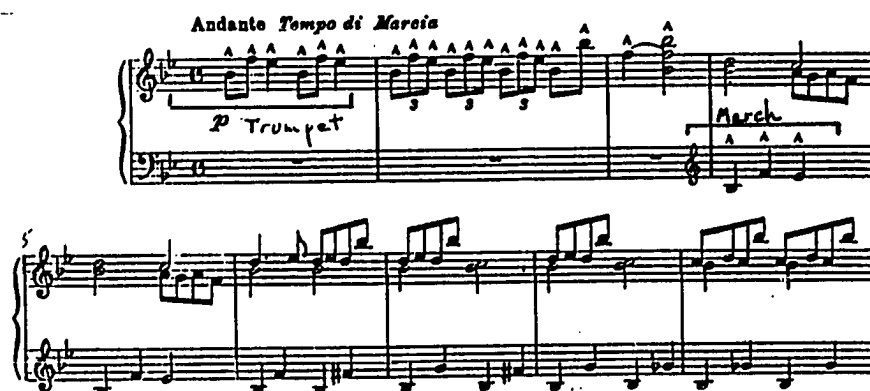
- [1] Instrumental overture (m. 1-55): the Spanish army, with Queen Isabella at the head, arrives in Archidona.
- [2] The Queen's aria (m. 56-98): Queen Isabella expresses benevolence to her captives.
- [3] Prayer to the Virgin (m. 99-117): the soldiers ask for help in finding the secret path to the Moor's castle.
- [4] Instrumental interlude (m. 118-127): the soldiers start down the secret path; the music reflects Moorish motives.
- [5] The Moorish King's defiance aria (m. 128-164): the King asserts his strength and confidence.
- [6] Instrumental interlude (m. 165-192): the Moorish King sees that the soldiers have found the way; the music becomes sad and reflective.
- [7] The Moorish King's suicide aria (m. 193-216): the King jumps over the castle parapet rather than surrender to the Spaniards.
- [8] Instrumental interlude (m. 217-228): the music represents military might and victory.
- [9] Queen Isabella's victory aria (m. 229-254): the Queen expresses thanks to the Virgin and reiterates her desire to be kind and generous to the fallen Moors.
- [10] Choral and instrumental interlude (m. 255-275): the

villagers and castle inhabitants join the Queen in expressing joy.

- [11] The Curate's aria (m. 276-316): a Curate, now free to voice his own beliefs, relates his dream of buried treasure.
- [12] Prayer to the Virgin (m. 263-275): soldiers and villagers ask the Virgin Mary to point out the spot where the treasure lies buried.
- [13] The Queen's treasure aria (m. 325-367): the Queen exults in finding the treasure and asks for a celebration with music and dance.
- [14] Spanish dance (m. 368-419): the Spanish villagers and soldiers perform a ballet.
- [15] Moorish dance (m. 420-480): Princess Anunit and her maidens perform a Moorish ballet.
- [16] Count Benito's aria (m. 481-520): Benito expresses his love for Anunit.
- [17] Anunit's acceptance aria (m. 521-537): Anunit expresses her love for Benito.
- [18] Love duet (m. 538-554): Benito and Anunit profess undying love for each other.
- [19] King Ferdinand's aria (m. 555-587): Ferdinand sings a reprise of Queen Isabella's victory aria.

The structure of A Legend of Spain easily allows an arrangement of the separate numbers in an orchestral or ballet suite.³ There is a great deal of musical contrast throughout, with constant shifting from major to minor. Freer's prosody is nearly impeccable. Her poetry suits each character's personality, and her music seems to reflect it. The text for Isabella, for example, successfully gives a picture of a strong ruler, but one with a kind and positive spirit whose reign will not destroy the customs and arts of the conquered people.

A trumpet call of a rising perfect fifth and descending major second, announcing the Spanish army, becomes by augmentation the tread of the marching soldiers and the accompaniment for the little overture (see Example III-17). Example III-17, measures 1-9:



³A suite from Legend of Spain was performed by Cavallo's symphonic band 29 July 1932 in Grant Park, Chicago (see Part I, p. 189).

Queen Isabella's aria presents a strongly structured melody of sevenths and octaves superimposed over both the melody and accompaniment of the military march. The perfect fifth B $\flat$ - F, enlarged to the minor sixth G $\flat$ (F $\sharp$), creates an interesting mixture of major and minor modes (see Example III-18).

Example III-18, m. 56-62:

The musical score for Queen Isabella's aria, measures 56-62, is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the vocal line, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating E major. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The vocal line begins with a fermata on the first measure. The lyrics are: 'Our Roy-al-ty comes not to con-quer the Moor, Nor to fight in joint quar-rel of Right or Wrong, But'. The piano accompaniment features a steady quarter-note rhythm in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand, including grace notes and sixteenth notes.

The Moorish king's two arias are superbly contrasted: the first, in E major with alternating major and minor sevenths and seconds, is given an Eastern flavor by its grace-note accompaniment. The straightforward quarter-note rhythm and the consonant perfect fifth and octave leaps of Queen Isabella's melodic line are replaced by an agitated eighth-and sixteenth-note motion and leaps of minor sevenths and tri-tones (see Example III-19).

Example III-19, m. 128-35:

Non presto, ma marcato

MOORISH KING

(28) Ha, ha, ha, ha, Come on, then, proud Queen!

(35) If a way thou canst find? Though no path can be seen, Fate to you, may be

The king's second aria moves to the parallel minor with a legato, repetitive accompaniment pattern. The scalar intervals, longer note values, and diatonic harmony mirror his sorrow and resignation. The two-strophe aria explains his unwillingness to surrender and his decision to die rather than submit to the conquerors (see Example III-20).

Example III-20, measures 171-76:

No'er shall I sur - ren - der, "In - vic - tus," I
Swift, from Oas - is's shel - ter, To chasms be -

(71)

Example III-20, cont.

(175)

cry! low Though Al-lah de-sert me, 'Tis
Is but one short mo-ment: No

The Queen's "victory" aria is a mixture of major and minor modes, with the lowered sixth and third of E major producing broken augmented triads in the upper voice of the accompanying chords. The rhythm and melody both are triumphal in mood; the text has been arranged to give the singer adequate breathing places (see Example III-21).

Example III-21, m. 234-39:

ISABELLA

(234)

Vic-tor-y, is ours to day; the bless-ed Vir-gin show'd the
way, As vic-tors, we must prove to Moor, How Span-lards,

The Curate's beautiful dream aria is the first in the opera to ask for a sustained legato line from the singer.

The rising arc of the melody suggests hope; the uneven rhythm of the accompaniment might have been chosen to depict uncertainty or troubled thoughts about the true significance of the dream. The conflict between major and minor is present once more (see Example III-22).

Example III-22, m. 276-82:

THE CURATE

Thrice have I dream'd of jew - els and gold, Which

lie be - neath this Cas - tle, so old. This

A Spanish-sounding rhythmic ostinato appropriately dominates the first dance interlude, its C major tonality punctuated by the use of the minor subdominant on the upbeats. The piano score calls for both castanets and tambourines (see Example III-23).

Example III-23, m. 364-69:



The equally long Moorish dance which follows requires harps, cymbals, tympani, and flutes. The E-minor tonality returns, recalling the Moorish king's final aria. Freer's use of the chromatically lowered fifth, which appears throughout the dance movement, provides added interest and emphasizes the Eastern color. The rhythm is more complex and less percussive than that of the Spanish ballet; the mood is one of serenity, exoticism and controlled elegance (see Example III-24).

Example III-24, m. 417-24:



Count Benito's love declaration⁴ is transparent in melody and accompaniment, distinguished by chromatic movement in the inner voices. The repeated chords of the accompaniment seem appropriate for the metaphor likening his love to the march of armed men, another example of Freer's sensitivity to her literary subject (see Example III-25).

Example III-25, m. 482-88:

COUNT BENITO

My love for thee doth

Moderato

march like arm - ed men, A - gainst a queen - ly

cit - y they would take, A - long the arm - y's

⁴In the score of A Legend of Spain, Freer informs the reader that the text of Count Benito's aria is by the American poet Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909).

Princess Anunit's acceptance aria and the lovers' duet immediately follow the love declaration, the duet acting as the last portion of Anunit's solo. The chromatic mediant relationship of the two arias, in D and F major respectively, provides tonal variety as well as heightened anticipation. Freer has constructed the melodic line by using sequentially the figure of an ascending third. This three-note motive appears twenty times in the seventeen measures of Anunit's aria, and is given an equal number of repetitions in the duet of the lovers. The ensemble is simply another strophe, with Count Benito singing a third lower than the Princess (see Example III-26).

Example III-26, m. 517-24 and m. 533-37:

PRINCESS ANUNIT

Oh, say not wom-an's heart is won

Andante

pp

A-lone by cap-ture, gracious knight. When first her trem-bling

Example III-26, cont.

(523)

bow - som knows love's flame, 'tis safe from fur - ther flight.

ANUNIT

(523)

Oh, say not that my heart was won A lone by con - quest,

BENITO

No sec - ond pas - sion e'er will charm; When once I love, it is — for -

ev - er!

Trumpets

rall. (as in opening)

The two choral prayers to the Virgin Mary asking help, first to find the path to the Moor's castle and later to point out the location of the treasure, use a broken-chord accompaniment similar to that of the Moorish king's second aria (see Example III-27).

Example III-27, m. 313-316:

LENTU

Lead us, Vir - gin Moth - er, Thou art wise, And

Lead us, Vir - gin Moth - er, Thou art wise, And

313

know - est where the se - cret treas - ure lies. Our

know - est where the se - cret treas - ure lies. Our

These short choruses bring textural contrast to the opera; they provide a welcome timbre change from the solo voices heard consistently throughout the work.

Summary

Legend of Spain is divided into four distinct sections by specific musical styles that represent the main elements in the story and create a unified work.

(1) The Spanish army arrives to reclaim Archidona and appeals to the Virgin for help in finding the secret path (measures 1-117). In this section the military music of the Spanish army and the victory aria of Queen Isabella convey a feeling of strength. The hymn-like style of the soldiers' prayer to the Virgin concludes this exposition.

(2) The Moorish music is first heard as an introduction to the Moorish king's defiance aria. It is recalled in his suicide scene as he realizes the secret way to the castle has been found; the army enters the village with its own military music heard in the exposition, and the two cultures express friendship (measures 118-275).

(3) The Curate, with a soaring new melody, presents the hope of finding a buried treasure.

Archidonians and Spanish conquerors unite in asking the Virgin to show where it lies, their prayer repeating the music of the earlier supplication (measures 276-363).

(4) the two cultures celebrate together, rejoicing over the treasure, as both Spanish and Moorish styles of music are recalled in the separate dances. The love of Benito and Anunit further unites the two peoples with music and text that combine words of a military nature with a tender new melody, just as King Ferdinand arrives and repeats the music of victory (measures 364-587).

A Legend of Spain is the first of Freer's operas with a happy ending. She continued this trend in the remainder of her chamber dramas with the exception of Joan of Arc.

A Christmas Tale

In her second and third operas, Massimiliano, the Court Jester and The Chilkoot Maiden, Freer used songs and piano pieces she had written earlier to augment a role, to add a ballet or other dance number, or to provide music for important entrances or exits.⁵ Music of prior works thus infused the major part of the operas' architecture. A Christmas Tale is the best and most successful example of a longer work structured around previously existing pieces.

As the opera opens, it is Christmas Eve in Paris. In a poor quarter of the city is a simple artist's studio that also serves as a home. Jacqueline watches her sleeping child, lamenting her husband Pierre's jobless condition and his state of mind which drives him to drink. She prays to the wooden images of St. Rose and St. Nicholas to help her. Pierre is a talented sculptor, and has carved the statues himself, with lifelike facial expressions that elicit

⁵Massimiliano uses the song "Apparitions," Op. 9, no. 2 to provide entrance and exit music for the jester. "To Love, the Soft and Blooming Child," Op. 15, no. 1, is interpolated exactly as written in 1912, to be sung by Lucrezia, the opera's heroine. Op. 22, no. 4 (Sonnets from the Portuguese), "Thou hast thy calling to some palace floor" is used as the instrumental accompaniment for a ballet at the opening of Scene Two, while the courtiers gather to celebrate Lucrezia's birthday. The Chilkoot Maiden, Op. 32, grows out of the Four Modern Dances for piano, Op. 31; These novelty pieces are used both as dance numbers and as accompaniment for solos or ensembles.

immediate adoration from every observer. Pierre calls them his "statues of love, my masterpiece." While Jacqueline and the child Rosette are asleep, the two saints come to life, bringing toys and sweets for the holiday. When the drunken, depressed but remorseful Pierre arrives home, the two heavenly visitors persuade him to change his life for the sake of his family and his art. With gratitude he renounces his dissolute ways and promises the saints eternal devotion.

Two Christmas anthems for mixed voices, A Christmas Carol, Op. 13, no. 4, and A Carol, Op. 21, no. 2, create a religious mood and form a surrounding structural framework for A Christmas Tale. The larger part of the opera's music grows out of the unpublished song "Sweet in Her Green Dell," Op. 17, no. 2, creating the music for the two leading roles of Pierre and Jacqueline.

There are three scenes in the opera, connected by instrumental interludes based on the development of melodic and rhythmic fragments from the three earlier works. In Scene 1, (measures 1-115 of the opera's 389 measures), Jacqueline presents the antecedent action in a lengthy soliloquy which uses nearly the whole of "Sweet in Her Green Dell." A four-measure introduction, with a tolling church bell and an organ phrase, precedes the aria, the organ music subsequently becoming an important motive. The two parts of Jacqueline's soliloquy are separated by the

twenty-four measure-anthem "A Christmas Carol," and the first scene concludes with Jacqueline's prayer to the saints, combining motives from the both the song and the organ phrase heard at the opening. The saints come to life in the second scene, (measures 116-224). Here Freer uses the organ theme again and introduces the main motive from "A Carol," the second of the two choral anthems used in the opera. When Pierre enters (measure 225) to begin Scene 3, the melody and accompaniment from "Sweet in Her Green Dell" change the religious mood set by the other two motives. Pierre now promises to reform, Jacqueline offers her continued love, and the original song is joined by motives from "A Carol," sung in its entirety at the conclusion of the action. A brief coda (measures 360-89) continues a development of these familiar fragments, ending instrumentally with the same joyous feeling created by the choir.

"Sweet in Her Green Dell" was composed during Freer's prolific period 1911-12, when she was still working with Ziehn. This unusual and beautiful through-composed song of thirty-nine measures shifts through implied tonalities of B minor, E minor, and D major, beginning on chromatic seventh-chord I (a French sixth in B minor) and ending with a Ziehn "irregular" cadence (a French sixth in D major resolving to the dominant). The melodic range is only a

major seventh. The entire song, a setting of George Darley's romantic poem, is given in Example III-28.

Example III-28, "Sweet in Her Green Dell," Op. 17, no. 2:

(Sweet in her green dell -)

Lento

1. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,
2. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,

(I)

5. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,
6. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,

7. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,
8. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,

9. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,
10. Sweet in her green dell The flower of beauty stum-bers,

(IV)

Example III-28, cont.

Down from the high cliffs The riv-u-let is stream-ing To

(I)

15

wind'round the wil-low leaves that lure him from a-bove,

O that in tears from my rock-y prison stream-ing,

20

I too could glide <to the bow-er of my love!>

Example III-28, cont.

Ah! when the woodbines with sleety arms have bound her,
 Ah! when the woodbines with sleety arms have bound her,

(21)

When she her eye-lids at the dream of my lay,
 When she her eye-lids at the dream of my lay,

Listening like the dove, while the foun-tains e-cho
 Listening like the dove, while the foun-tains e-cho

(25)

To her lost mate's call in the forests far a-
 To her lost mate's call in the forests far a-

Tempo primo

Example III-28, cont.

(34) *allegro*

-- way. Come then, my bird! For the peace thou hast -- ach,
 way. Come then, my bird! For the peace thou hast ever bearest,

(35)

Still Heaven's messenger of comfort to me --
 still Heaven's messenger of comfort thou wilt come --

allegro

(36) Come -- this fond bosom, O faith-ful-lest and fair-est,
 Come -- this fond bosom, O faith-ful-lest and fair-est!

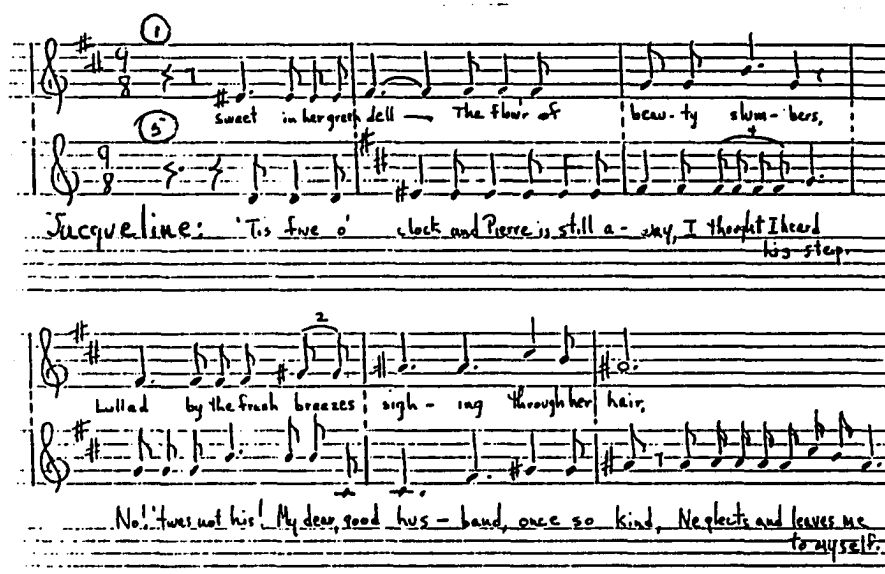
And.

Bleeds with its death-wound, its wound of love for thee!!
 Bleeds with its death wound, its wound of love for thee!!

(I)

In the opera, Freer adapted the song for Jacqueline's first aria, using exactly the same accompaniment but modifying the melodic line to fit her libretto. Example III-29 compares the melody of the original with beginning of Jacqueline's opening aria.

Example III-29, "Sweet in Her Green Dell," m. 1-6, compared with A Christmas Tale, m. 5-10:



① Sweet in her green dell - The flour of beau-ty slum-bers,

② Jacqueline: 'Tis five o' clock and Pierre is still a-sleep, I thought I heard his step.

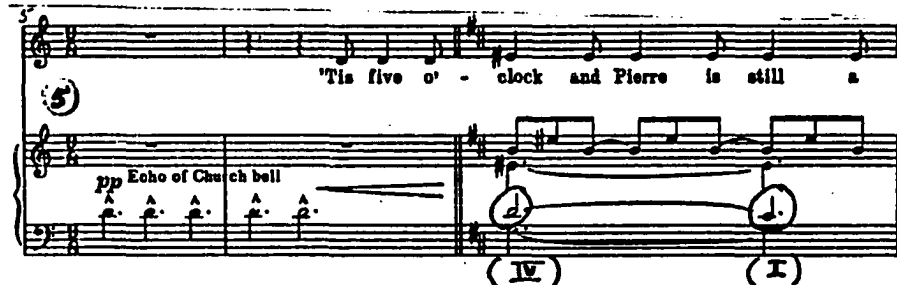
③ Lull'd by the fresh breezes, sigh-ing through her hair,

④ No! 'twas not his! My dear, good hus-band, once so kind, Neglects and leaves me to myself.

Freer's favorite chromatic seventh-chord I is heard at the start of "Sweet in Her Green Dell," creating the tonal ambiguity so characteristic of her works. In the opera this sonority is delayed by the suspension of the d^1 church bell, an operation that permutes the chordal intervals to

create chromatic seventh-chord IV (see Example III-30 and compare with Example III-28, measure 1).

Example III-30, A Christmas Tale, m. 5-6:



Jacqueline's thirty-seven-measure aria describes her loneliness and Pierre's neglect of her and their child Rosette. The changed meter and texture of the accompaniment appearing in measures 13-26 of the original song are introduced in the opera by the re-iteration of the organ motive heard in the opening scene. This motive subsequently becomes important not only as a mood-setting device, but as a means of scene connection, modulation, and change of idiom. It is used throughout the opera whenever the text refers to the cathedral or to a religious thought or act. The first organ phrase (measures 3-4) suggests G minor; its reappearance in F# minor (measures 20-21) prepares the quick tonal shift to B minor (see Example III-31).

Example III-31, A Christmas Tale, m. 3-4 and m. 20-21:

The musical score for Example III-31, A Christmas Tale, measures 3-4 and 20-21, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 3-4) is marked 'Lento' and 'Andante'. It features a 'Church bell' (piano) and 'Cathedral Organ' (piano). The second system (measures 20-21) is marked 'p' (piano), 'poco' (poco), and 'rit.' (ritardando). It includes 'Organ in the distance' (piano) and 'Cathedral Organ' (piano). The score is written for piano and organ.

This kind of structural planning not only shows technical skill, but is an indication that Freer understood the singer's need for a brief respite as well as the necessity for variation in texture.

Another important, expansive theme from the early song develops as an accompaniment for Pierre and Jacqueline's music; it is later used as an instrumental interlude at several points in the opera (see Example III-32, compare with measures 25-26 in Example III-28).

Example III-32, A Christmas Tale, m. 34-35:

said to me, "Dear, Good - night!"

poco rit.

Recitando

Should he be hun - gry, the sup - per is read - y the

This rich melody is introduced for the first time at the close of Jacqueline's aria. It connects Jacqueline's description of Pierre's disruptive state with a brief recitative disclosing the distressed wife's ever-present hopefulness for her husband's return. The recitative is newly composed, but it is quickly followed by a development of the melody shown above. Jacqueline continues above this accompaniment, relating both her admiration of Pierre's talent and her understanding of the importance of art in his life (see Example III-33).

Example III-33, m. 75-79:

(75) Yet I am proud of these wood-en im-a-ges

la melodia marcato

(77) (recit.) My Pierre cuts a liv-ing face from liv-ing oak.

(79) I stand back and ad-mire in si-lence,

la melodia marcato

As Jacqueline expresses the comfort she receives from seeing the cathedral lights through the window, the organ motive supports her (see Example III-34).

Example III-34, A Christmas Tale, m. 38-40:

(38) Andante

fire glows bright. And through the win - dows

organ

can I not see the lights of No - tre Dame.

poco rall.

The organ theme returns in meter when St. Nicholas blesses the food Jacqueline has prepared for Pierre; it also accompanies Jacqueline's query (see Example III-35).

Example III-35, A Christmas Tale, m. 185-88:

(185) Lento

Organ

An-gels, I should be hun-gry toul God blows this meal.

JACQUELINE (half asleep, half awake)

Is that you, Pierre? Not yet, not yet

p.

The cathedral provides a perfect opportunity for the use of the two previously written anthems for mixed voices. They are heard sung by the cathedral choir at the beginning and end of the opera, respectively, setting a mood of Christmastide spirituality at the start and bringing joyous feelings of celebration at the close. The first, A Christmas Carol, Op. 13, no. 4, is a setting of a poem by Freer's friend and biographer Agnes Greene Foster. The two verses are given a through-composed setting with different tonal centers; the accompaniment is simply a closed-score version of the vocal parts. Ziehn's chromatic voice-leading and several chromatic seventh-chords distinguish the anthem, especially in the following excerpt (see Example III-36).

Example III-36, A Christmas Carol, m. 4-10:

born, And best of all, a - long life's way, The

born, And best of all, a - long life's way, The

And

(VIII)

Example III-36, cont.

King comes in to rest and stay, When love is born, When

King comes in to rest and stay, When love is born, When

(I)

The other sacred chorus used in the opera is Freer's setting of her daughter's little poem "A Carol." Originally one of four short songs in Op. 21 (no. 3), "A Carol" in a mixed-voices arrangement underlines the joyous Christmas spirit as Pierre and Jacqueline celebrate their happiness.⁶ A rhythmically-modified melodic motive from "A Carol" is heard for the first time when St. Nicholas comes to life (see Example III-37, compare with Example III-38).

⁶The four-voice arrangement of A Carol is one of three Christmas anthems to be included in the sixteen-number collection published in 1932. The setting of Foster's poem and also For Unto Us A Son is Given, with a text by Agnes Lee. The latter includes an organ accompaniment written by Wilhelm Middelschulte, a Ziehn disciple and a colleague of Freer's.

Example III-37, "A Carol," Op. 21, no.3, m. 1-3:

Bells are ring - ing, Chimes pro - claim - ing "Peace on earth, good will to
Let the still of love now guide us To the man - ger of the

St. Nicholas's instrumental introduction begins with expansive harp arpeggios to call attention to the melody that follows; it will be heard several times more before "A Carol" is actually performed (see Example III-38).

Example III-38, A Christmas Tale, m. 116-19:

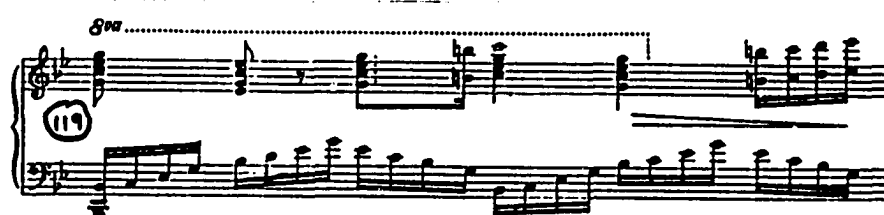
(116)

(117)

(118)

8va.....

Example III-38, cont.



The triplet figure from the original song is reserved for the appearance of St. Rose, and is developed throughout the dialogue in the scene of the saints (see Example III-39).

Example III-39, A Christmas Tale, m. 132-37:

SAINT ROSE moves forward. SAINT NICHOLAS

(132) Allegro

Nich - o - las? All, Rose, you're

G major

a tempo

SAINT ROSE

late. Be-cause I've been to see the chil-dren who have

The motives from "A Carol" appear in B $\flat$ major and C major, but when the church choir closes the opera with a complete rendition of the anthem, its original tonality of B major sounds bright and joyous, enhancing the exalted mood produced by the happy ending. Freer achieves the

modulation very simply by moving two of the voices in the C-major chord chromatically, lowering one by whole step and retaining the other (see Example III-40).

Example III-40, A Christmas Tale, m. 323-28:

SAINT NICHOLAS

Come Rose to our plac - es (chor)

* SAINT NICHOLAS and SAINT ROSE again stand as statues where they stood at first.

Bells are ring-ing, chimes pro-claim-ing, "Peace on earth, good will to
Let the star of love now guide us To the man-ger of the

Bells are ring-ing, chimes pro-claim-ing, "Peace on earth, good will to
Let the star of love now guide us To the man-ger of the

Andante
Organ

Summary

When the opera ends quietly with a brief duet by Jacqueline and Pierre as they go to early Mass, the music

of "Sweet in Her Green Dell" returns. Freer has achieved a perfect structural balance by using the two anthems near the beginning and end, separated by portions of the unpublished song Op. 17, no. 2. The two themes from the song are used only for the music of Pierre and Jacqueline; the two anthems and their motives, with the little organ melody, are reserved for the religious elements in the story. The mystical appearance of the saints and the proximity of the cathedral, so important in the unfolding of the action, are underlined by the appropriate use of organ and choral music.

Conclusion

Every Freer opera is striking for its variety of musical styles, each suitable for a character or situation in the drama. The juxtaposition of her best song-writing with her successful the four-voice technique makes a happy combination in every case. The use of pieces composed earlier in her life allowed her to complete several of the little chamber operas in a comparatively short period of time, simply by devising musical ways to introduce the older songs, ensemble pieces, or piano solos. Her final opera, The Brownings Go to Italy (1936), is a virtuoso example of this technique, for here she used every one of

her songs written to a text of Robert Browning, plus five songs from the cycle Sonnets from the Portuguese.⁷

Every opera shows excellent agreement of textual and musical accent. Sensitive text-painting abounds, as in the songs: the sounds of the Piper's flute, the organ-like chord structures, cries of fear, and the imitation of church bells are several such examples. Conceivably Freer wrote each leading female role with herself in mind: all are for mezzo-soprano, with few notes in the higher register. Awareness of singers' needs is shown by the careful preparation of entrance pitches; breathing places or short rests are provided by instrumental phrase extensions or interludes. The tritone is a characteristic interval in melodic lines, especially in recitative-like sections, and all important vocal lines contain interesting and unusual gestures because of unexpected harmonies. There is virtually no contrapuntal writing either in accompaniments or choral settings.

⁷The earlier songs using texts of Robert Browning that appear in The Brownings Go to Italy are "My Star," Op. 4, no. 2; "Apparitions," Op. 9, no. 2; "Nay, but You Who Do Not Love Her," Op. 18, no. 4. Freer also used "Year's at the Spring," but this appears to have been newly-set for the opera. It was published separately and probably given an individual opus number, but the solo edition has not been located. The following poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, set to music in Sonnets from the Portuguese, Op. 22, appear in the opera: No. 1, "I Thought Once," No. 2, "But Only Three," No. 4, "Thou Hast Thy Calling," No. 21, "Say Over Again," and No. 43, "How Do I Love Thee?"

All of Freer's chamber operas were performed in some manner during her lifetime (see Part I). Legend of the Piper received the largest number of public, staged presentations. Others (Massimiliano, Masque of Pandora, Preciosa, The Brownings Go to Italy) were usually presented for local or state cultural organizations and never became generally well-known. Joan of Arc received a radio broadcast; Scenes from "Little Women" was taken to London in a one-woman performance. Chilkoot Maiden and Legend of Spain were arranged as ballet suites, and Frithiof received its first performance with a narrator relating the main events between solo or duet portions of the work. In some of the operas (Frithiof, Masque of Pandora, Joan of Arc) the dramatic action seems to be too extensive to be handled effectively in a one-act work of such brief duration. Processions, sword-fights, storms, and the like are often given as little music as thirty-two measures; an audience has not much time to relate the music to the event in the drama.

The operas are harmonically and musically less inventive than the songs, but they are worthy of note for their variety of subjects, their clever text-painting, and their carefully conceived structure. That they were written in so short a time span and performed under many different kinds of circumstances is also remarkable. Freer's continued effort at being part of her own movement

for "American opera by American composers" is extraordinary when one reviews her busy life of writing, publishing, and organizing concert and opera performances. At the same time, she appears to have been successful as the wife of Archibald Freer, participating wholeheartedly in his philanthropic commitments at home and abroad, and upholding the responsibilities of motherhood. Social approbation and recognition of her music were equally important; she was able to achieve both.

CHAPTER IV

FREER AMONG HER AMERICAN CONTEMPORARIES

During Freer's most prolific period of composition (1904-36), other American composers were adding to the ever-increasing body of art-songs with English texts. New American operas with English libretti also continued to appear on the musical horizon, some perhaps at least partly inspired by Freer's forceful letters and articles on the importance of developing an American national art. Ultimately, the creation of her own chamber operas set a courageous and confident example, but the strongest motivation for opera composers was the promise of performance and national recognition given by Freer's American Opera Society of Chicago and the Bispham Medal.

Rather than opera, however, songs and piano pieces seemed to be the favored genres for many composers. Because these smaller forms were more easily programmed and could be performed by talented amateurs in the home as well as by professional soloists in public concerts, the possibilities for publication and general acceptance were far greater. Freer, though unrelenting in her demand for

American compositions, ironically took no strong cues from many of her contemporary colleagues who boldly displayed their nationalism by using American Indian melodies, jazz rhythms from black cabaret shows, Civil war songs, southern Negro spirituals, folksongs, or early American hymns to create original art songs. Several comparative examples are given below.

Nationalist Composers

Two prominent composers whom Freer knew personally, and whose works were performed during the time of her own publications, were Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881-1946) and John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951). Both composers explored and subsequently used native American musical sources not found in Freer's work. She delved conservatively, almost always, into her own musical experiences and past training, using her already-stored musical knowledge to write songs with English texts whose style echoed that of the European art song. Her idea of "American" music began and ended with the use of poetry in the English language. She seemed to have no time or desire to use or even acknowledge the American musical idioms that were surfacing in artistic music around the country. In contrast, Cadman was interested in American Indian music, discovering and recording actual tribal melodic and rhythmic patterns and

using them or modifications of them in many of his songs, operas, and piano pieces. Carpenter also went beyond his mentor Ziehn's chromatic voice-leading and ambiguous harmonic progressions, experimenting with the pentatonic scale and impressionistic sonorities. His song cycles Gitanjali (Tagore, 1914) and Watercolors (Chinese verses, 1916) show both these techniques, but his American heritage is prominently displayed in the popular jazz rhythms he incorporated into his later songs, piano solos, and orchestral works.

American Indian Themes

Of Cadman's songs based on American Indian melodies, none is more famous than "From the Land of the Sky Blue Water," Op. 45, no. 1, the first of the cycle Four Indian Songs. The poet and librettist Nelle Richmond Eberhart created an imaginary scenario, and for his setting of her text Cadman used an Omaha tribal melody exactly as it had been recorded by Alice Fletcher (1828-1923), the American ethnologist. The introduction is an original flageolet love call of the Omahas; Cadman's tasteful accompaniment subtly imitates a quiet but rhythmic Indian drum (see Example IV-1).

Example IV-1, "From the Land of the Sky Blue Water,"

m. 1-10:

The musical score is written for Voice and Piano. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems.

System 1: The Voice part begins with the instruction "Intro: loud call." The Piano part starts with a circled "1" and the tempo marking "Moderately, but increasing in time and tone to end of Introduction." The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line.

System 2: The Voice part enters with the lyrics "From the Land of the Sky - blue Wa-ter,". The piano accompaniment continues with a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The measure number "4" is circled at the beginning of the system.

System 3: The Voice part continues with the lyrics "They brought a cap - tive". The piano accompaniment maintains its rhythmic accompaniment. The measure number "8" is circled at the beginning of the system.

In contrast to Cadman's research and his adherence to melodic and rhythmic authenticity, Freer's "Indian" music is strictly her own. Her opera The Chilkoot Maiden, based on a legend of the Alaskan Tlingit tribes, contains no native Indian themes. Nowhere in her writings or interviews does she mention an attempt to discover original melodies of this people; she states only (see Part I) that she learned of the Chilkoot legend by reading Underwood's

Alaska in the Making, and was inspired to write the opera. The work opens with a chant sung in unison by the men of the Chilkoot tribe. They ask their god Skagua for protection from the dangers that face them because of white men who have come to their land to seek gold: the evil god Dugek may avenge the trespassers by bringing forth warm winds to cause avalanches, destroying the people. This dark, foreboding chant in the minor mode is heard throughout the opera whenever the action involves the Chilkoots or one of their tribe. The syncopated accompaniment with its grace notes and open fifths imitates a primitive drum rhythm, less elegant than Cadman's and much more heavily voiced. The whole musical effect creates an obvious "Indian" color (see Example IV-2), but is not authentically Indian.

Example IV-2, The Chilkoot Maiden, m. 13-17:

13 1. Have mer-cy up-on us, O Ska-gua, we pray; We'll

2. 'North wind' pro-tect us, We'll keep them a-way; Have

Example IV-2, cont.

guard this thy Val - ley, From White men to - day; Let
mer - cy up - on us! White men will ho - tray, We

Jazz and "Popular" Idioms

Carpenter's appropriate and timely adaptation of jazz rhythms is displayed in Four Negro Songs (1927), a cycle inspired by the set of poems, The Weary Blues, by Langston Hughes (1902-1967). A fragment from "Jazz-Boys," the third song in the group, is given in Example IV-3. The syncopated rhythms and placement of textual accents complement each other and exactly suit the poem's subject.

Example IV-3, "Jazz-Boys," m. 1-9:

Moderato
Sleek black boys in a

Example IV-3, cont.

ca - ba - rel, Jazz - band! Jazz - band!

Play! Play! To-mor-row, who knows? So dance to - day!

Many of Carpenter's larger works incorporate not only the syncopated "feel" of jazz, but the harmonic practices as well. The music for his ballets Krazy Kat (1922) and Skyscrapers (1926), more than his Violin Concerto (1937) and Piano Quintet (1934), show his interest in this new idiom during the Twenties. The latter works belong to the late nineteenth century harmonic style, with glimpses of impressionistic colors and unresolved dissonance.

None of Freer's songs contain examples of popular jazz rhythms, but in her Modern Dances for Piano, Op. 31 (1926), used later as the basis for The Chilkoot Maiden, there are two particular rhythmic motives that can be found in

popular-style piano solos of the early twentieth century. The first is a rag rhythm () featured by Scott Joplin (1868-1919) and other rag composers (e.g., Charles Johnson (1876-1950)) in the first decade of the twentieth century. Joplin's "Swipesy," published in 1900, exploits this rhythmic pattern, a rag "signature" (see Example IV-4). Example IV-4, Joplin, "Swipesy," m. 1-8:



The same rhythm is the main subject of Freer's Modern Dance No. 1. Freer indicates an allegro tempo (see Example IV-5), the opposite of Joplin's "slow" marking for "Swipesy."

Example IV-5, Freer, Modern Dance No. 1, m. 1-8:



Example IV-5, cont.:



The second of these "American" rhythms in Freer's Modern Dances is a dotted-eighth, sixteenth-note and triplet motive () similar to one in Felix Arndt's (1889-1918) famous novelty piece "Nola" of 1915 (see Examples IV-6 and IV-7).

Example IV-6, Arndt, "Nola," m. 52-59:



Example IV-7, Freer, Modern Dance No. 3, m. 1-6:



Example IV-7, cont.:



It cannot be said with certainty that Freer used either of these rhythms intentionally as a means of getting a more "popular" sound into her piano pieces. The score of The Chilkoot Maiden, however, in the saloon scene, asks the stage director to "train singers for the modern two-step dances." The rag rhythm  does not appear elsewhere in Freer's piano pieces or even in her "popular" songs; she may have associated it with the "modern" music. The  motive was not new to her when she wrote the Modern Dances in 1928; she had already used the pattern in No. 9 of her Lyric Studies, Op. 3, the early piano works completed in 1904 (see Example IV-8).

Example IV-8, Lyric Study No. 9, m. 39-46:



In the opera Masque of Pandora (1930), the same motive accompanies an aria by the gods' messenger Hermes (see Example IV-9).

Example IV-9, Masque of Pandora, m. 249-56:

Andante

Now as an ar-row from Hyp-er-i-on's bow,

My er-rand is done.

I fly, I float, I soar in-to the air, re-

turn-ing to O-lym-pus.

poco rall.

Exit Hermes.

Civil War Songs and Patriotic Songs

A discussion of Freer's American contemporaries would be incomplete without including the great patriot and composer Charles Ives (1874-1954), whose songs and other works were entirely unlike Freer's or anyone else's. Ives's unusual and unprecedented ideas about musical composition first widened the listening experiences of his New England acquaintances, not always happily, as early as the 1890s. American composers who continued the European musical traditions were always a disappointment to Ives, whose iconoclastic works showed his determination to introduce new and often shocking elements that were distinctly American in flavor. Freer would have strongly supported Ives's desire to create music that reflected American ideals, but it is doubtful whether she and her colleagues ever heard any of Ives's music; his name is absent from a list of American works performed by the Chicago Symphony in the Twenties under Frederick Stock.¹

There are few similarities between Freer and Ives. The most notable trait common to both is the creation of new works from compositions written previously. Adapting an

¹Luening, in Odyssey of an American Composer, credits Stock with playing more American works than any other conductor in the country, and notes the performance of music by Griffes, Loeffler, (Henry F.) Gilbert, Hadley, Sowerby, Still, Carpenter, Weidig, (Edward) Collins, (Henry) Eichheim, Stock, Stillman-Kelley, Hill, Farwell, Goldmark, Converse, and Bloch, p. 231.

old song to new words, as Freer did in "How Many Times Do I Love Thee?" and "Whispering Winds" (see Chapter II), solved for Ives what might have been a sensitive situation in his early courtship. Wanting to please his future bride with a setting of her poem "Spring Song," he "looked out a straightforward piece written four years earlier, but discarded, and adapted it to her words."²

American hymn tunes, Civil War songs, and popular patriotic songs are scattered, either whole or in part, throughout Ives's compositions. In all of Freer's works, on the other hand, only one small instance of such borrowing can be found. Both Ives and Freer have used the refrain of the Civil War Song "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" by George F. Root (1820-1895), shown in Example IV-10.

Example IV-10, Root, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp," m. 9-16:



²David Wooldridge, From the Steeples and Mountains, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 131. Harmony Twichell sent "Spring Song," to Ives in August of 1905, three years before their marriage. In October of the same year Ives once again "borrowed" an older song for a setting of her poem "Autumn."

Ives borrows only a single phrase of Root's song, joining it with parts of other American songs in "He Is There!" (1917), No. 50 in 114 Songs. Motives from "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" (David T. Shaw) and "We're Tenting Tonight" (Walter Kittredge) are interspersed with musical fragments of Ives's own creation; the result is a genuine American product. In the excerpt shown in Example IV-11, only the Root and Shaw tunes are present.

Example IV-11, Ives, "He Is There!" m. 20-28:

CHORUS

boy has sailed o'er the o - cean, Hee-ray! He is there, he is there, he is

Root!

there. He's fight-ing for the right, but when it comes to night, He is

there, he is there, he is there; As the Al - lies beat up all the

Col 8 (ad lib)

f

mp

cresc.

ff

"Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" appears in its entirety, most appropriately, in Freer's Scenes From "Little Women," Op. 42 (1934). As the opera begins, the four sisters lament their father's absence as he fights with Grant's army against the Southern rebels. The familiar Civil War song suddenly becomes the accompaniment for an arietta sung by Jo, the second-oldest daughter, who wants to be a soldier boy and go off to join her father (see Example IV-12).

Example IV-12, "Little Women," m. 124-31:

Wish I were a sol-dier boy Tramp-ing by my fa-ther's

side. We would march to vic-to-ry, As the con-flict and we'd see, And come

home the na-tion's he-roes and its pride.

poco rall

Root's melody is arranged with heavy lower voices to imitate the sound of marching feet. Freer's typical chromatic voice-leading (see Chapter I) gives a different and unexpected color to the simple tonal harmonies of the original (m. 128-30). The C major tonality is weakened in m. 127 by the unresolved leading-tone in Jo's part, which seems like an inner voice rather than an independent melody. Made up simply of chord tones, and with the same rhythm as the original, the vocal line is mostly absorbed by its accompanying sonorities as it crosses above and below the melody line of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp."³ Freer perhaps thought of Jo's part as a supporting line rather than a prominent melodic element. The familiar tune itself is the more important statement, musically conveying Jo's tomboyish character and her impossible wish.

The tonal ambiguity so characteristic of Freer's songs (see Chapter I and Chapter II) appears here once again in the melodic gestures of the vocal part: measures 126-27 outline an E minor triad within the C major tonality; the raised fourth scale degree in measure 129 continues downward rather than functioning as a new leading-tone; the E^b in measure 130 brings an unexpected major-minor

³Ziehn refers to part-crossing (Manual, p. 57), "Sometimes one part rises above a higher one, or descends below a lower one. This . . . occurs when the respective part in its region has not the necessary space to bring forth a certain melody or when the text or the action [or] the sentiment demands such an ascent or descent." Freer's choral pieces contain many examples of part-crossing.

conflict. Freer's overall harmonic-melodic style in Little Women reflects that of her earlier works; the single (and rather slight) use of an American song appears so near to the last of her compositions that it might easily be overlooked. If "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" was in her original plan for an opera based on Alcott's Civil War story, she might have, like Ives, drawn from other suitable American music of the same period. It is impossible to say when or how the idea of using the song in Little Women came to her; her nationalistic sentiments, so often expressed in prose, are not evident in most of her music.

Women Composers

By the turn of the century women composers had become more visible, due to numerous arguments such as the one by Fanny Morris Smith in the feature article of Etude's special issue Women in Music, September 1901. Smith blamed society for the second-class place women had held in the nineteenth century, saying, "as a class they had no money. They did not support themselves . . . [they] had no control of the funds necessary for a composer's education."⁴

A year later, Otto Ebel in Women Composers, wrote:

⁴Also quoted in Judith Tick, "Passed Away Is the Piano Girl," in Women Making Music (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), p. 335.

Scarcely fifty years ago the subjects of harmony and counterpoint had been considered outside the province of women's education, and the acquirement of such knowledge, other than as a pastime, would have been regarded as a mental aberration . . . it is no longer looked upon as an eccentricity for women to compose.⁵

Freer's best songs were written before 1921; that year marked the organization of the Opera in Our Language Foundation, which subsequently turned her attention to composing operas and writing articles about opera in English. The best songs of her later period include several which were conceived as solo arias in Massimiliano ("The Jester's Serenade") and The Brownings Go to Italy ("The Year's At The Spring"); these were eventually published separately. Several successful art songs and piano pieces written by other women composers during the first two decades of the twentieth century provide interesting comparisons with Freer's work.

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Of American women who composed art songs known and performed in the early twentieth century, Amy Beach (1867-1944) of the New England School of Composers is undoubtedly the most prominent. Beach's compositions include a number of orchestral and other large works, but her shorter pieces

⁵Otto Ebel, Women Composers (Brooklyn: F. H. Chandler, 1902), preface, also quoted in Tick, op. cit., p. 339.

for solo voice or piano are equally successful, displaying luxurious nineteenth century harmonies, soaring phrases, and masterful craftsmanship. The exact notes of birdcalls, as heard in nature, were a lifelong interest of Beach's, and she also drew upon Scottish, Gaelic, and Indian traditional melodies for her music. Her suite for piano, Eskimos: Four Characteristic Pieces, is an example of Beach's use of authentic Eskimo melodies; other original folk melodies appear in her songs and instrumental pieces.

There is no record of personal acquaintance between Beach and Freer. Freer's busy domestic, social, and creative life in midwestern Chicago did not allow her much opportunity to seek out other professional women musicians outside of her own immediate circle. She was surely aware that Beach was a supporter of the "opera in English" movement (see Part I, page 117), but it is doubtful that she had heard Beach's works. Beach's "The Year's at the Spring," Op. 44, no. 1 (Browning), was published by Arthur P. Schmidt in 1900, thirty-five years before Freer added her own unusual setting of this poem to her last opera The Brownings Go to Italy. Similarities and differences of both settings are discussed below, and examples IV-13a and IV-13b show the opening measures of each for purposes of musical comparison.

Example IV-13a, Beach, "The Year's at the Spring," m. 1-8:

Allegro di molto.

The year's at the spring, And days at the morn; Morn - ings at sev - en; The hill - side's dew - pearled;

Example IV-13b, Freer, "The Year's at the Spring," Op. 43,
in The Brownings Go to Italy, m. 152-63:

Piace:

The year's at the Spring, And days at the morn;

Example IV-13b, cont.:

Morn - ing's at sev - en; The hill - sides dew - pearld, The

lark's On the wing; The snail's on the thorn;

poco rall.

Both women have chosen a rapid tempo for "The Year's At the Spring," and an agitated accompaniment of repeated chords. Though in different meters and tonalities (Beach's in B $\flat$ major, Freer's in E minor), the upward motion of the melodic line, pitch by pitch, is amazingly similar. Studied in their entirety, however, the two songs show interesting differences in structure. Freer presents the entire poem twice, using contrasting downward intervals the second time and saving the musical climax on high G $\sharp$ for the final word "world." Beach, instead, chooses to repeat the first two lines before introducing the final quatrain; in her musical plan, the poet's most important word is "right;" at this point Beach presents the climactic pitch, high B $\flat$, and the longest duration (six and one-half beats) in the piece.

"The Year's At the Spring" is one of innumerable texts about nature that attracted art song composers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Settings of these poems describing landscapes, storms, plants and animals, or other natural phenomena, often imitate natural sounds, particularly in the accompaniment, e.g., Franz Schubert's "Der Lindenbaum" (Die Winterreise) and Henri Duparc's "L'invitation au voyage." The sound of wind rustling linden leaves, or the consistent lapping of water by the shore, are successfully imitated in these famous songs, the accompaniment serving not merely as a harmonic support for the singer, but as an integral part of the poem's mood.

While Freer's cycles Five Songs to Spring and Six Songs to Nature are nature-related, and both include a few examples of the imitation of natural sounds (see "Before the Rain," page 276), Beach's knowledge of the actual musical notes in different birdsongs found its way into many of her songs and piano solos. Her song "Meadowlarks" (1924, Ina Coolbrith) is not an imitation but an exact pitch-by-pitch representation (one octave lower) of a California lark's call.⁶ Working in the rural setting of the MacDowell Colony in Peterboro, New Hampshire, and also traveling to other areas as a professional pianist, Beach continued to take note of this authentic natural music,

⁶This information is given in the score.

incorporating it into appropriate musical structures (see Example IV-14).

Example IV-14, Beach, "Meadowlarks," Op. 79, no. 1, m. 1-8:

Allegro ma non troppo

Piano

Volce

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O hap - py that I am! (Lis - ten to the

Allegro vivace dolce

rit.

sempre con Pedale

The lark calls in "Meadowlarks" serve as an introduction, and also provide the triad motive from which the vocal line is developed. The song's structure is thus formed from the notes of the birdcall: the sounds are not merely mood-producing. Beach's piano works "A Hermit Thrush at Morn" and "A Hermit Thrush at Eve" are especially well-known examples that also offer accurately recorded birdsong as part of their structure.⁷ Freer's piano works, on the contrary, are not at all programmatic, nor do they imitate

⁷"A Hermit Thrush at Morn" is re-printed in James Briscoe, Historical Anthology of Music by Women, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 204-10. An essay on Beach's work by Adrienne Fried Block in this anthology (pp. 158-60) describes the composer's frequent use of birdcalls in her music.

or reproduce natural sounds in any way. Their generic titles are occasionally modified by musical adjectives (as in "Harmonic-Rhythmic" Study, Op. 1, no. 2, or "Lyric" Intermezzo, Op. 2, no. 1), or Italian titles suggesting tempo (as Andante, Op. 1, no. 1, or Scherzetto, Op. 40, no. 1). In her piano music, Freer's major source of inspiration seems to have been the nineteenth-century composers whose solo works she undoubtedly practiced as a teen-ager in Philadelphia. Her memoirs suggest that while in Paris, her time at the piano was spent as an accompanist of art songs and operatic arias. Her piano compositions (and her song accompaniments as well), were thus modelled on the music she knew; her subsequent lifestyle gave her no time to explore other ideas.

While Freer contented herself with small musical forms including chamber operas, Beach's list of works includes a symphony, a mass, a piano concerto, plus numerous other large choral pieces and one opera. In addition, she maintained a successful concert career as a performing pianist, an aspect of professional musical life which Freer had long ago given up in favor of becoming the first American to teach the Marchesi vocal method. As composers of song, however, both were sensitive to poetic images and text-setting, and the chromatic colors of the late nineteenth century suffuse their works.

Carrie Jacobs-Bond (1862-1946)

A well-known composer of "popular" songs whose work also coincided with Freer's, Carrie Jacobs-Bond was a self-trained musician whose songs and piano pieces were in great demand. Her songs were considered too "classical" for Tin-Pan Alley and not sophisticated enough to be published by prominent publishing houses. She is perhaps best known for "A Perfect Day" (1907) and "I Love You Truly," (1909) two sentimental ballads with her own texts. Bond's songs certainly lacked the musical sophistication of those by Freer and Beach, but their popular style of poetry and easily-assimilated melodies held immediate appeal for general audiences, and they were widely performed.

In comparison, the years 1907-9 in Freer's life brought forth such tonally ambiguous and technically difficult works as "Song of the Rose" and "Summer Night," (see Chapter II) as well as the first eleven of Sonnets from the Portuguese. Her "popular" songs came only near the end of her life with Opp. 40 and 41; even these later compositions show a harmonic and prosodic craftsmanship which is lacking in the Jacobs-Bond songs. Examples IV-15 and IV-16 show the first phrases of Jacobs-Bond's "A Perfect Day," and Freer's "Night of a Thousand Stars," Op. 41, no. 8 (1936, G. Hawkins-Ambler), the latter published as "a popular song."

Example IV-15, Jacobs-Bond, "A Perfect Day," with cello obligato, m. 1-5:

Moderato espressivo

p

p

Cello

p

When you come to the end of a per - fect day, And you sit a - lone with your

Example IV-16, "Night of a Thousand Stars," m. 1-6:

Moderato

p

p

Night of a thous - and stars, the myr - i - ad

Example IV-16, cont.:



"Night of a Thousand Stars," while simpler in both melody and harmony than the earlier Freer songs, still presents a more creative and sophisticated rhythmic contrast between voice and accompaniment than Jacobs-Bond's "A Perfect Day." A judicious mixture of duplets, triplets and sixteenth-notes prevents a "sing-song" effect; the poetry itself avoids the repetitive alternate-beat accents of Jacobs-Bond's popular-style verse, exactly echoed in her melodic lines for both voice and cello. The accompaniment for "Night of a Thousand Stars" is more than a harmonic support: its murmuring ostinato, like that of Schubert and Duparc, is essential to the song's mood and the projection of the poem's inner meaning. Freer's few "popular songs" never achieved the familiarity of Jacobs-Bond's "A Perfect Day" or "I Love You Truly." Technically demanding for both singer and accompanist, the Freer songs were often overlooked by the amateur musician who often desired more readily assimilated music.

Freer's compositions throughout her life were published by prominent publishing houses, occasionally in private first editions undoubtedly made possible by her husband's wealth and professional prominence. Her activity in musical organizations brought her own name before the public on many occasions, as did her numerous addresses before local and state cultural groups and her published journal articles on opera in English. Jacobs-Bond, on the other hand, who lacked professional musical training and had neither the wealth nor social status of the Freers, faced constant rejection from the important publishing houses. Undaunted, she and her son finally established their own publishing company in Chicago and became quite successful with her large output of songs and piano pieces.

Both women wrote autobiographies: Freer's Recollections and Reflections is characteristically modest, with emphasis on her early experiences as a student and performer in Paris, while Jacobs-Bond's Roads of Melody (1927) is rather like a tea-table conversation, filled with personal philosophy. Instead of writing articles fervently championing a special cause, as did Freer, Jacobs-Bond produced a book of popular poems, The End of the Road, which includes her own philosophical comments. Some of these little homilies were set to music in a collection of humorous Half-minute Songs (1910) a venture that reveals Jacobs-Bond's general outlook on life. In one of these,

"Keep Awake," there is visible (and aural) evidence of the second use of prior melodic material: Jacobs-Bond returned to her earlier "A Perfect Day" (see Example IV-17).

Example IV-17, "Keep Awake," No. 6 of Half-minute Songs:



In Freer's songs, the closest example of such whimsicality is "My Annabelle" (see Part I, Fig. 40, p. 193), its text written by a young friend of her granddaughter's. Here, as in most of her songs, Freer again chooses a major/minor conflict, beginning in E $\flat$ major and ending in the relative key. The only departure from her usual style is the presence of accented harmonic minor seconds on the afterbeats of the introduction and close. Melodically, three especially sensitive touches deserve notice: the first is the diminished fifth (m. 4) that suggests Annabelle's not quite perfect condition; second, the missing elements of the doll's structure are enumerated on successively higher pitches (m. 6, 7, 8); and finally, the heavy voicing of the afterbeats throughout the entire song adds the effect of something "broken" to the musical picture. These elements combine to create a degree of finesse exhibited in most of Freer's music; Jacobs-Bond's

poetry and songs, even at their best, are conceived as melody and chordal accompaniment only, without a plan for uniting them into an expressive whole.

Gena Branscombe (1881-1973)

Canadian-born Gena Branscombe, seventeen years younger than Freer, studied both composition (Felix Borowski, 1872-1956) and piano (Rudolph Ganz, 1877-1972) at Chicago Musical College. She became a teacher at the same institution, and later taught at the Whitman Conservatory in Washington. Her most famous work, Pilgrims of Destiny (1928), for mixed chorus, soloists and orchestra, marks her as a composer who explored the larger musical structures. Most of her compositions through the 1930s and 40s are dramatic works requiring both choral and orchestral forces; as Freer's powers waned, Branscombe reached her zenith. Like Freer, however, she wrote over 150 songs, many in the early part of her life, which include settings of several poems in Barret-Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese and also some of Robert Browning's verses. She is included here because her harmonic style in these particular settings is similar to Freer's. Branscombe's harmonies bear the same chromatic inflections and colors; her songs reflect the Romantic style of her teacher Borowski,

particularly in their piano accompaniments (see his Concerto for Piano, 1914, and his violin solo "Adoration").

Branscombe was a performing conductor as well as a composer and teacher; she spent most of of her life in America, but retained always a close connection with her Canadian heritage. In this sense she was also a nationalist. She and Freer apparently had no professional or social connections, though they lived in the same city for some years. A champion of contemporary music and contemporary composers (as was her piano teacher Ganz), Branscombe belonged to professional musical organizations and used them as vehicles for the performance of new compositions. The numerous songs and piano pieces in Branscombe's oeuvre might well have been performed on the musical programs sponsored by Freer's groups, but none are listed on the printed programs of the Arts Club or other groups who heard Freer's music.

Branscombe's setting of Robert Browning's "There's a Woman Like a Dewdrop" (1911), although rich with the chromaticism found in Wolf and Strauss, is quite unlike Freer's conception of the same text. Example IV-18a shows that Branscome favored heavy voicing and agitated chordal movement for the opening lines of the poem. These techniques continue throughout the first thirty-six measures of the song's three-part structure.

Example IV-18a, Branscombe, "There's a Woman Like a Dewdrop," m. 1-6:

Allegro giocoso

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so

pur-er than the purest; And her noble heart's the noblest,

yes, and her sure faith's the surest: And her eyes are dark and lustrous, like the

meno mosso

cresc. meno mosso ritard. a tempo

In Freer's setting both rhythm and prosody are far more ambiguous; the singer has more freedom, almost as in a recitative; the tempo is much slower, the chromaticism still important (see Example IV-18b).

Example IV-18b, Freer, "There's a Woman like a Dewdrop," m.

1-6:

Reduction:

Although both composers chose compound meter, Branscombe stays exactly with the syllabic patterns inherent in the verse. Freer instead borrows simple-meter groupings and thus creates a mixed-meter effect, continuing this rhythmic variety throughout the entire song. Branscombe's thick, closely-voiced chordal accompaniment, moving consistently with the pulse, gives a feeling of accelerating intensity. This is absent in Freer's choice of a much slower harmonic rhythm with its decorative, ostinato-like figuration. The consistent chromatic tones in Branscombe's conception tend to overburden the delicacy the poet seems to have intended; Freer's more transparent accompaniment allows the listener to perceive this subjective feeling.

Other women composers of Freer's generation who are worthy of mention are Helen Hopekirk (1856-1945), Margaret Ruthven Lang (1867-1958), and Clara Rogers (1844-1931). Hopekirk and Rogers, both foreign-born but married to Americans and living in the United States, were European-trained pianists who studied with the famous pedagogues Leschetizky and Moscheles, respectively. Rogers was also trained as a singer, and had a notable operatic career in both Europe and America. Hopekirk composed mostly for piano in the style of Debussy and Fauré, whose music she preferred to perform. As a composer, Rogers is known for several songs and violin pieces; she was primarily a teacher and writer, and published a number of books on

vocal technique, plus an autobiography, Memories of A Musical Career (1919). Lang's musical background is more analogous to Freer's: she also studied with her father before going off to Europe for training. She was not a performer or teacher, however, but studied composition in Germany, then later worked with MacDowell and Chadwick in America. She wrote works for orchestra and chorus, vocal solos with orchestral accompaniment, about 200 songs, and some piano pieces. The names of these prominent women composers do not appear among Freer's colleagues, nor in her programs or writings.

Final Comments

There are many reasons for Freer's seeming isolation from the musical currents in America during the Twenties and Thirties. The most important of these is undoubtedly her lifestyle as the wife of Archibald Freer, and the expectations placed upon her by that lifestyle.

After the Freers returned to Chicago at the turn of the century, they apparently did not travel again. At first, they were caught up in their respective adjustments to living in an American city and establishing a permanent household. Their young daughter and her education demanded a great deal of time and thought.

Aside from the cultural clubs, there were social obligations at home, as well as the time-consuming philanthropic work in which both husband and wife were deeply involved. Freer takes care in her autobiography to mention every one of these organizations, especially those whose purpose was to help the sick and wounded during the war. The work in behalf of these groups, the financial aid given to them, and the honors and medals awarded her husband and herself for their tireless support, constituted an important part of the Freers' life. The Freer money apparently went mostly to these groups rather than to support the large Chicago musical organizations.

It is impossible to say whether the Freers attended concerts given by the Chicago Symphony or other professional groups. Her own life was so subsumed by Arts Club and other cultural group performances as well as her later work for the OOLF and AOSC, it seems unlikely that any time or energy remained. If Freer attended programs other than the "in house" recitals at her clubs, the repertoire she heard was surely mostly from the nineteenth century; the music of the modernists, if any was performed, may have been so unfamiliar or distasteful that she discounted it, as she did jazz and its incorporation into new operas (see Part I, p. 179).

When the Freers' daughter married in 1915, four grandchildren followed quickly; from Freer's notices and

photographs in Music News and Musical Courier, from her letters, her song dedications, and from her few interviews, it seems clear that her family was extremely important to her, though she did not neglect her own obligations in their favor. A letter from Eleanor Freer Willson in the Class of 1915 Bulletin, Bryn Mawr College, mentions "parking the children with Mother and running off for a day or so."⁸

When Freer began writing her chamber operas in 1921, she was already 57, a rather late point in her career to attempt new compositional styles. Again, time was an important factor. Her inexhaustible work in the two societies she had founded, and her absorption in the search for new operas made her oblivious to the changes in musical composition going on around her. If she was aware of them, it was by reading about them only, and not actually experiencing the new sounds. The largest and most successful portion of her career as a composer had by then already been completed.

⁸Letter to the members of the Class of 1915, from Eleanor Freer Willson, dated 1923, Bryn Mawr College Archives. Eleanor expresses a desire to go to Bryn Mawr to see her old friends, but "I have to arrange my trip by mother's plans . . ."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Many questions about Freer's life and work can be answered only by conjecture. What was she like as a performer? As a teacher? Was personal health a recurring problem in her work and in her marriage? What was expected of her in her position as the wife of a wealthy and socially prominent professional man? Did she observe her own compositions possibly taking second place to her role as a motivator and supporter of the American opera composer? Were her own thoughts about herself as a composer limited because of nineteenth-century attitudes about women in music? Did her early decision to help America gain a recognized place in the musical world prevent her from achieving her true potential as a performer or composer?

Freer herself describes her childhood as one in which her apparent prodigious talents were not exploited. She received no special private lessons in voice or piano, and no effort was made to steer her toward a concert career. Her growing-up years saw a nation recovering from the

ravages of the Civil War; professional choices for women were few. The Everests were understandably protective of their talented daughter; they certainly wanted a better future for her than teaching in the Philadelphia public school system. The offer of financial help for study in Europe seemed the best solution, given the few choices a young woman faced at that time. Did young Nellie really desire to be a concert or opera singer? Having to leave home for vocal training did not suit her; the realization that her father's expertise was not good enough to guarantee a career seemed unfair; the Everests and many other Americans were as musically gifted as any Europeans. A combination of patriotism, anger at the prevailing American inferiority complex and determination to correct it were among the conscious elements that brought forth Eleanor's decision to become a teacher.

The Everest home was a kind of social salon, where "one met the celebrities of the day, in music, art and literature."¹ Meeting concert artists in her own surroundings after having perhaps heard them in performance at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, gave Freer an early exposure to the rigors of the touring life. Perhaps she unconsciously weighed the disadvantages of giving up a comfortable home for this kind of mobile existence. She

¹Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 33, a quote from Freer's own notes.

saw her father, whom she admired, secure in his skill and content to share his musical and linguistic knowledge with these famous people in his own studio. Her mother was a perfect helpmate--a singer of professional quality who performed in churches and at social affairs. Their life, though apparently not opulent, was comfortable and pleasant; it is, therefore, small wonder that she rebelled at going to a foreign land to be "finished" by a stranger.

Marchesi, according to Freer's biographer, was overwhelmed by the glorious timbre in Eleanor's voice; this nameless quality apparently "held the audience of critics [at Marchesi's studio] spellbound."² Emma Nevada, in the same class, agreed with this opinion (Part I, p. 25), but remarked that the voice was of "small compass." Perhaps Eleanor was aware that she had a small vocal range in comparison to the other singers who shared Marchesi's instruction; part of her momentous decision may have been based on that awareness. Her performances at Marchesi's concerts drew praise, but she describes in her own Recollections the paralyzing fright she experienced when singing with Liszt as her accompanist. She may not have had the nerves of steel demanded of a concert performer. After her marriage, she no longer performed regularly for large audiences, although she was willing to step in at the last moment on one occasion in Chicago for an Arts Club

²Foster, p. 51.

concert (Part I, p. 44). She also appeared as accompanist at least once for David Bispham when he performed her songs at Orchestra Hall.

As a teacher of the Marchesi method in Philadelphia Eleanor saw as many as sixty students each week, and beginning in 1889 taught by invitation at the National Conservatory in New York. While the Marchesi principles were widely recognized as successful, drawing many students to her private studio as well as to the Conservatory in the hope of having concert careers, it was perhaps not only the method that drew and retained them. Eleanor must have absorbed from her father a teacher's most important trait: a patient and kind manner. Her disciplined and cultured home life fostered a pleasant, modest personality and a sensitive intuition, as the letter from Ditson (Part I, p. 22-3) indicates.

There were two periods in Freer's life during which her musical abilities were curtailed by illness. The first occurred at the time of her marriage in 1891, when she ended her private teaching in Philadelphia and New York. Her years of hard work in Paris, followed by the intensive schedule she maintained in Philadelphia and New York, according to her biographer, had been "too much for her." For a while she was happy to rest from her musical activities and "restore health and strength to her frail

body."³ At the height of her best work with Ziehn, in 1907, she again experienced poor health. During what is described as "many months of tedious convalescence," her old friend Bispham persuaded her to begin writing her life story.⁴ Perhaps it was at this time that Freer discovered writing as a way of dealing with periods of enforced rest. Although her life's accomplishments (compositions, translations, journal articles and correspondence for her "opera in English" campaign) are many, they could be done in her own home at a preferred time. Her constitution might not have allowed the stresses of traveling or the continued pressure of deadlines. There is no record of the Freers spending vacations in Europe or even other parts of the United States; they seemed content to remain in Chicago with family and friends. Freer apparently was not even present at the New York Manuscript Society's concerts featuring the music of women composers: she does not mention the concerts in her writing.

No diaries or other memorabilia from Freer's personal life as a wife and mother have been found. Her husband

³Foster, p. 96.

⁴ In "Raison d'être," the preface to Eleanor Everest Freer, Foster describes being with Freer years later when she re-discovered the notes. Fearing that Freer's modesty would never allow her to complete and publish them, Foster offered to take the notes and expand them into a book. She also relates here the information that several years earlier the Freers had urged Bispham to write his own memoirs, which appeared in 1920 as Memoirs of a Quaker Singer.

seems to have been most supportive of her efforts as both a composer and patroness. Since she derived no income of her own from teaching or performing, it was Archibald Freer who provided the money necessary for publishing private editions of her music, printing orchestrations for the operas, and most likely adding financial backing to ventures like the Musical Arts Studio and the American Opera Society of Chicago. In return, she aided him in philanthropic causes by organizing concerts--some with her own music--and heading committees to raise money for worthy causes.

Social entertaining should be mentioned as another aspect of the Freers' home life: afternoon and evening musicales included several programs of German lieder sung by David Bispham "at Mrs. Freer's."⁵ Invitations to these affairs were printed on special cards with the E. E. F. monogram prominently displayed.⁶ These musicales may have at other times featured local amateur performers as well as recognized professionals like Bispham. The frequency of such events is not known, but colleagues and friends of the Freers may have come to expect invitations to musical afternoons or evenings at 1420 Lakeshore Drive, knowing of Freer's involvement with music and the cultural clubs. For

⁵David Bispham Scrapbooks, New York Public Library, Americana Collection.

⁶A facsimile of Freer's monogram, reproduced by Richard Hoyt, is on page 202 of Part I.

a life involving such social affairs, household help must have been available on a regular basis for a family in the Freers' position; Freer's creative work and organizational promotion projects could not have allowed time for the daily tasks required for proper upkeep of a large home.

A great measure of devotion to her husband and daughter can be seen in Freer's music: the first songs she composed (Op. 4) include a dedication to young Eleanor as well as settings of two poems written by Archibald. The song "I Have Done" (Duncan Campbell Scott), written in 1907, is dedicated to her husband, but no settings of his poems followed the early ones. There are, however, among the remainder, four settings of Eleanor's poems, and three songs set to verses written by her granddaughter Barbara. In spite of her active life outside of the home, Freer seems to have been genuinely family-oriented, a character trait and value sense given to her by industrious, yet thoughtful and caring parents.

Although Freer's autobiography lists only "Polka Facile" and "Aurelian Overture" as her first compositions, Foster's biography tells of an earlier attempt:

"her first verses, written for her own music, were the outcome of a desire for some forceful patriotic words to fit a patriotic melody which had so filled her being that she felt it must find expression in a War Song."⁷

⁷Foster, p. 11-12.

Such strong feelings about her country, born of the social feeling prevalent in the aftermath of the Civil War, show that nationalism and the need to express it in song had long been a part of Freer's nature. The Foster biography was thus aptly named: Eleanor Everest was a "patriot" even before she made her unprecedented decision to use her talent for the good of her country rather than for her own glory.

Balancing the desire to create songs for others to sing with her need to create a recognized place in the world for America's music and gifted musicians was a grandiose task; as it was, the two desires governed her life, with one or the other taking first place at differing times. The years between 1903 and 1914 brought to print her best and greatest number of songs, including the three most important cycles. The years immediately following World War I began her struggle to promote opera in English, starting with the Chicago Opera. Her continued demands for the use of the English language in both opera and art songs took the form of written editorials, journal articles and letters to important people whom she believed could help her in the fight. Most of her published articles and public speeches to arts groups are concerned with the need to bring these two inherently European genres to American audiences in their own language. In this sense she was

also an educator adapting her personal expertise to the situation in which she found herself.

From 1921 to the end of her life, her major effort was devoted to writing about opera in English, motivating American composers to write new operas in the English language, and trying to establish throughout the country a continuing interest in the performance of works by American composers. Her correspondence with Schwerké and her connection with the Victor Voice Studio in London showed that her hopes for the improved status of American music were not contained within America's borders. While she composed eleven chamber operas of her own during her enduring struggle for a national art, these works are small forms of comparatively short duration, six of them structured around songs and piano pieces she had written earlier. Her song cycles especially provided a goodly supply of resources she apparently needed at times for the creation of new works. Freer never stopped creating, but her strongest forward thrust was not for herself and her own compositions, but for the gifted American performers and composers who surrounded her then, and who would succeed in the future because of her efforts.

Cornelius and Amelia Everest had recognized in Eleanor an unusual musical gift, and through their own expertise were able to develop it. She was fortunate, because in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, most girls were taught to

play the piano and sing only as a social accomplishment, whether they were talented or not.⁸ Everest taught his daughter not only keyboard and vocal technique but also instructed her in the fundamentals of harmony and musical composition, a concept exactly opposite to the widespread belief of the time that women could not think logically or in the abstract, since it was "alien to the feminine personality."⁹

These attitudes were undergoing gradual change during the 1890's, but even the emergence of women as orchestral players and the performance of orchestral works by women composers did not prevent male critics and writers from pursuing the old ideas. The portrait of "woman as Muse" was furthered by George Upton, the Chicago critic, whose words were exceedingly influential into the 1900s:

. . . it does not seem that woman will ever originate music in its fullest and grandest harmonic forms.
. . . however, there is a field in which she has accomplished great results; namely, her influence upon the production of music. . . without her influence many of the masterpieces which we now so much admire might not have been written . . . the great composers have written through her inspiration; she has, in numerous notable circumstances, been their impulse, support, and consolation.¹⁰

⁸Alice Stone Blackwell, Women's Journal, August, 1891, also quoted in Tick, op. cit., p. 334.

⁹T. L. Krebs, "Women as Musicians," Sewanee Review 2, 1893, p. 77.

¹⁰George Upton, Women in Music, (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1880), p. 28.

Freer's serious study of composition with Ziehn took place just at the beginning of the end of the old order. If she was at all influenced by nineteenth-century attitudes about women composers, it would be in her adherence to small forms. Her goal of becoming a teacher, however, and her vocal training in France did not allow time for composing, so there was little possibility of attempting a large instrumental work. Her apparent lack of training in orchestration was another factor. When she began composing seriously in 1901, her foremost desire was to write songs (and later operas) in the English language. There was no motivation or time then to take on large choral and orchestral projects such as had been successfully completed by women composers of her own generation, e.g., Lang and Beach. It can be said that Freer's entire compositional activity was focused on improving America's national art; she was influenced only by her earlier experiences and her own beliefs, she was deterred by nothing.

The Freer compositions are but one part of a remarkable woman's life work. After Freer's death in 1942, her songs and chamber operas were no longer performed, and her name, like those of many other women composers in America and elsewhere, was largely overlooked. She herself had been the driving force behind her music; she sent scores to singers, conductors and critics. The performers on whom

she depended were, for the most part, talented local musicians who willingly brought her works to the attention of the public. Most often that public was composed of members of Chicago organizations devoted to the arts, or of national music groups that were eager to present new music written by one of their then-active colleagues.

The nineteenth-century prejudice against women composers, still hovering in the minds of many, may have caused Freer's works not to be taken seriously. Although Freer knew several prominent critics as well as nationally-recognized performers--like Bispham, who shared her views on American music and opera in English--her own works did not continue to reach American audiences in spite of her many good critiques in the music journals and newspapers. Favorable comments were not enough; consistent performances were necessary. Her published music often includes on its back covers excellent reviews of her pieces by well-known musicians who had apparently looked over the scores and found them "interesting" and "tasteful." These complimentary statements should have led to performances, but most often they did not. A letter to Freer from the tenor Lucien Muratore is but one example of this kind of momentary interest:

I have found time to read your published score, Legend of the Piper, and I find it a beautiful work. The tenor solo, pages 63-68, is exquisite! Your work is delightful, and [I] hope some day to hear it at the

Chicago Auditorium, when the occasion will be a real Festival (sic) for me.¹¹

Muratore never offered, apparently, to sing the tenor solo he thought "exquisite," not even at the Chicago Auditorium, where he hoped "some day to hear it."

Frederick Stock of the Chicago Orchestra, in his critique of Legend of the Piper, could summon up only a brief sentence about Freer's opera, emphasizing instead his hopes for American opera in general:

I find your Legend of the Piper interesting. I hope you will succeed in your effort on behalf of opera in English, for this foreshadows an ultimate success for a repertory of American opera, the greatest boon the American composer could desire.¹²

Many of the Freer songs are unusual in melodic design and harmonic choices. The chromaticism and ambiguous tonality that permeate her earlier music often bring difficult technical and interpretive problems. The same mood often prevails throughout a group of her songs, often due to the choice of text. Some of the pieces are so brief that an impression of the song's meaning can barely be made in a single performance. In some cases the poetry is dated or too esoteric to be accepted by average contemporary audiences. Most importantly, perhaps, the song recital as Freer knew it does not have the same popularity among concert-goers today.

¹¹Quoted in Foster, Eleanor Everest Freer, p. 138.

¹²Ibid., p. 110-11.

Without her consuming involvement in organizing and developing what ultimately became the American Opera Society, Freer might have devoted more time to her own works. It is doubtful, however, that she would have ventured further harmonically or structurally. She seemingly had no interest in the new experiments with atonality, pan-diatonicism or other contemporary techniques; without this curiosity and eagerness to attempt new styles, her compositions would most likely have continued in the post-romantic tendencies with which she was familiar. The reason for this might be that she began to compose seriously too late in her life. She had already experienced foreign study, public performance, teaching, marriage and motherhood; after her illness and Ziehn's death she may not have had a strong incentive to delve into new idioms, but was content then to create as she had always created.

Since Freer's nationalism played such an important role in her life, shaping her career and guiding her subsequent efforts for the American composer, it is of value to place her work toward developing an American national art in a worldwide context. The awakening nationalities of the late nineteenth century were in search of individual identities. While the European nations seemed secure in their own long-established cultures but were looking toward new political

solutions, Americans gloried in their successful democratic system, but were doubtful about their indigenous culture. In music, the result of this inferiority complex was a long dependence on European composers, conductors, performers and teachers--the situation which Freer found so distasteful and unfair. She became, in her quest for American cultural recognition and identity, only one of many Americans (and Europeans as well) who fought against the older and more developed cultures they had shared with a mother country.¹³

The question "What is American music?" could not be satisfactorily answered by the many critics and writers who attempted to answer it. The turn of the century, which was the beginning of Freer's career as a published composer, was characterized by a world-encompassing temper of nationalism which intensified the search for answers to such questions relating to literature and poetry as well as music. According to the writer Hans Kohn,

At this time, movements arose [in Europe] which stressed an irrational vitalism and often a nationalism of folk and soil . . . strengthened by insistence on the primacy of esthetic values and rejection of the cultural traditions and moral standards of the past. It was an age of transition, of revolt, and of a new intensity . . . America did not escape this general current.¹⁴

¹³Hans Kohn, in American Nationalism: An Interpretive Essay (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 84-5, describes in detail the struggles and results of these growing nationalisms.

¹⁴Kohn, loc. cit.

Continuing into the 1930s, however, American music as an identifiable cultural phenomenon was still partially dependent on its European heritage. Freer's attempts to reduce this dependency by fighting for recognition of the American composer and American opera is as great a contribution to American music history as are her own works.

It is perhaps enough to discover Eleanor Everest Freer through her intensive nationalism, her "foundation child" the American Opera Society of Chicago, and her music, without knowing more of her personal life. She deserves to be remembered not only as a composer and as a supporter of composers, but as a true American taking part in a great quest for cultural independence.

APPENDIX A

THE WORKS OF ELEANOR EVEREST FREER

Music

The following list of Eleanor Everest Freer's compositions places the works in order by opus number. Copyright dates are given where known. Some works with earlier copyright dates were later placed in another group, possibly for purposes of publication. Opus numbers missing or incorrectly numbered are so indicated. Names of poets or librettists are given in parentheses; unpublished works are asterisked.

Op. 1 Three Short Studies for Piano, 1903

- No. 1 Andante
- 2 Harmonic Rhythmic Study
- 3 Souvenir!

Op. 2 (missing)

- No. 1 Lyric Intermezzo for Piano
- 2 Rondo for Piano

Op. 3 Nine Lyric Studies for Piano, 1904

Op. 4 A Book of Songs, 1905

- No. 1 "Cradle Song" (William Blake)
- 2 "My Star" (Robert Browning)
- 3 "When is Life's Youth?" (Archibald Freer)
- 4 "Like A Shooting Star, Love!" (Archibald Freer)
- 5 "Be True" (Horatius Bonar)
- 6 "Lady, Leave Thy Silken Thread" (Thomas Hood)
- 7 "Daybreak" (John Donne)
- 8 "Cherry Ripe" (Robert Herrick)
- 9 "Time of Roses" (Thomas Hood)

Op. 5 Two Songs, 1905

- No. 1 "The Shepherdess" (Alice Meynell)
- 2 "Serenade" (Robert Browning)

- Op. 6 Five Songs to Spring, 1905
- No. 1 "The Eternal Spring" (John Milton)
 - 2 "Song in March" (William Gilmore Simms)
 - 3 "Song in April" (William Watson)
 - 4 "Incipit Vita Nova" (William Morton Payne)
 - 5 "An April Pastoral" (Austin Dobson)
- Op. 7 Ensembles for Women's Voices, 1905
- No. 1 "O World Be Nobler" (Laurence Binyon)
 - 2 "The Wood Peewee" (Duncan Campbell Scott)
 - 3 "Sister, Awake!"
- Op. 8 For Mixed Voices, 1905
- No. 1 "For Music" (Lord Byron)
 - 2 "Phillida and Coryden" (Nicolas Breton)
 - 3 "Lord, When the Sense of Thy Sweet Grace"
(Richard Crashaw)
 - 4 "Shall I Be Loved As I Grow Old?" (Cornelius Everest)
- Op. 9, Four Songs, 1906
- No. 1 "A Vagabond Song" (Bliss Carman)
 - 2 "Apparitions" (Robert Browning)
 - 3 "The Ideal" (Duncan Campbell Scott)
 - 4 "A Constant Lover" (Sir John Suckling)
- Op. 10 Six Songs to Nature, 1905 (entire cycle published 1913)
- No. 1 "The World Beautiful" (Thomas Hood)
 - 2 "Before the Rain" (Thomas Bailey Aldrich)
 - 3 "After the Rain" (Aldrich)
 - 4 "The Harvest Moon" (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)
 - 5 "My Garden" (Thomas Edward Brown)
 - 6 "To the Western Wind" (Robert Herrick)
- *Op. 11 Five Triolets in Song (Austin Dobson)
- No. 1 "Roseleaves"
 - 2 "A Tear"
 - 3 "Circe"
 - 4 "A Greek Gift"
 - 5 "Urceus Exit"
- Op. 12
- No. 1 "Faith," 1906 (Frances Anne Kemble)
 - 2 "The Dancers," (Michael Field)
 - 3 "Gallop Song," 1907 (Sara Hamilton Birchall)
 - 4 "Song of the Rose," 1907 (Sappho, trans.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
 - 5 "August Night," 1907 (Hester Bancroft)
 - 6 "Summer Night," 1907 (Alfred Lord Tennyson)

- Op. 13 Vocal Quartets, 1907
- No. 1 "Four Stanzas on Freedom" (James Russell Lowell)
 - 2 "The Wood Peewee" (Duncan Campbell Scott)
 - 3 "Unto Us a Son is Given" (Alice Meynell)
 - 4 "A Christmas Carol" (Agnes Greene Foster)
- Op. 14 Two Songs, 1907
- No. 1 "She is Not Fair" (Hartley Coleridge)
 - 2 "I Have Done, Put By the Lute" (Duncan Campbell Scott)
- Op. 15 Songs from the Greek
- No. 1 "To Love, the Soft and Blooming Child" (Anacreon, trans. Thomas Moore)
 - 2 "Golden Eyes," 1912 (Rufinus, trans. Andrew Lang)
 - *3 "Bridal Songs" (Sappho, trans. Arnold, Palgrave, Tennyson, Felton, Merivale)
 - 4 "When Spring Adorns the Dewy Scene" (Anacreon, trans. Thomas Moore)
 - 5 "On the Need of Drinking," 1912 (Anacreon, trans. Francis Bourne)
 - 6 "To A Painter," 1907 (Anacreon, trans. Bourne)
- Op. 16 Two Songs, 1909
- No. 1 "The Boat is Chafing" (John Davidson)
 - 2 "Daughter of Egypt" (Bayard Taylor)
- Op. 17
- No. 1 "She's Somewhere in the Sunlight," 1911 (Richard LeGallienne)
 - *2 "Sweet in Her Green Dell" (George Darley)
- Op. 18 Four Songs, 1912
- *No. 1 "The Merchant to Secure His Treasure" (Matthew Pryor)
 - *2 "For Her Gait, If She Be Walking" (William Browne)
 - 3 "Fate's Decree" (Thomas Moore)
 - 4 "Nay, But You Who Do Not Love Her" (Robert Browning)
- Op. 19
- No. 1 "When I Am Dead, My Dearest," 1909 (Christina Rossetti)
 - 2 "Love in My Heart," 1909 (William Sharp)
 - 3 "O Fly Not, Pleasure," 1910 (Wilfrid Blunt)
 - 4 "How Many Times Do I Love Thee?," 1910 (Thomas Lovell Beddoes)
 - 5 "Who Has Robbed the Ocean Cave?," 1911 (John Shaw)

- Op. 20 Three Songs
 *No. 1 "Ships that Pass in the Night," 1913 (Hester Bancroft)
 2 "During Music," 1913 (Arthur Symons)
 3 "Evening Song," 1907 (Sidney Lanier)
- Op. 21
 No. 1 "A Valentine," 1909 (Eleanor Freer)
 2 "A Carol," 1909 (Eleanor Freer)
 3 "Arachne," 1927 (Eleanor Freer)
 3 (incorrect numbering) "Our Mother Tongue," 1913 (Richard Monckton Milnes)
 *4 "O Tell Me, Little Spark of Life," (Cornelius Everest)
 5 "A Farewell," 1912 (Charles Kingsley)
 6 "Rondel," 1912 (Charles Swinburne)
- Op. 22 Forty-Four Sonnets from the Portugese, 1909 (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
 No. 1-11, published 1909 as Vol. 1
 No. 12-44, published 1910 in three additional volumes
 No. 1-44, published 1939 in one volume with French translation by E. E. F.
- Op. 23
 No. 1 "The Old Boatman," 1909 (Howard Weeden)
 2 "Grace for a Child," 1909 (Elia Peattie)
 3 "You," 1909 (Agnes Greene Foster)
- Op. 24
 No. 1 "Old Love Song," 1912 (Wallace Chapman)
 2 "I Fear Thy Kisses," 1920 (Percy Bysshe Shelley)
 3 "Outward Bound," 1913 (Harriet Monroe)
- Op. 25
 No. 1 "Sweet and Twenty," 1912 (William Shakespeare)
 2 "Jenny Kiss'd Me," (Leigh Hunt)
 3 "A Devout Lover," 1912 (Thomas Randolph)
- Op. 26 (missing)
- Op. 27
 No. 1 "To A Dreamer," 1913 (Agnes Lee)
 2 "A Child's Quest," 1915 (Frances Shaw)
 3 "The Flowers of France," 1916 (Miguel Zamacois)
 4 "For the Freedom of All Nations," 1917 (Eleanor Everest Freer)
 5 "Walls of Doubt," 1917 (Lee Nichols)
 6 "The Stealer," 1917 (Lee Nichols)
 7 "Hymn," 1920 (Charles Wright, Science)
 8 "Etude Realiste," 1921 (Charles Swinburne)
 *9 "To His Lyre," (Horace)

- Op. 28 Opera: Legend of the Piper, 1921 (Josephine Preston Peabody)
- Op. 29
 No. 1 "Nights O'Spring," 1923 (Bertha Ochsner)
 2 (missing)
 3 Greek Dance for Two Pianos, 1939
 No. 4-9 Love Cycle, 1927 (Elizabeth R. McCormick)
 "How Can We Know?"
 "I Write Not To Thee"
 "Love"
 * "Between"
 * "Thou"
 * "It Was Spoken"
- Op. 30 Opera: Massimiliano, the Court Jester, 1925 (Elia Peattie)
- Op. 31 Four Modern Dances for the Pianoforte, 1926
- Op. 32 Opera: The Chilkoot Maiden, 1926 (Eleanor Everest Freer)
- Op. 33 Opera: A Christmas Tale, 1928 (Barrett Clark, adapted by E. E. F.)
- Op. 34 "Ishtar's Song," 1927 (E. E. F., adapted from the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh)
- Op. 35 Opera: A Legend of Spain, 1927 (E. E. F., adapted from Washington Irving's Tales of the Alhambra)
- Op. 36 Opera: Masque of Pandora, 1928 (E. E. F., adapted from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)
- Op. 37 Opera: Preciosa, or The Spanish Student, 1928 (E. E. F., adapted from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)
- Op. 38 Opera: Joan of Arc, 1929 (E. E. F.)
- Op. 39
 No. 1 "A Greater, Grand Chicago," 1927 (Mary L. Peare Taylor)
 2 "My Annabelle," 1929 (Polly Hartquist)
- Op. 40 Opera: Frithiof, 1929 (E. E. F., adapted from the Norse saga translated by Esias Tsegner)

- Op. 40 Nine Songs, 1935 (incorrect numbering)
- No. 1 "Children's Spring," for mixed voices, Barbara Helen Willson)
 - 2 "The Wild Sea," for mixed voices, (Eleanor Freer Willson)
 - 3 "Upon Julia's Clothes," 1935 (Robert Herrick)
 - 3 (incorrect numbering) "Cobra: The Serpent's Story," 1935 (Gita Orlova)
 - 4 "A Promise," 1935 (Esther Turkington)
 - 5 "A Shepherd and a Shepherdess" (Alice Meynell)
 - 6 "A Dancing Girl" (Frances Sargent Locke Osgood)
 - 7 "A Bird Song" (missing, but presumably the melody sung by the Three Graces in the opera Masque of Pandora)
 - 8 "Drifting Down the River," (Barbara Helen Willson)
 - 9 "A Love Call," (Barbara Helen Willson)
- Op. 41, 1936
- No. 1 Scherzetto for piano
 - 2 (missing)
 - 3 "Gundi" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 4 "Kuni-san" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 5 "Whispering Winds" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 6 "Questions" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 7 "Dear, Wert Thou Less" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 8 "Night of a Thousand Stars" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 9 "The Cup" (George Steele Seymour)
 - 10 "Rondel" (Max Vivier)
- Op. 42, 1936
- No. 1 "Parted" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
 - 2 "Love and Nature" (G. Hawkins-Ambler)
- Op. 42 (incorrect numbering) Opera: Scenes from "Little Women," 1934 (E. E. F., adapted from Louisa May Alcott)
- Op. 43 Opera: The Brownings Go To Italy, 1936 (G. Hawkins-Ambler, adapted from the lives and works of Robert and Elizabeth Browning)
- Op. 50
- No. 1 "Advent of Spring," 1941 (Andreas Bard)
 - 2 "Music of Wings," 1940 (Francesca Falk Miller)
- Op 51, 1942
- No. 1 "Dream Caress" (George Burt Lake)

Translations of Italian Dramas

These translations were made in 1907-8 during Freer's convalescence from illness. The dramas are listed in Foster's biography.

<u>Rights of the Soul</u>	Giacosa
<u>As the Leaves</u>	
<u>Unhappy Love</u>	
<u>The Cats Paw</u>	
<u>The Stronger</u>	
<u>Miriam, the Innkeeper</u>	Goldoni
<u>The Beneficent Boor</u>	
<u>The Spark</u>	Testoni
<u>Unconditional Surrender</u>	
<u>Jephthah's Daughter</u>	Cavallotti

Prose and Poetry

From 1921 to 1924, Freer wrote many letters regarding opera in English to the editor of Music News, Charles E. Watt, who was a close friend of hers and shared her feelings. Many of these are brief--only one or two paragraphs. The writings listed below are papers and articles of substance, some published in Music News and/or other music journals. The addresses to large groups or given on the radio were not always reprinted, but may be seen in the original typescript, in the Scrapbooks of the American Opera Society of Chicago (Newberry Library).

Editorial: "American Students Should Be Taught at Home,"
Musical America (26 June 1909) editorial page.

Editorial: "Recognize the American Composer," Music News 4
(18 Oct. 1912): 2.

Article: "Our Mother Tongue," Music News 5
(5 Sept. 1913): 8.

Address: "Our Chicago Poets," Chicago Arts Club,
18 November 1915.

Poem: "For the Freedom of All Nations," published 1917.

Editorial: "Nationalize Our Music!" Music News 13 (18 Feb.
1921): 2.

Editorial: "Opera in Our Language," Music News 13 (6 May 1921): 2.

Charter: "Opera in Our Language" Foundation, June 1921, Scrapbooks of the American Opera Society of Chicago.

Editorial: "Honor and Country," Music News 13 (23 June 1921): 2.

Editorial: "Let Us Have Grand Opera, By All Means," Music News 13 (24 June 1921): 2.

Article: "Americanism for Americans," Music News 13 (6 July 1921): 9.

Article: "The American Opera: It Is Right and Our Right," Music News 13 (3 Aug. 1921): 19.

Article: "A List of American Operas," Chicago Evening Post, 26 April 1922.

Article: "Organized Clubs for Opera in Our Language," Musical Leader 44 (Nov. 1922): 433.

Editorial: "The Red Cross Work of American Musical Art," Music News 13 (16 Dec. 1921): 2.

Article: "Opera in Our Vernacular," Music News 14 (24 Mar. 1922): 17.

Address: "Patriotism in Art," Chicago Daily News radio (30 Mar. 1923), original copy in AOSC Scrapbooks.

Address to Friends of American Indians, 26 Sept. 1923, in Music News 15 (19 Oct. 1923): 4.

Editorial: "Civic Opera: Foreign Languages or English?" Music News 16 (11 April 1924): 2.

Charter: American Opera Society of Chicago, National, 7 April 1924, Scrapbooks of the AOSC.

Article: "Art Is History," Music News 16 (29 Aug. 1924): 4.

Article: "On Italian and American Opera," Music and Musicians, 16 July 1924, reprinted in Music News (29 Aug. 1924): 16.

Letter of resignation to AOSC, (30 Oct. 1926) AOSC Scrapbooks.

Autobiography, Recollections and Reflections of An American

Composer, (no date given on first and private edition,
1927 given on public edition.

Article: "An Urgent Need," Music News 21 (1 Mar. 1929): 4.

Article: "A Century of Progress in American Opera," Music News 22 (20 June 1930): 6.

Article: "Musing on Opera," in AOSC Scrapbooks, original
typewritten copy, published in Music News 23 (8 June
1931): 9.

Letter of resignation as Chairman of Bispham Memorial Award
Committee, (11 May 1939), AOSC Scrapbooks.

APPENDIX B

DAVID BISPHAM MEMORIAL MEDAL RECIPIENTS

1924 Ernest T. Carter (1856-1953)	<u>The White Bird</u>
Charles Wakefield Cadman (1881-1946)	<u>Shanewis</u>
Francesco DeLeone (1887-1948)	<u>Alglala</u>
Theodore Stearns (1880-1935)	<u>The Snowbird</u>
1925 John Adam Hugo (1873-1945)	<u>The Temple Dancer</u>
Ralph Lyford (1882-1927)	<u>Castle Agrazant</u>
Simon Bucharoff (1881-1955)	<u>Sankara</u>
Frank Patterson (1871-1948)	<u>The Echo</u>
Humphrey J. Stewart (1856-1932)	<u>The Hound of Heaven</u>
Henry Hadley (1871-1937)	<u>Azora</u>
Victor Herbert (1859-1924)	<u>Natomah and Madeleine</u>
J. Lewis Browne (1864-1933)	<u>The Corsican Girl</u>
Isaac Van Grove (1891-1979)	<u>The Music Robber</u>
W. Frank Harling (1887-1958)	<u>Light of St. Agnes</u>
Aldo Franchetti (1860-1942)	<u>Namika San</u>
Frederick Converse (1871-1940)	<u>Pipe of Desire</u>
William McCoy (1848-1926)	<u>Egypt</u>
1926 Eleanor Everest Freer (1864-1942)	<u>Legend of the Piper</u>
Clarence Loomis (1889-1965)	<u>Yolanda of Cyprus</u>
S. W. Harwell	<u>Bella Donna</u>
Charles Carlson	<u>Phelias</u>
Jane Van Etten (Andrews)	<u>Guido Ferrante</u>
William Lester (1889-1956)	<u>Manabozo</u>
Henry Purmort Eames (1872-1950)	<u>Priscilla</u>
Hamilton Forrest (1901-)	<u>Yzdra</u>
1927-28 Deems Taylor (1885-1966)	<u>The King's Henchman</u>
Albert Bimboni (1882-1960)	<u>Winona</u>
1929-31 Walter Damrosch (1862-1950)	<u>Cyrano de Bergerac</u>
Wesley La Violette (1894-1978)	<u>Shylock</u>
Pietro Floridia (1860-1932)	<u>Paolette</u>
Mary Carr Moore (1873-1957)	<u>The Cost of Empire</u>
Charles S. Skilton (1868-1941)	<u>Kapolin</u>
Karl Schmidt (1864-1950)	<u>Lady of the Lake</u>

1932 Marx E. Oberndorfer	<u>Roseanne</u>
Clarence Cameron White (1880-1960)	<u>Quanga</u>
Otto Luening (1900-	<u>Evangeline</u>
Howard Hanson (1896-1981)	<u>Merrymount</u>
Ralph Errolle (1891-1973)	<u>Prince Elmar</u>
Virgil Thomson (1896-1991)	<u>Four Saints in Three Acts</u>
Bernhard Rogers (1893-1968)	<u>Marriage of Aude</u>
1933-36 Louis Gruenberg (1884-1964)	<u>Emperor Jones</u>
George Antheil (1900-1957) and	
John Erskine (1879-1951)	<u>Helen Retires</u>
T. Carl Whitmer (1873-1959)	Religious operas
Rossiter Cole (1866-1952)	<u>Maypole Lovers</u>
John L. Seymour (1893-1969)	<u>Pascha's Garden</u>
Peter J. Engels	<u>Minnehaha</u>
Richard Hageman (1882-1966)	<u>Tragedy in Arezzo</u> (<u>Caponsacchi</u>)
1937-38 George Gershwin (1898-1937)	<u>Porgy and Bess</u>
Albert Stoessel (1894-1943)	<u>Garrick</u>
J. Marius Paulsen	<u>The Cimbrians</u>
Julius Osier	<u>The Bride of Baghdad</u>
1939 Edward Collins (1887-1951)	<u>Daughter of the South</u>
1940 Beryl Rubenstein (1898-1952)	<u>The Sleeping Beauty</u>
Quinto Maginini (1897-1974)	<u>The Argonauts</u>
1944 Douglas Moore (1893-1969)	<u>The Devil and Daniel Webster</u>
1945 Frederick Jacobi (1891-1952)	<u>The Prodigal Son</u>
1946 Ernst Bacon (1898-1990)	<u>The Tree on the Plain</u>

Esther Turkington, in her final report in 1946 as President of the American Opera Society of Chicago, included a list of David Bispham Medal recipients to that year, beginning with Ernest Carter in 1924. The list was not complete, no dates were provided, and not all letters of thanks from the winners were kept in the Society's scrapbooks. Many medals were awarded in person, some at performances of the operas, some in other cities by designated friends or associates of American Opera Society members.

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HSP - Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
DLC - Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
NL - Newberry Library, Chicago
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