

The Wind Demon
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The Music of Democratic Sociability

by Robert Offergeld

(with additions by Edward A. Berlin)

The American piano music of the last half of the nineteenth century is considered here as falling under two main headings. Viewed in relation to each other, the composers in these two groups constitute a peculiar historical case that requires a more than cursory inspection.

Much of the music of the first group was frankly directed to American popular taste as it then existed by composers who were in some degree public favorites. It includes striking and in some cases bizarrely autistic essays in the larger forms, particularly symphonies and operas, as well as countless waltzes, polkas, schottisches, galops, and marches for piano solo. It was produced by a large and loosely associated body of highly dissimilar composers--some self-taught, a few distinctly bohemian, one or two downright disreputable. The unquestioned superstar of this constellation is Louis Moreau Gottschalk. The earliest is Anthony Philip Heinrich (born 1781). The latest is Homer Newton Bartlett (born 1845).

In both imagery and execution the variety of their music is remarkable. It ranges from a vigorous frontier primitivism to brownstone-ballroom elegance to extraordinary examples of urban sophistication that prefigure jazz on the one hand and evoke a Rossinian or Offenbachian wit on the other. At its best it is so good that the musicological snobbery that suppressed it for a century seems nothing less than criminal. But even at its routine average it can surprise us with its capacity for rendering American subject matter in a deliciously fresh vernacular. Its tone is generally optimistic, and it can be genial to the point of gregariousness--and that (plus its occasional roughneck associations) is probably what invited both its popular success and a considerable measure of critical disrepute.

By far the most interesting fact about it is that good, bad, or indifferent, it promptly found a place in the daily life of the nation wherever it managed to get heard. Those who first encountered it seemed to sense with delight that it was somehow about *them*, and today we see that it is actually a marvelously characteristic portrait of the society for which it was composed.

For these and other reasons I have identified it generically elsewhere as the music of democratic sociability, a description I am borrowing for use here.

The music of the second group is in general much weightier. It was directed to the most elevated taste of its day and was produced by a very different breed of composer, often under a protective umbrella of more or less explicit academic sanction. Of the aggregate musicality of the composers in this category there can be no question, and socially they were far more conventional and culturally much more homogenized than their opposite numbers. Today, given the eclipse of Edward MacDowell, the most impressive member of the group is undoubtedly Horatio William Parker. The earliest (and the actual founder of the academic tradition) is John Knowles Paine (born 1839). [For works by Parker and Paine, see New World Records 80280-2, *Fugues, Fantasia, and Variations.*] The

latest is Henry Franklin Belknap Gilbert (born 1868).

It would be difficult to find in any liberal-arts discipline anywhere a more exhaustively prepared or devoutly right-thinking collection of professionals. Mainly they were New Englanders born and bred to begin with, and they subsequently became accredited members of the German apostolic succession through rigorous training in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, or Frankfurt. As events fell out, it was not their music but their pedagogic distinction and their academic honors that became their monument.

This is not to say that their music is negligible. Particularly in its more ambitious forms--fugues, sonatas, cantatas, oratorios, masses, symphonies, operas--it was admirably conceived for use in the increasingly ceremonialized social, political, and religious life of a maturing nation subject to imperialist daydreams. At its best it was capable of large utterance and could evoke an edifying sense of solemn public occasion. It was consequently much esteemed by both the social and musical establishments. And its chief composers, although still quite young and in excellent health, were precipitately crowned with laurel and installed with full honors in the nation's academic pantheon.

If any one man could be held responsible for the systematic underestimation of the popular group and the over-promotion of the academic one, it would be John Sullivan Dwight, a lapsed Unitarian minister and Brook Farm veteran. Today it has become clear that he was really a disaster for both groups, for by harping in and out of season on the righteousness of his pet academics he made them seem duller than they actually are.

For almost thirty years Dwight edited from Boston a remarkable crusading biweekly, *Dwight's Journal*, which dogmatically expounded the musical law and prophets for a limited but influential readership devoted to plain living and high thinking. Thanks to his sense of mission and his far-flung network of domestic and foreign correspondents, Dwight in the 1860s was the most formidable music critic in the United States--an extraordinary situation when you consider that his musical credentials were next to nonexistent. There is some doubt whether he could read an ordinary hymn tune at the piano with any ease.

My own belief is that Dwight was the archetypical dilettante critic who does not really *hear* music at all, who in fact closes his mind to its actuality in order to pursue undistracted his preconceived notions about it. Its several subject matters, its various grammars, its sensuous textures, the hard-won expansion of its expressive resources under the Romantics--all these concerns of first importance to real professionals were to Dwight matters of more or less indifference.

When he saw the name Bach or Beethoven on a concert program, Dwight seems to have gone into the kind of Transcendentalist swoon common among Brook Farmers in the presence of the certified Sublime, and the sounds thereafter penetrating his consciousness appear to have composed themselves into a tonal homily aimed at making man a nobler creature from stem to stern. When on the other hand he saw on a program the name Gottschalk, he went into a kind of apocalyptic Mosaic rage, and the sounds of Gottschalk's so gracefully human music didn't stand a chance against the rumble of supernatural thunder from Sinai.

It is not uncommon for persons susceptible to these exalted states to imagine they are privy to the

voice of God, an illusion probably encouraged in Dwight's case by his youthful pipeline to Emerson--who had, in addition to a perfect tin ear, a pipeline of his own to Carlyle, who had the most awesome pipeline of all to Goethe, who knew God personally. With connections like these you probably don't need music lessons, and Dwight never seems to have questioned his right to dispose of great musical issues in the grandly moralizing style of, say, Ruskin on architecture. His conviction of his own rectitude found expression in an operating principle so simple, so effective with the uninformed, and so widely parroted by critics who came after him that it set back the cause of American music a good century.

Dwight dismissed from serious discussion any music that was not umbilically connected to the German classics between Bach and Mendelssohn. Among the many important things thus consigned to the dustbin were just those chapters of our early musical history that are most characteristically American: the immensely popular but "unscientific" shape-note tune books that permitted the musically unlettered to take real possession of their hymnals as a working treasury of domestic and secular vocal pleasure, independent of Sabbath and preacher and precentor. Plus the magnificently visionary William Billings and his peers [see New World Records 80276-2, *The Birth of Liberty*] and their rough-hewn but contagious fusing tunes. Plus Father Heinrich and Stephen Foster and Gottschalk (each of whom made his own way in spite of Dwight's distaste or hostility). Plus all such grandly ambitious and completely American mavericks as Charles Hopkins and George Bristow and William Fry--declared and sometimes rude antagonists of New York's almost totally German musical establishment, yet gifted composers whose demonstrated capacity for growth justified special consideration or at least systematic encouragement, and who got neither from Dwight.

None of Dwight's individual prejudices, however, was as damaging to our cultural self-estimation as his general party line, repeatedly aired in print not only in *Dwight's Journal* but by his often revoltingly stooge-like correspondents, including tributary critics who published in newspapers outside Boston. Those interested in a detailed view of it will find it given by Frédéric Louis Ritter (see Bibliography), a Swiss émigré conductor, the author of America's first and most depressing history of music, and for many years apparently Dwight's chief Boston coadjutor. Reduced to essentials, the Dwight-Ritter view was that Americans had no music or musicality of their own worth the name, and it helped institutionalize for a century America's hopelessly colonial psychology as a German musical dependency.

Yet one has only to read the half dozen or so basic travel books and pioneer memoirs of the early Republic to realize that the springs of America's native musicality have from the first been deep, copious, and irrepressible. Foreign travelers in the Old West (a historian's term meaning the early trans-Appalachian West, not the later trans-Mississippian one) found our people dancing, singing, and fiddling in the virgin forest. No Conestoga wagon train on the Cumberland Turnpike, no barge fleet on the Erie Canal or keelboat flotilla on the Mississippi or steamer on the "western waters" (as they then called the Great Lakes and the Ohio River system) but had, in addition to its treasured shape-note tune books, its quota of bugles and trumpets (their piercing calls regulated the great cattle drives that accompanied the wagon trains, and also guided nocturnal or fogbound water traffic, ringing by day and night above the startled forests and rivers). Nor did any of them lack another treasure, one beyond price to families heading into the great western solitudes, of jew's-harps, flutes, fiddles, guitars, and banjos. A full quarter century before Dwight began his *Journal*, not only pianos and harmoniums but even pipe organs were on the trail behind the jew's-harps and

banjos, traveling overland in wagons or, as surviving steamship manifests indicate, lashed to cargo decks amid the bacon, hides, sperm candles, sausages, raisins, mustard, and beeswax. In Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio*, we learn that in the summers of the 1820s half the town of Steubenville used to gather in the streets at twilight, standing in silence to hear Thomas Cole's sisters play duets on the first piano in town. (Cole, himself an amateur flutist, later became a founding father of American Romantic painting as the leader of the Hudson River School.)

By 1852, the year Gottschalk returned to America for his New York debut and Dwight began his *Journal*, American manufacturers were producing roughly ten thousand pianos a year. When one adds to this the thousands of pianos imported from Europe before the opening of the Erie Canal (Pleyels, Broadwoods, Erards, Clementis), and the thousands more produced in America between 1825 and 1850, one begins to understand why the piano was by mid-century the most important influence in our musical history until the wind-up phonograph.

The majority of these pianos were played by marriageable young ladies as a demonstration of personal accomplishment and family gentility, and their appetite for new sheet music, as for other fashionable commodities, was omnivorous and insatiable. The great carved and polished piano case itself became a kind of domestic shrine or altar where the sacred flame of sentiment was tended faithfully by chosen vestals, and as befitted its consecrational function it was draped with paisley or lace, festooned with ivy, surmounted by ancestral portraits, lighted by oil lamps or candles, and decorated with wax or feather flowers, pictorial plates, seashells, and other souvenirs of travel and upper-middle-class sensibility.

Inevitably this altar and these vestals demanded--and got--a music of their own: a music showy but not too difficult, a pictorial music that described either the beauties of nature (clouds, birds, brooks, flowers, storms, trees, waterfalls) or real but distant places (Spain, the Alps, Morocco, Venice)--or an even more insidiously seductive music that described the various interior landscapes of sentiment (religious, amatory, military, patriotic, Byronic, Ossianic, or just namelessly nostalgic).

Much of the piano music discussed below was produced in answer to this admittedly rather special demand. Its better examples prove again that subject matter can be less important than style, and that the term "salon music," so sourly applied to the genre by certain later professionals who should have known better, was based more on their actual ignorance of it than on any really superior taste. Ironically, given the general academic contempt for it, this is almost the only socially respectable American music produced in its era that shares with the cantatas of Bach and the symphonies and concertos of Haydn and Mozart a healthy sociological base. It was produced not for professional vanity or academic honor but for daily consumer use, and any composer who could keep it coming on a reasonably competent level was assured of a comfortable income from it.

We can estimate the vivid novelty of these pieces to their first hearers if we remember that the piano concert repertory as we know it did not yet exist. The great Romantic expansion of the literature by Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt had scarcely begun to reach the large public, and the sacred classics were simply unacceptable to the big middle-class audiences that had replaced the aristocracy as the chief economic patron of concert music. Even Liszt was forced by vehement audience protest to substitute his transcription from Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* for a Beethoven sonata he had programmed--a celebrated scandal noted thoughtfully by other virtuosos of the day, including

Gottschalk.

The shorter pieces produced under these circumstances for the American market were consequently based largely on the prevalent socially fashionable dance forms, and these with few changes except expressive ones could become moody "character" pieces suitable to the current passion for the Gothic Revival (pictorially, this genre was a straight theft from the Graveyard Poets, full of ruins, owls, ivy, and moonlight). In scale these waltzes, polkas, and galops were necessarily somewhat limited, although at their most expansive, in the hands of Gottschalk, they could suggest the grand quadrilles and cotillions under the blazing chandeliers at Newport and Saratoga.

For public performance on the virtuoso level, something more ambitious was called for, and the first European virtuosos to tour America--Henri Herz, Leopold de Meyer, Sigismond Thalberg--established a surefire formula for it. It called mainly for extensive variations on operatic, patriotic, or other well-known tunes. It would probably take a good pianist weeks to work his way through all the known variations, domestic and imported, on "Hail, Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle" alone. We simply have no conception today of the immoderate appetite in the young Republic for these two tunes. It was practically impossible to get any sort of public occasion under way without a performance--customarily encored--of one or both.

For a grand rabble-rousing finale, a third genre was available--big and exceedingly noisy battle pieces that recalled by name the outstanding military and naval engagements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Heading the list for longevity was Franz Kotzwara's *The Battle of Prague*, composed in London in 1788, followed in due course by a sampling of the Napoleonic wars (*La Battala [sic] de Baylen*, from the Peninsular War, and *The Battle of Maringo [sic]*, both published in New York, in 1809 and 1811 respectively), plus *The Battle of New Orleans* (War of 1812), *The Battle of Buena Vista* (Mexican War), and dozens more. By far the most imaginative and effective of this genre was Gottschalk's Civil War epic *The Union*.

It is not possible today to hear this music with ears and minds innocent of all that has happened to the piano literature, to American society, and to our national image since these pieces were new. But we owe them at least a modest effort to imagine them against the backdrop of the vanished America for which they were composed.

When Anthony Philip Heinrich was born in Bohemia in 1781, Bach's sons were still working, a ten-year-old boy named Beethoven was writing his first piece known to us, and America's Andrew Law, William Billings' starchy rival, was publishing *A Select Number of Plain Tunes* ("plain" was Law's rap at Billings' fancy fuguing tunes). When Homer Bartlett died in Hoboken in 1920, George White's *Scandals* were introducing a young composer named George Gershwin, the hit songs of the year included "Margie" and "Whispering," and Ravel was writing "La Valse."

From Heinrich's birth to Bartlett's death is 139 years, and incredible as it may seem, there was about a decade at a kind of crossroads in time when both those men, plus the eight other composers on this record, were all living and composing in New York. In this period most of them enjoyed personal as well as professional relationships with each other, and at least five of them were publicly associated in the battle for recognition of American music. Although they differed widely in talent and accomplishment, their music shares family resemblances that are as peculiar, as stylish, and as

readily dated as the croquet costumes worn by Winslow Homer's superbly self-confident young ladies.

In some respects there has been no more beguiling moment in our musical history. It was the precise high noon of the nineteenth century--that marvelously spirited decade of the 1850s, when a rambunctious young nation, excitedly engaged in self-discovery and cheerfully publishing its hearty self-approval, really seemed about to demonstrate the motto on its Great Seal, A New Order of the Ages.

Few of our great men had yet frozen into the textbook postures of their immortality. William Cullen Bryant, for example, could happily punch a literary enemy in the nose on a Broadway sidewalk. Even our biggest cities were still delightfully countrified, full of trees and birds and every kind of domestic animal. In Washington, President Zachary Taylor's pet horse Old Whitey, which had the run of the White House grounds, used to amble out of the gate to be petted by passersby or to wander about nibbling flowers in neighboring gardens. And it illustrates to perfection the cheerful opportunism of what I have called the music of democratic sociability to note that although President Taylor occupied the White House for only a year, Charles Grobe managed to get out not one but three piano pieces about him--"General Taylor's Grand March," "Old Rough and Ready Quickstep," and "The Battle of Buena Vista," the last based on the episode that made joint national heroes of Old Rough and Ready and Old Whitey and brought them both to the White House.

GEORGE WILLIAM WARREN (1828-1902)

The Andes, Marche di Bravoura (Homage to Church's Picture "The Heart of the Andes")

One of the more amusing aspects of the lifelong friendship between Gottschalk and Warren is that Gottschalk, the flagrantly antipuritanical young virtuoso, seldom failed to enchant the most respectable people. Socially Gottschalk was unreservedly liked (doubtless to the extreme irritation of Dwight) by numbers of proper Bostonians, including Mason, the Chickering, Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the F. G. Hills, the James Thomas Fields. But Gottschalk seemed specially attractive also to the officially most respectable of all musicians--those who composed nineteenth-century America's hymns, and in the 1850s they were the largest, the most successful, and by far the most solvent composing fraternity in the Western world. Richard Storrs Willis, editor of the *Musical World and Times* and a Gottschalk champion from the first, was the composer of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" and the author of *Our Church Music*. Warren, a self-taught musician, went on to compose the "National Hymn," one of the great modern Protestant processionals, and to edit *Warren's Hymns and Tunes, As Sung at St. Thomas Church*. The historically eminent hymnologist Hubert Platt Main (he composed more than a thousand hymns and made a fortune publishing the gospel hymns of Moody and Sankey) was as a boy a pupil of the nineteenth century's hymnological founding father Lowell Mason, and he remarked to a correspondent late in life that "after a diet of Mason's hymns, Gottschalk was sheer heaven." Main was sixteen and had just started composing hymns on his own when he first heard "The Last Hope" (the same year Warren heard it in Albany). At some point in the next ten years it was Main who first arranged Gottschalk's religious-theatrical masterpiece as a hymn for the Methodist Episcopal Church, and those interested will find it under the title "Gottschalk" in Philip Phillips' collection the *New Hymn and Tune Book*, published in 1867. In the same collection, alongside great classics by Billings, Timothy Swan, and Daniel Read, are dozens

of hymns by Lowell Mason, dozens more by Main himself, and several by Gottschalk's good friends William Mason and George F. Root. After the nationally reported amatory scandal involving a seduction that drove Gottschalk from the United States in 1865, it must have entertained him no end to find himself two years later in such lofty company--purified, so to speak, by association.

All that was still in the future when Gottschalk returned at the outset of the Civil War from his four-year pagan holiday in the West Indies. Warren was then living in Brooklyn as organist of Holy Trinity. Remarking that he was now more intimate with Gottschalk than ever before, Warren wrote, ". . . we were together often and often, and under all kinds of circumstances."

One of these occasions led directly to the perpetration of two distinctly polemical piano works: Gottschalk's "Cri de Délivrance" (a fantasy on George F. Root's "Battle Cry of Freedom") and Warren's "The Andes." It was a grand reception for New York's "upper tendom" (N. P. Willis' phrase for what later became "the four hundred") at the Fifth Avenue home of William T. Blodgett, a millionaire art collector who had just acquired Frederick Church's celebrated canvas *The Heart of the Andes* (now in the Metropolitan Museum). In Warren's account, during the course of the reception a visiting English nobleman with Secessionist sympathies made a disparaging remark about American music, which brought Gottschalk to his feet in defense of his brother-workers. White as a sheet, and in his excited and overwhelming eloquence, he told them of a melody then being sung by regiment after regiment, marching down Broadway *en route* for the cars to Washington. And, on the spur of the moment, he sprang to the piano again, and gave such an astounding rhapsody on George F. Root's "We'll Rally Round the Flag" [*sic*] as is entirely beyond description. I never heard anything like it, and never will again. The effect was earthquakean almost. These men of art are enthusiastic; and they were frantic. The uproar could have been heard a mile. Gottschalk was nearly killed with embraces,--and the gentleman from England had departed.

Warren's "The Andes" is not in the least Andean. It is a spirited march against the Philistines for use as propaganda for the American music party. Gottschalk promptly made a thunderous two-piano version of it, and since the Church painting and the demonstration at the Blodgett party were the talk of the town for weeks to come, Gottschalk and Warren played the piece repeatedly with great success during the 1862-63 season.

—R.O.

GEORGE F. BRISTOW (1825-1898)

Dream Land, Op. 59

The wave of migration that brought Anthony Philip Heinrich to Philadelphia was rich in musicians. It also brought a Paris Conservatoire student named Leopold Meignen to Philadelphia and an English conductor and singing teacher named William Richard Bristow to New York. Meignen taught the twenty-year-old William Henry Fry harmony and counterpoint, and Bristow became the father of George Frederick Bristow, the American violinist, pianist, organist, and composer.

Fry and Bristow were the most important American orchestral composers until the arrival of the Boston academics. Both men wrote overtures, oratorios, operas, and symphonies that were performed with popular success and greeted with serious critical attention. The chief musical

difference between them is that whereas Fry's musical language derives largely from Italian opera (particularly Bellini and Donizetti), Bristow's derives from the German classics.

From contemporary newspapers one learns that in one important respect the men were in quite different categories publicly. Bristow was a highly accomplished performer on three instruments, and Fry was not on any--although during one of his lectures on the art of song, and in the presence of the best singers in the country, Fry once went to the piano and illustrated his point vocally, to the great amusement of everyone present.

Because Bristow was so much in demand as a performer his name was constantly in print, as were those of Richard Hoffman, William Mason, and George William Warren--indeed, they were forever appearing in "testimonial concerts" and "benefits" for each other, in addition to the concerts they gave for themselves. Hoffman played second piano at Gottschalk's New York debut, for example, while Bristow was accompanist for the other assisting artists. Today we have little idea how much music was made for and by New Yorkers in the 1850s, and with a remarkable spontaneity--or at least informality. New York still offered a small-townish intimacy, and there was almost daily fraternization among our most distinguished professionals until the Civil War ended the neighborly world of ready sociability.

Another thing that set Bristow apart was his distinction as a performer in the German repertory. He was consequently *persona grata* with the New York musical establishment from the first (as were Mason and Hoffman, for the same reason), and was an influential member of the New York Philharmonic Society from its foundation in 1842, when he was seventeen.

The general consternation may therefore be imagined when Bristow in 1854, after several years of distinguished service, not only sided publicly with Fry but accused the Philharmonic Society of making "a systematized effort for the extinction of American music." Not even Fry had gone *that* far, and the Dwight-Ritter response to Bristow's accusation is immortalized in Ritter's *Music in America* with one of the most unconscionably arrogant and revealing remarks in the annals of musicology: "They [the Philharmonic Society] could scarcely extinguish that which had no existence." There was "music in America," all right--good *German* music. But as for *American* music? There simply was no such thing.

Bristow resigned. Not, however, before adding:

During the eleven years the Philharmonic has been in operation in this city, it played once, either by mistake or accident, one single American composition--an overture of mine.

After remarking that one exception proved the rule, he asked:

Now, in the name of the nine Muses, what is the Philharmonic in this country? Is it to play exclusively the works of German masters, especially if they be dead, in order that our critics may translate their ready-made praises from the German? Or is it to stimulate original art on the spot? Is there a Philharmonic Society in Germany for the encouragement solely of American music?

At this point the Philharmonic seems to have been struck for the first time by the implications of a disaffected Bristow marching with Fry under the American flag at the head of a sympathetic company of American and English instrumentalists. The French conductor Louis-Antoine Jullien had just demonstrated repeatedly that the paying New York public was perfectly happy with the symphonic works of Bristow and Fry. The Philharmonic discreetly retreated, negotiations were undertaken, Bristow returned to the fold, and the following season the Philharmonic played his *Jullien* Symphony, followed in due course by his *Columbus* Overture and his *Arcadian* and F-sharp-minor symphonies.

It was more a victory for Bristow personally than for the principles of the American music group. The Philharmonic continued to premiere new works by such luminous successors to Beethoven as Heinefetter, Erdsmandörfer, Schindelmeisser, and Fuchs, and even some by its virtual PR man Ritter. But no profane note by Heinrich, Fry, Gottschalk, or Hopkins ever passed its majestic lips.

For its first few measures we feel that Bristow's "Dream Land" may turn into a Mendelssohnian song without words or even an opulently rueful Gottschalkian nocturne like "Ricordati" or "La Chute des Feuilles." But the piece escapes both these alternatives, and its title and date tell us why.

The word "dream" in the title of a nineteenth-century piano piece ordinarily signals three things. First, the musical landscape we are about to enter is not real but visionary; it will avoid actual dance forms and other examples of local color. The second concerns the piece's metrical shape: dreams do not often present themselves in eight-measure segments, so in dream pieces we can usually expect a looser formal organization. The third and most important thing is the piece's *psychological* form: a dream piece almost always begins with a section expressing intense longing, succeeded by another expressing more or less ecstatic fulfillment.

All these requirements are satisfied to the letter in Liszt's "Liebestraum," but it is a surprise to find Bristow bringing off a comparable program in "Dream Land." By the time we reach his also Lisztian cascade of thirds and sixths, we feel we have left the worlds of Mendelssohn and Gottschalk for a quite different part of the Romantic forest. "Dream Land" was composed in 1885, and the Impressionists are just around the corner.

The piece is unpublished. —R.O.

CHARLES GROBE (1817?-1879)

United States Grand Waltz, Op. 43

Grobe, (who is thought to have been born in Weimar in 1817, and is known to have come to America in 1839) was beyond doubt the most productive piano-piece factory that ever existed. In 1842 (the year Gottschalk left for France as a boy) his pieces were already well known to piano-playing Americans. He wrote potpourris and operatic transcriptions galore, pious variations on Lowell Mason's "Missionary Hymn," tributes to military heroes like Colonel Jefferson Davis and General Zachary Taylor, and even produced a "revamped, remodelled, and renovated" edition of *The Battle of Prague*. In the Civil War years (which, naturally, produced *Music of the Union*) Grobe

reached his Opus 1,348, and hundreds were yet to come. Some authorities credit him with two thousand works.

It baffles one to say how any one of Grobe's pieces could achieve more (or less) popularity than the others, since at twenty paces they are practically indistinguishable. It did happen, however, and the "United States Grand Waltz," produced in 1845, went into many editions. The cover of the first edition shows Grobe as a trim young man, but in later ones he has become portly and prosperous.

The "United States Grand Waltz" is a neat collection, showy but not too difficult, of lively runs in single notes and octaves, gladdened by the treble rattle of crisp triplets and ending dramatically with fortissimo rolled chords. One searches it in vain for a touch of real individuality, and one can only conclude that it was probably the titles and dedications of Grobe's pieces that constituted their main appeal. The "United States Grand Waltz" is "dedicated as a Tribute of Respect to the Ladies of the U.S."

Grobe's real peculiarity is not musical at all but industrial, like Grand Rapids rococo furniture. He so smoothly occupies his manufacturing function--he is so much of what he is and so little of anything else--that he possesses an almost sinister economy of type, a little bit like an automaton encountered in *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

—R.O.

RICHARD HOFFMAN (1831-1909)

In Memoriam L.M.G.

Dixiana (Caprice for the Pianoforte on the Popular Negro Minstrel's Melody "Dixie's Land")

Except for occasional visits to his native England, Richard Hoffman by preference spent his adult life in the United States. Yet he never became an American citizen. The main reason was a peculiarly English reluctance to depart from established domestic observances. He had the same birth date as Queen Victoria, and after breakfast on their birthday he invariably put up a small British flag on the mantelpiece and went to the piano and played "God Save the Queen." This would have been improper for an American citizen, so Hoffman stayed British.

Notwithstanding the claims in several reference works, Hoffman did *not* study with Liszt but principally with his father, who was a pupil of Hummel and Kalkbrenner. When Mendelssohn proved unavailable for lessons, the boy studied with the incredible "piano lion" Leopold de Meyer (who seems to have instructed him mainly while being measured for shirts or suits or while having his hair cut), after which, being a member of a large family, all musicians, Hoffman decided to try his fortune in the United States. He was already a good bravura pianist who could excite audiences, and in 1847 he made his American debut at the old Broadway Tabernacle playing Émile Prudent's *Grande Fantaisie on "Les Huguenots,"* De Meyer's Introduction and Variations on *Semiramis*, and in his own arrangement of the *William Tell* Overture for three pianos.

His most sympathetic newspaper critic was Charles A. Dana (also making *his* debut), about to be

managing editor of Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*--a post Dana occupied five years later when his new music critic William Henry Fry came back from Paris practically arm in arm with Gottschalk to beat the *Tribune's* big drum for American composers. A little later Hoffman played the Mendelssohn G-minor Concerto with the New York Philharmonic Society, the beginning of a long and sunny association (the Philharmonic in fact made him an honorary member at the height of the uproar about Bristow). In the 1848-49 season, with violinist Joseph Burke, he toured the Eastern states and even "the West"--Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago--four years ahead of Gottschalk and five ahead of William Mason in the frontier concert business. At their first appearance in Milwaukee, with tickets at fifty cents (they refused to come down to the suggested price of twelve-and-a-half cents), Hoffman and Burke had a profit of \$72.50 after expenses of \$16.95--not considered at all bad at the time. On one occasion they returned a borrowed square piano to its owner after their concert by pushing it two blocks on its own casters.

By this time Hoffman had many friends in the American musical community--among them the New York German stalwarts Henry Christian Timm, William Scharfenberg, and Otto Dresel, as well as the distinguished Boston pianist Francis G. Hill, later a faithful Gottschalk ally; Jules Fontana, Chopin's intimate friend and pupil, who was centered in New York but also toured America around this time with Camillo Sivori, *the* Paganini pupil; and a little later William Vincent Wallace, the remarkable violinist, pianist, composer, and adventurer from Ireland by way of New Zealand, India, South America, Mexico, and London, whose opera *Maritana* was a great hit at Drury Lane in 1845, and who returned permanently to London and several more operatic successes in 1853 after launching his old friend Gottschalk on his American career.

On the eve of the 1850s the American frontier was all but swarming with European concertizers. The natives listened to the European music with awe, but there is little evidence that the visitors heard the native music at all. Yet some of it was pretty hard to miss. "Turkey in the Straw" (Zip Coon) had been a countrywide hit since 1834 (the original lyric mentions General Jackson, whom Zip Coon is going to succeed as president). It was now joined by "Arkansas Traveler" (first printed in 1847) and "Oh! Susanna" (1848). Passed irresistibly from fiddler to fiddler, these and a dozen other unquenchably optimistic tunes set a swaggering young nation dancing from Vermont to California, so that Dwight would feel it to be one of his first obligations in his forthcoming *Journal* to take arms against all such.

Just at the middle of the nineteenth century the most celebrated of all European concertizers hit the American trail. Hoffman had just finished his first American tour when Barnum concluded his deal with Jenny Lind. At this point Hoffman received a proposal from Barnum to tour America with Lind--not as her accompanist but as assisting artist. When he completed this extraordinary assignment Hoffman was only twenty-one, but he was a seasoned trouper and an acknowledged fixture of American musical life. So his friend Wallace engaged him as assisting artist for the imminent New York debut of Gottschalk, who was just twenty-three.

Hoffman from the first admiringly acknowledged Gottschalk's stature as a major pianist of the era and his "genius" as a composer, calling him "the one American composer of genuine originality." And Gottschalk deeply valued the recognition and loyalty he received from "the admirable and conscientious Hoffman." In the early 1850s they performed together repeatedly, Hoffman often being the first to play in Gottschalk's marvelous and thoroughly American four-hand dances,

whether of the West Indian or the brownstone-ballroom variety.

When Gottschalk made his "second debut" in 1862, following his five-year West Indian holiday, Hoffman was again his supporting artist. In the privacy of his journal for that year Gottschalk left a delightfully partisan portrait of Hoffman--and also of an unnamed Boston critic:

Of all the pianists who have visited the United States, there is not one whose talent merits more esteem than that of Richard Hoffman. A conscientious artist, a perfect musician, he has arrived legitimately and without effort at the high position that he occupies. His taste and the moderation of his judgment have preserved him from coteries. He is neither the chief nor the instrument of any clique. He admires and understands the great dead (I mean the classics) but he does not conclude from this that he must kill the living who possess talent. He does not believe that in admiring Schumann he is compelled to believe that Rossini is a fool. He comprehends Bach but does not shrug his shoulders on hearing the name of Bellini. In conclusion, he is an artist and a *gentleman*.

In the middle 1850s Gottschalk had expressed his regard in action rather than words. He dedicated "The Banjo" to Hoffman, and though he never alludes to such things, I am certain he knew exactly what that piece historically is--the first great American character portrait for piano: ostensibly a primitive sketch of a banjo picker, actually a stunning image of an era and a society. In addition, Gottschalk programmed Hoffman's compositions as he did Mason's, not just as a graceful compliment but because anything Gottschalk played sold by the thousand at the nation's sheet-music counters. Among the Hoffman pieces he programmed was "La Gazelle (Andante Élégante)," which he made so popular that many people thought it was his own.

"Dixiana" is I think part of a diverting professional dialogue Hoffman was having with Gottschalk about minstrel tunes in concert pieces. It starts off very grandly with a fugue that shortly dissolves in a fit of giggling triplets. The piece was published in 1861, and like Gottschalk's unpublished Variations on "Dixie's Land" it could not have had a very long concert life, being necessarily sent to storage when the tune became the war song of the South.

Hoffman's remarkable and moving "In Memoriam L.M.G." was published in 1870, a year after Gottschalk's death, and Hoffman recalled forty years later how painful that mysterious tragedy had been for those who were close to him.

The piece has this verse as a superscription:

I sing to him that rests below;
And since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave
And make them pipes whereon to sing.

I find it impossible to hear this piece without sensing an uncanny double image. It expresses Hoffman's feeling about Gottschalk as his friend, but I think it also expresses Hoffman's sense of Gottschalk *in his music*. Indeed, the Gottschalkian harmonic presence in certain measures is so strong that one feels that one is witnessing an act of evocation, or possibly a kind of exorcism. Note the

strange sense of relief at the end, when the oppressive minor key suddenly lightens into major.
—R.O.

CHARLES JEROME HOPKINS (1836-1898)

The Wind Demon (Rhapsodie Caractéristique pour Piano), Op. 11

In 1864, three months before his death, the composer and critic William Henry Fry returned in the *New York Tribune* to his favorite subject:

Twenty years ago there were in some of the cities, perhaps in New York, half amateur, half professor [*sic*], societies who were glad to play original compositions; and in one or two instances struck medals in honor of the composer. But all that is changed . . . and there is never a word of cheer or a thousand dollars of assistance for the young composer. . . .

Nothing . . . is ever done for musical art as a public thing, an entity to be encouraged by private purses in default of any government or class support such as it receives in Europe...

Occasionally a composer, once in ten or fifteen years, is found enterprising enough to do something, but always at his own cost. . . .

Apropos: We perceive that Mr. C. J. Hopkins is about to offer some orchestral compositions of his own, on Tuesday night at Irving Hall, notwithstanding the closing of all musical doors here against young composers. The occasion deserves special notice from all interested in original compositions.

By 1864 the self-taught organist, teacher, and composer Charles Jerome Hopkins (his first name is erroneously given in some reference works as Edward) had been before the musical public, entirely at his own vehement insistence, for at least eight years. In 1856 he had founded the American Music Association, and concerts under its auspices of music by Gottschalk, Richard Storrs Willis, George William Warren, Bristow, and others are reported in contemporary newspapers. So it is certain that in 1864 Fry, like everybody else within hearing, had long been aware of Hopkins.

A more interesting question is how *well* he knew him. For if Fry and Bristow were habitually belligerent in the cause of American music, Hopkins was monomaniacal, and in some quarters he was regarded as seriously unbalanced. Like many more or less paranoid people, he seems at periods to have exercised considerable charm--enough at any rate to persuade numbers of otherwise sensible musicians and laymen to engage themselves in writing to help him advance American music. Among the Hopkins papers in the Americana Collection at Lincoln Center Library is a sheet of blue notepaper bearing such an engagement written in ink and signed by numbers of leading New York instrumentalists, vocalists, and composers, Gottschalk's name heading the list and Bristow's not far below.

One gathers that in practice "American music" as defined by Hopkins often turned out to be music *by* Hopkins--and woe betide those who took their commitment to it lightly. He had a gift for that peculiarly demoralizing kind of invective that is hilarious to everybody but its victims, and those he

viewed as renegade in their promises to him soon found that life was scarcely worth living. Some he denounced in articles or pamphlets. Others he subjected to long campaigns of unflattering doggerel verse on postcards meant to be read by the victims' domestics. He was quite capable of questioning the manners and the integrity of the entire Church of England over a few concert tickets, and on one such occasion he got himself haled into court--where he promptly had everybody but the prosecution in gales of laughter. A perfectly terrible person obviously. How one regrets not having known him!

In his later years Hopkins was subject to deep melancholy. In an extraordinary 1885 letter to the *Musical Courier* he listed the unhappy end of twelve prominent American musicians. Three suffered "early decline and consumption from disappointment." Five, including Harry Sanderson, a Gottschalk protégé, went to "a drunkard's grave." Four, including U. C. Hill, founder of the New York Philharmonic, were suicides. Hopkins concluded his letter:

I hope to live long enough to see a composer of operas, symphonies, and concertos here granted a chance to make a living at least equal to that now enjoyed by a shoemaker or tailor, but to treat him royally as if he were a tenor or ballet dancer would be beyond the wildest dreams of obediently yours,
Jerome Hopkins

Hopkins' "The Wind Demon" (the published title; he later renamed the piece "The Cyclone") was composed in the summer of 1859 and published in 1865. It is dedicated to Richard Hoffman--who, if he knew what was good for him, promptly programmed it.

Given the universal popularity of Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony and Rossini's *William Tell* Overture, storm pieces inevitably became a specialty of the Romantic nature painters, and today there are still people who hear storms among Chopin's études and in the finale of his B-flat-minor Sonata. As a rule, however, piano storms follow the Rossini formula, starting softly in the distance, then sweeping thrillingly close in wailing chromatics and thunderous chords, finally dying away in silence, sometimes with concluding comments from damp but optimistic birds.

The Hopkins storm is not in this tradition at all. Actually, except for its frequent changes of meter and a *misterioso* section of chromatic diminished-seventh chords (this part would have made the fortune of a silent-movie pit pianist), it is a designedly monotonous one-idea piece that builds a sense of lashing energies by means of massive chords reiterated with great force through double and triple dotting. The piece is not especially pictorial but has a peculiarly obsessive quality.

Hopkins composed more than seven hundred works (few of them published), including numerous vocal and instrumental pieces, a "Fantasia for Five Pianos," an *Easter Festival Vespers*, a symphony, and two operas.

—R.O.

ANTHONY PHILIP HEINRICH (1781-1861)

"The Laurel Waltz" from The Elssler Dances

In addition to being our first declared nationalist in music, Anthony Philip Heinrich was by temperament an incurable Romantic, and he was both these things on so grand a scale that his enthusiastic early admirers called him "the Beethoven of America." We still have to smile at that, but we no longer feel called upon to deplore Heinrich's often excessive musical eccentricities. Today we hear in them the exuberance of a bigger-than-life American folk character--one who turned up, moreover, at a wholly implausible time and place.

The time was the second decade of the nineteenth century, when great military and political events reinforced two streams of migrants--one crossing the Atlantic to the New World and another crossing the Appalachians to the wilds of Kentucky and Ohio. The fulminating energies released by these developments inspired the young Republic with almost insanely grand ideas and projects. These included not just a national network of highways, canals, and railroads through virgin wilderness, plus perhaps the most ambitious capitoline complex in architectural annals amid the Washington swamps. They also included the fantastic *Historical Monument of the American Republic* (measuring nine by thirteen feet) by the Massachusetts painter Erastus Salisbury Field; John James Audubon's equally monumental but superrealistic *Birds of America*, rendered from nature despite heartbreaking reverses, and a quarter century in the execution; and Joel Barlow's huge and repeatedly enlarged epic poem *Columbiad*, which envisioned an eventual apotheosis of American ideas in a congress of nations and a republic of all mankind.

In the same overpowering family are some dozens of the larger Heinrich scores, the work of a Bohemian émigré whose proudest boast was to sign himself "American composer." Heinrich's love for America--the land, its peoples, its politics--was from the first an all-embracing passion, finding expression in grandiose descriptive works, several of them for enormous orchestral and vocal forces, that celebrate our great men (including Heinrich's admired Indian heroes), our history, our weather, landscape, and natural wonders, and even our topical social events and national gossip. And when he had nothing grander to do, he dashed off joyous little choral toasts to people or places he liked--"Huzza for Washington!," for example, or even "Huzza for Philadelphia!"

It was apparently around 1810 that Heinrich, an amateur violinist and a merchant with Hamburg banking connections, came to America and settled in Philadelphia. But in 1817, impoverished by the failure of the Hamburg bank, he moved to the "solitary wilds and primeval forests of Kentucky."

Here he lived for a time among the Indians of Bardstown, and that first year, when Thomas Jefferson was still doing without the orchestra he so ardently desired at Monticello, Heinrich conducted a Beethoven symphony in the frontier town of Lexington. The next year he began to compose--from "a mere accident," as he remarked late in life--what can only be called an inundation of music. Whereas most composers produce one or two pieces at a time, Heinrich seldom issued anything less than a collection, and for openers he brought forth in 1820 a sprawling assortment of pieces for voice, piano, and violin magnificently called *The Dawning of Music in Kentucky, or the Pleasures of Harmony in the Solitudes of Nature*.

The basic language of this music derives from eighteenth-century Europe. But nothing could be more American than the teeming extravagance of its ideas and images, its restless harmonic adventuring (including passages of unbridled chromaticism), and its wildly proliferating modulations. It is American above all in the urgency of its impatience with European rhetoric. Heinrich simply

could not bring himself to follow the conventional paths to foregone musical conclusions, and he seldom completes even an eight-measure statement without some trace of the "strange ideal somersets and capriccios" (in his own phrase) that became his signature. He can become so absorbed in the fascinating oddities that occur to him in transit that one sometimes feels before the end of a piece that Heinrich has forgotten exactly what he had in mind when he began it. Yet nothing is more engaging than the high good humor with which he perpetrates his surprises, and he is obviously as delighted as a child with his merry gift for confounding our expectations. As a boy in Boston, William Mason once read through one of Heinrich's piano pieces for him at Chickering's warehouse, and decades later he recalled how pleased the old man had been when, in the course of an otherwise uneventful score, Mason successfully coped with some explosive and totally irrelevant sforzandos. That sort of thing was of course too much for Dwight, who predictably came up with such adjectives for Heinrich's music as "wild," "complicated," "bewildering."

Heinrich was held in affection by the New York musical community and even commanded a certain public, and in his later years a few concerts were devoted almost exclusively to his works. But to the rest of the mid-century American music group he must have seemed one of those eccentric old parties who have been around forever (he was born eight years before Washington became president) and who are consequently gently ignored. When a concert of his works was announced in 1853, the fact was pointedly noted in the *New York Tribune* by the caustic William Henry Fry, who missed no chance to publicize his battle lines:

There will be five original pieces, vocal and instrumental, composed by Mr. Heinrich, the merit of which we cannot speak of from personal knowledge, but for anything the public knows to the contrary they may be first rate and worthy of any composer. We speak this way because a composer in this country may as well burn his compositions for any opportunity he has of making himself heard. Our Opera Houses and Musical Societies are worse than useless so far as they foster American Art. . . .

As noted below, Fry knew personally whereof he spoke.
—R.O.

Ever mindful of the images and happenings about him (and equally aware of the commercial wisdom in offering a product that the public could identify as current), Heinrich often sought to translate events into sound. Thus the *Elsler Dances*, a suite opened by the delicate "Laurel Waltz," was composed--or at least named--in response to the spectacular effect the famous Austrian ballet dancer Fanny Elssler made on New York in 1860. The balance of the suite consists of "The Zephyr Dance," "The New York Capriccio" ("a waltz in *motu contrario*"), and "The Nymph of the Danube" (a "Grand Serenade"), the last also published for military band.

E.A.B. adds.

When we recall that Heinrich had to publish his pieces himself, we begin to see commercial method in the teeming popular imagery, historical and biographical, of his title pages. Dedications too sometimes helped, and the various days of *The Musical Week* are inscribed to the top musical organizations in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, London, and Prague. I don't know about London and Prague, but Heinrich's courtesies to the musical establishment in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia got him none that we know of in return. And Ritter's *Music in America*, which devotes

three pages to the Boston vocal programs of Ritter's, wife Fanny, does not so much as mention Heinrich.

—R.O.

LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK (1829-1869)

Romance

As an altogether dazzling little twelve-year-old prodigy, Louis Moreau Gottschalk was dispatched to Paris for piano study in the year 1842. He had spent his childhood in a New Orleans that was annually visited by the new productions of the Paris Opéra and the Comédie Française, and he was consequently as familiar with the masterpieces of Bellini, Meyerbeer, Racine, and Molière as he was with the local Afro-American versions of traditional French Creole music ranging from nursery songs to eighteenth-century gavottes. Sometimes in the evening he listened as the oldest slaves recounted mysterious legends, half-narrative, half-song, from Africa by way of Haiti. And on Sunday afternoons, when the slaves were released from their quarters to assemble until twilight in the square called Place Congo, Gottschalk stood with his father in the crowd of white spectators to watch the violent leaping dances the slaves performed to the relentless crescendo of their improvised drums.

Before he was eighteen, he had startled the European musical community and public with the first concert pieces ever derived from authentic Afro-American sources, and for the remainder of his career his music mingled operatic grandiosity, French classicism, and New World folklore both white and black, creating a highly personalized sound as well as an immensely successful medium for rendering the vigorous American subject matter he loved.

At the time of his departure Louisiana had scarcely begun to realize that it was part of the United States, and Gottschalk's ten years abroad spared him the abrasive national transition from a ceremonious and delightfully old-fashioned republican society that lived in a picture-book Greek Revival landscape to a pushing and elbowing social upheaval rendered almost unrecognizable and not a little alarming by yeasty Jacksonian ideas of democracy. Gottschalk had been raised in a semifeudal aristocratic society (its laws in fact were Roman, derived from Justinian by way of the Code Napoléon) in which the paterfamilias was the undisputed master of the family. He returned to the United States to find that New York's newly wealthy brownstone ruling class was a gynarchy in which the family was dominated by ruthlessly ambitious matrons with ungovernable manhunting daughters. Long before it provided the subject matter for some of Henry James's best novels this fact affected the nature of Gottschalk's concert programs and the *coupure* of his stylish American social dances—not to mention the moral and psychological detachment with which he pursued an extremely eventful private life.

Gottschalk in 1853 found New Yorkers still scrambling for copies of the recent book edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (he himself had read it some months earlier in Cadiz, where he had borrowed it from two English tourists who had borrowed it from their ambassador in Madrid). He discovered

that every man, woman, and child in the country felt obligated to sing, whistle, or strum a popular tune (attributed to the minstrel E. P. Christy) called "The Old Folks at Home." He also found New York's streets full of brass bands enthusiastically marching and countermarching for any or no reason at all; noted that music stores sold a spate of sheet music for piano by composers like Charles Grobe (his 1852 hit was "Gothamite Quick-Step"); and observed that *Godey's Lady's Book* (which had breathlessly announced his arrival to America's young ladyhood) published numerous polkas, mazurkas, and schottisches alongside its reams of melodiously tearful graveyard poetry and its engravings of fake Gothic ruins. Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of *Godey's*, was a commander in America's army of lady poets and novelists, some of whom would soon be writing about Gottschalk. Most of them published under alliterative pen names like Grace Greenwood or Fanny Forester, but Sarah was a no-nonsense type who had recently published the nine-hundred-page *Woman's Record, or Sketches of All Distinguished Women from the Creation to 1851*. Like Hawthorne, Gottschalk disapproved of that sort of thing, since it obviously led to developments like the Bloomer Girl--a creature so curious that as soon as he ran across one he noted it in his journal.

Gottschalk's cordial welcome in New York's upper-class male society must have given him far deeper satisfaction than the permanent flurry he caused among the ladies. Almost to a man the city's chief intellectual lights were delighted with him, both as an artist and as an incomparably entertaining social lion, and many of them--painters, sculptors, and writers as well as musicians--became his lifelong friends.

One of the most important was N. P. Willis, who in addition to being a gifted essayist and topical poet and the editor of the immensely popular *Home Journal* was a social paradox, a celebrated fashion plate with brains to spare. Oliver Wendell Holmes said he was "something between a remembrance of the Count D'Orsay and an anticipation of Oscar Wilde," but the remark is scarcely just. Willis had been the friend and employer of Edgar Allan Poe, and after the poet's death he took up his defense against the calumnies of Poe's literary executor, R. W. Griswold. In his youth Willis had been a pet of the English aristocracy and a dedicated opera buff who became a good friend of the sopranos Giulia Grisi and Giuditta Pasta, and in 1853 New York he was a vastly amused and amusing *arbiter elegantiae*, sternly admonishing gentlemen who neglected to wear white gloves to the opera. It can be imagined with what gusto he piloted young Gottschalk through his initial New York social fling among the "upper tendom." Willis claimed to be incompetent to discuss any music but opera, so it was his brother Richard Storrs Willis, a sometime composer who had studied music in Leipzig, who gave Gottschalk's New York debut the most discerning of its many rave notices:

Mr. Gottschalk, the American pianist, made his *début* at Niblo's Saloon on Friday, the 11th instant. We mention the date, because we are convinced that the musical history of the country will require that it should be preserved. His playing has the effect of an orchestra, and the modulation of a single instrument. He is the only pianist we have yet heard who can electrify and inflame an assembly. He produces the same sort and same degree of effect as that which oratory sometimes has in times of public commotion.

Willis was writing for readers who had heard the speeches of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, and it would be hard to find a grander American metaphor to describe the power of America's first great pianist.

Equally friendly to Gottschalk was a legendary New York intellectual of a quite different sort—Henry Clapp, the ferociously independent editor of the avant-garde *Saturday Press* and the acknowledged king of New York's first bohemia. Clapp had spent some years in the Paris of Henri Murger (author of *La Vie de Bohème*, the basis of Puccini's opera), spoke French like a native, and was thought by many to be the wittiest man in the country. He once defined Horace Greeley as "a self-made man who adores his creator." When the newly fledged lecturer Artemus Ward received a business telegram asking "What will you take for forty nights in California?," Clapp told him to reply "Brandy and soda"—and Ward found himself nationally famous overnight as a humorist. Clapp was the first to publish the poetry of Walt Whitman and years later the fiction of Mark Twain. During the storm of scandal that darkened Gottschalk's later career Clapp remained his unwavering friend and ally, and when the news of the pianist's death reached New York it was Clapp, signing himself "Figaro," who in his dry, laconic way wrote for the *New York Leader* what can only be called a rave obituary.

Before Gottschalk left France for America, Berlioz warned him that "the originality, the subtle refinement of a special talent, could be appreciated only in very old societies." Berlioz had strongly advised Chopin and Liszt to stay away from America, but he could not tactfully do so with Gottschalk, who after all was born there. Yet Berlioz' warning must often have been on Gottschalk's mind, and I suspect that when his "originality" and "special talent" seemed feeble weapons in the young and harsh society he was facing, it was probably the warm admiration of men like the Willises and Clapp, of William Henry Fry and the other members of the American music group, of the painter Frederick Church and the sculptor Hiram Powers that helped him survive the bleakness of his restless, homeless life and the viciousness of enemies whose sheer vulgarity rendered them invulnerable.

In recent years the Gottschalk revival has abundantly brought to public attention the composer's early Afro-American pieces, the big patriotic numbers, the marvelous West Indian dances, the later virtuoso pieces in the European tradition, and such inspired renderings of the American landscape as "The Banjo," "Columbia," "The Last Hope," and "Tournament Galop." Gottschalk's elegantly crafted American social dances, however, are not yet widely recognized for the gems they are—possibly because most of them are concealed behind flowery old-fashioned titles.
—R.O.

The "Romance," couched in an unusual dissonant chromaticism, forgoes the virtuosity (it is basically a very simple piece to perform), exoticism, and sentimentality often associated with Gottschalk and reveals instead an introverted side of his nature. Although there is evidence that it may have been composed in 1859, and certainly by 1861, Gottschalk did not include it in his 1863 list of works. Possibly the "Romance" was never performed in public; it may even be unfinished, though it is musically complete as it stands.

Before Gottschalk's premature death he had entrusted many of his manuscripts to the care of a close Cuban friend and colleague, Nicolás Ruiz Espadero (1832-1890). Espadero subsequently published some of the manuscripts, but a sketchbook of seven pieces, of which the "Romance" is the first, was to remain unpublished and forgotten until 1969, when it was noted in the Offergeld *Centennial Catalogue* of Gottschalk's works. It is now available in facsimile, with transcription and exemplary commentary, in Jackson and Ratliff, *The Little Book of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (see Selected

WILLIAM HENRY FRY (1813-1864)

Adieu (Song for the Piano)

Late in October of 1852 the United States Mail Steamship *Humboldt* brought back to New York the composer William Henry Fry, who for six years had served brilliantly in Europe, mostly in Paris, as the *New York Tribune's* political and musical correspondent. His battle plans were at this point fully prepared and long matured. Assuming his duties at once as music critic of the *Tribune*, Fry simultaneously, and at the cost to himself of several thousand dollars, delivered to an astonished city a gargantuan series of lectures on the history of music--not just German music from 1750 to 1850 but the *world's* music, including Oriental and American examples (the latter by Fry himself) that the Dwight forces scarcely considered music at all. The examples, all arranged or composed by Fry, were performed at his expense by the Philharmonic Symphony and the Harmonic Society Chorus under Bristow's direction, with the addition of a huge band and leading soloists from the Italian and the Sontag opera companies.

As a lecturer Fry was informal, vivid, witty, unbelievably erudite, and a rabble-rouser. Although tickets to his show cost five dollars, his audiences numbered in the thousands, and for weeks the town could talk of nothing else.

In August 1853, the spectacular French conductor Louis-Antoine Jullien arrived in New York. He was a colleague of Berlioz' London period, and despite his obtrusive podium showmanship he was unquestionably one of the great virtuoso conductors of his day. Even the people who later parroted the Dwight-Ritter party line and called him a charlatan (Theodore Thomas, for example) learned a great deal of their craft by playing in the superb orchestra that Jullien now assembled in New York. In September he conducted Fry's symphony *A Day in the Country*, and before Christmas Eve, when he led the premiere of Fry's *Santa Claus: Christmas Symphony*, he had given more than a dozen performances of various Fry works to great popular acclaim.

Added to the ferment created by Fry's lectures, the popular success of his music finally mobilized the Dwight party against him. Dwight knew better than to tangle openly with a professional of Fry's stature, so he struck indirectly through the published opinions of Richard Storrs Willis, editor of the *Musical World and Times*. Nothing could have been more adroit, for Willis was a known admirer of Fry, but one who had reservations about the lack of discipline in his music: "I admire your genius but it is genius astray. A splendid frigate at sea without a helm. . . ." And so forth. Willis apparently felt he had earned the privilege of writing condescendingly about *Santa Claus*, calling it an "extravaganza" and finding it frivolous because it contains descriptive passages about wintry sounds--sleigh bells, cracking whips, trotting horses, snowstorms--that audiences found somewhat comic.

This was exactly what Dwight needed, and after flattering Fry with Willis' compliments he went Willis one better with a tone of offensively avuncular you-really-aren't-going-to-pretend-this-is-Art? raillery about *Santa Claus*. Eventually he came to his real point. Trotting out the ancient alibi of all critics who function as pious assassins of the new, he asked an unbelievably hypocritical question:

"Why then is not friend Fry willing practically to submit the merit of American symphonies to . . . the only true test? namely, to time and the world's impression. . . ." Fry could easily have asked why Dwight wasn't willing to do exactly that with the European music he wanted played to the exclusion of everything else. But Fry's reply, eminently practical and also irrefutable, was already in print: ". . . the public never demand any new pieces--they wait until such pieces are presented." And they seldom *are* presented, except over the dead bodies of such as Dwight.

Fry's tiny and wistful "Adieu (Song for the Piano)," which is unpublished, was composed at Nahant, Massachusetts, on August 23, 1855. The piece is inscribed on a single manuscript page and is written in traditional eight-measure statements with repeats and a da capo conclusion. The manuscript was discovered in the 1930s by the musicologist William Treat Upton. At my request it was again brought to light in 1976 after a search at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which has custody of the Fry papers. So far as is known, it is the only piano piece Fry ever completed, although Upton also reported fragments of a piano sonata, at present unlocated.

—R.O.

HOMER NEWTON BARTLETT (1846-1920)

Grande Polka de Concert

Homer Bartlett was a descendant of Josiah Bartlett, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first governor of New Hampshire. A prodigy, Homer played piano publicly at nine and began composing at ten. After study with a number of important teachers, including Sebastian Bach Mills, he enjoyed a long and distinguished career--including thirty-five years as organist of New York's Madison Avenue Baptist Church--that kept his name and reputation fresh in America's musical periodicals for half a century.

Bartlett presents an extremely interesting case historically, particularly as a stylistic bridge between two wholly different musical eras. The "Grande Polka de Concert (composée par Homer N. Bartlett)" is a worthy essay in the brilliant Gottschalkian ballroom tradition, including the mandatory use of French on its title page. It was published in 1867, when Bartlett was twenty-one. When we compare the "Polka" to Grobe's "United States Grand Waltz," which at first glance seems to belong to the same genre, we readily perceive the great difference between Grobe's showy but perfunctory little display number for home use and Bartlett's polished, musicianly, big-scale virtuoso piece. Even if it does not quite equal Gottschalk's melodic invention, harmonic novelty, and pointed wit, the "Polka" is nonetheless thoroughly captivating, and it must have proved irresistible to a society so enamored of polkas that they appeared regularly in the pages of *Godey's Lady's Book*.

It is so characteristic and so successful an example of its type that it comes as a surprise to learn that Bartlett also composed big virtuoso organ works, a symphonic poem based on *The Iliad*, a three-act opera, plus numerous smaller vocal and instrumental works for a total of two hundred and fifty opus numbers. And when we further discover that Bartlett did a series of piano pieces on Japanese themes, we realize that we have left the 1850s behind for the fascinating but less sunny and indeed much less innocent world of James Gibbons Huneker, Lafcadio Hearn, James McNeill Whistler, and Art Nouveau.

—R.O.

WILLIAM MASON (1829-1908)

Silver Spring, Op. 6

A Pastoral Novellette

Today William Mason is vaguely but affectionately remembered as the image of the old-fashioned American piano teacher at the turn of the century--a smallish, pot-bellied old dear with great drooping moustaches that made him look rather like the Walrus in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Actually Mason was a distinguished performer who gave New York its first real education in chamber music, and he was also very likely our most important piano pedagogue until the era of Curtis, Juilliard, and Eastman. In the old Steinway Building in New York, his studio, with its two concert grands, its marble and bronze busts of the great dead, its elaborately autographed portraits of *everybody* important after Beethoven--Liszt, Gottschalk, Wagner, Brahms, Grieg, Von Bulöw, Rubinstein, Paderewski--was for two generations the mecca of America's provincial piano teachers. Twenty years after Mason's death there were old ladies tending the sacred flame of Classical Music in the pages of *Étude* magazine who still venerated his studio as a shrine.

If Mason could have escaped earlier the Better Music dogmas and bulldozing educational tactics of his father, he might well have become the great concert artist he so desperately wanted to be--and perhaps even a memorable composer. Heaven knows he tried. He went to Germany in 1849 (*nobody* from Boston would have dreamed of going to Paris), but he differed radically from Paine and the other New Englanders who followed him there. He passed up the endless hours of character-building counterpoint and organ practice in favor of the spellbinding piano virtuosos with the magic names--first to old Ignaz Moscheles, as a pious gesture toward the great dead, then to the thunderous piano wrecker Alexander Dreyschock (the poet Heine said that when Dreyschock played in Vienna and the wind was right you could hear him in Paris), and after that, finally, to Liszt. Only Moscheles could possibly have been approved wholeheartedly by Boston, by Lowell Mason, or by Dwight.

Neither Lowell Mason nor Dwight was that easy to escape--not then, and, what is worse, not now. Mason was the latter-day chief of the "scientific" Better Music movement that drove the popular shape-note tune books of the old Yankee singing masters out of New England, leaving what used to be called the Old Southwest (then not including Texas) the only spirited congregational singing in the country to this day, and bequeathing the Protestant Church in the Atlantic states its long, sad heritage of hired soloists, paid choirs, and shamefaced congregational mumbling. Not in the more than twelve hundred hymns with which Mason denatured our acts of communal praise nor in the pious secular inanities he pumped into our public-school music books is there a trace of our antecedent musical history or our native musical vitality. His hymns are so dully correct in harmony, so feeble in melody, and so uniform in their watery characterlessness that they constitute a monument to Christian antimusicality. At length one realizes that there is one function in which they are superb. Mason's hymns, like Charles Grobe's piano pieces, are marvelous commodities. Mason in fact packaged hymns as others packaged beans or cod, and there is evidence that he was not above exploiting a monopoly situation in the hymn and schoolbook markets. I know of nothing in Holy Writ or the commercial statutes of nineteenth-century Massachusetts that prohibits this, but it

decidedly cools one's view of Mason as a disinterested spiritual force.

Meanwhile, though the elder Mason was not a great deal more competent musically than Dwight, he was if possible even better informed about the intentions of the Almighty, and a sample of what the son had to put up with in Boston can be inferred from what the father wrote to Dwight's *Journal* and other periodicals during his 1852 tour of European music festivals. The following reflections were inspired by a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony:

God is not yet fully known in his works; yet science is gradually revealing him; and in the kingdom of sounds, as well as that of plants and minerals, in living things, and in surrounding worlds [the Transcendentalists obviously had their own space program] he is manifesting himself in the researches and investigations of him who he made in his image. Beethoven is the great modern revealer of truth, as it exists in the region of sounds.

So far so good. If that sort of thing helps you get to the bottom of the Ninth, fine. But Mason hasn't finished, because he knows something that even Beethoven doesn't:

If God can be seen in his works; if ideas of beauty and sublimity can bring up any proper conceptions to the imagination of the good and true; then [this is best read slowly] Beethoven has, in part, lifted the veil; but yet we may not fully understand; Beethoven himself might not have understood his own productions; for even human nature *restored*, purified, and raised to its highest degree of intellectual and moral greatness, can only appreciate *in part* the wonderful works of its own creation.

If *Beethoven* isn't up to understanding Beethoven, the rest of us need all the help--restoration, purification, intellectual and moral elevation and so forth--we can get. Providentially, this help is forthcoming just a few pages away, where we find notices about Dr. Mason's latest hymnbook, the *New Carmina Sacra* (1852), and another year's subscription to Dwight's *Journal*. And since the foregoing was published in 1852, it will be noted that what Virgil Thomson later called the Music Appreciation Racket was with us long before a lot of the music it became our duty to appreciate.

Unhappily, William Mason on his return from Europe in 1854 discovered that the endless pages of such Transcendentalist glup in Dwight's *Journal* affected his own situation. Like everybody else, Mason unquestionably read Dwight's three undisguisedly prejudicial notices about Gottschalk's 1853 debut (two of them printed before Dwight heard him play a note). After Mason's years abroad (if not before), he was too experienced not to spot Dwight as a fake. Likewise he was too professional not to be shocked by Dwight's effrontery in publicly arraigning in a spirit of the meanest parochialism an artist whom Berlioz and Chopin had made welcome in the European musical community. When Mason read the pages of fulsome praise with which Dwight welcomed *his* debut he necessarily saw the role he had been assigned in Dwight's plan. Gottschalk, who ignored the classics and played unfamiliar things, simply had to be destroyed to make way for William Mason, the first flower of the Boston classical school. So before the public had even heard Mason, Dwight burst into print:

. . . wonderful virtuosity . . . the power, the delicacy, the brilliancy . . . the poetic feeling and expression . . . a brilliant virtuoso . . . equally able to illustrate Bach and Handel, Mozart and

Clementi, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt and Thalberg and Stephen Heller and the host of lesser stars. . . .

Poor William. He knew that even if some of that *were* true, it was irrelevant. After all his effort he had come home to find the field in the possession of a real magician--for what Berlioz said was evident to everybody but Dwight. Gottschalk had the "sovereign power" of one of the elect. And William Mason, as he himself must have known, did not. He would not have been human if he had not felt bitter disappointment, but it never, or almost never, showed. Instead he made friends with Gottschalk and presently wrote a long letter to Dwight pointing out, without mentioning Gottschalk, that it was perfectly true that Beethoven's piano writing at times left something to be desired.

After that, for a year or so Mason dutifully toured the Northeast, giving concerts of the classics to polite but not rapturous audiences. Gottschalk went on playing nonclassics, among them Mason's "Silver Spring," that audiences found perfectly delicious.

"Silver Spring" is almost certainly among the set of early pieces that Mason showed Liszt. Though not unconventional as water pieces go, it is more interesting than the rest of Mason's early things, possibly because its rippling figurations were designed to show off Mason's peculiarly pearly touch, for which he was at one time quite famous, and which led to the eventual preparation of his great pedagogical series, *Touch and Technic*, which was still selling very well in the early years of this century.

"A Pastoral Novellette," which may have been written to commission for the bound set of teaching pieces among which it appeared in 1895, is a real surprise. It is full of original and telling harmonic touches, including a sudden modal excursion in the fourth measure that is really quite provocative, and has a curious intensity lacking in Mason's earlier things. Who knows what depths his modesty and his overwhelming Boston background may have concealed all those years.

R.O.

Ivan Davis made his New York debut as a recitalist at Town Hall in 1959 and as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic in 1961. His London recital debut in 1968 resulted in appearances with the London Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, and the National Orchestra of Spain. He has since performed with major orchestras on both sides of the Atlantic, and is the winner of many awards, including the Casella, Busoni, and Franz Liszt competitions. He has made a number of recordings for the Columbia and London labels.

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students.

All were trained professional musicians, and some were brilliant performers as well, providing us not only with new perceptions about America's musical past but with convincing demonstrations of their discoveries in actual sound. We can thank them for ending a century of disgraceful ignorance and partisan misinformation about our heritage and for proving that our real problem has never been poverty but the disorder of a long-neglected and almost unexampled richness.

—R.O.

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- 4 Richard Hoffman: In Memoriam L.M.G. (4:45)
- 5 Richard Hoffman: Dixiana (Caprice for the Pianoforte on the Popular Negro
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- 6 C. Jerome Hopkins: The Wind Demon, (Rhapsodie Caractéristique pour Piano), Op. 11
(5:55)
- 7 Anthony Philip Heinrich: Laurel Waltz from "The Elssler Dances" (3:45)
- 8 Louis Moreau Gottschalk: Romance (publ. Alexander Broude, Inc.) (4:14)
- 9 William Henry Fry: Adieu (Song for the Piano) (2:39)
- 10 Homer N. Bartlett: Grande Polka de Concert (5:15)
- 11 William Mason: Silver Spring, Op. 6 (5:19)
- 12 William Mason: A Pastoral Novellette (3:59)

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